

THE KAS MEDIA AFRICA AWARD FOR LOCAL JOURNALISM ANNOUNCES THE WINNERS OF THE 2024 CONTEST

KAS Media Africa and the Jury of the KAS Media Africa Award for Local Journalism are pleased to announce the three winners of the 2024 contest. They were chosen out of almost 300 submissions from 22 countries in Africa and they are:

Maryagatha Gichana, Kenya

For her piece – “Sterilised Without My Consent - Tales of HIV Positive Women”, the Daily Nation

The jury said:

In a compelling piece of local journalism, the Daily Nation’s Maryagatha Gichana lifts the lid on a pervasive practice of the sterilisation, without consent, of HIV positive women in Kenya. Prompted by the story of one woman, Gichana takes us on a journey, detailing the experiences of victims who are often young, uneducated, economically vulnerable and therefore exploitable. The story explores the principle of informed consent, which was affirmed by a ruling of the Supreme Court of Kenya. It exposes the abuse of power by health professionals, which is seemingly rooted in either a lack of understanding or misinformation about scientific advances to prevent mother to child transmission of the virus. Significantly, it delves into the resultant impact of such sterilisation on the families of these women, particularly in a patriarchal society that deems the value of their femininity by their fertility. The jury believes such compelling storytelling of issues that directly affect women and their right to exercise choice over their bodies are hugely important in the practice of local journalism. The excellence of her execution deserves this accolade.

Read the piece [here](#).

Kwaku Krobea Asante with Adwoa Adobe-Owusu, Ghana

For the TV production – “Dangerous endorsements: Exposé on herbal medicine advertising in Ghana”, The Fourth Estate

The jury said:

The documentary takes on the important topic of the safety process and the dealing of media outlets with herbal medicines in Ghana. The author of the film uses a very original to uncover, how unsafe the handling of herbal medicine is: He creates his own brand of fake medicine. “MAKOFA” is then used to test the procedures in place to ensure that only safe products are marketed to customers. The test shows, that regulations are flawed, and radio and television stations are happy to advertise a herbal medicine against all kinds of maladies, although it has not been approved. The documentary is outstanding in topic, realization and in the way it keeps viewers in suspense – and in shock – as it shows how the fake product is doing in the very real business of herbal medicine.

Watch the piece [here](#).

Grace Obike, Nigeria

For her article – “Abuja communities where girls’ breasts are suppressed to save them from rape”, The Nation

The jury said:

Grace Obike’s story on breast ironing in Abuja highlights a troubling practice where girls aged 9-13 undergo this painful procedure to protect them from paedophiles in the community. Published by the Nation – a Nigerian publication – the narrative vividly describes the process and the lasting trauma that it inflicts on these young girls. Despite efforts to curb this gender-based violence, the story underscores the challenges in changing entrenched mindsets and holding perpetrators accountable for what is a lasting impact on these girl’s transition into womanhood.

Read the piece [here](#).

Many exceptional submissions

This year’s competition brought in many exceptional submissions – a testament to the calibre of journalism across the continent. While we can only have 3 winners, the jury identified the following two submissions for recommendations:

Cynthia Gichiri, Kenya

For her documentary – “Pressed Freedom”, Africa Uncensored

The jury said:

Freedom of press is the base for democracy. Big words, but they have a meaning for each and every journalist, starting on a local level up to the big international stories. Getting answers from officials, commenting on public problems and figures without fear of retaliation, doing your job without risking your life – the documentary shows what a demanding job this is in Kenya today. It uncovers the difficulties reporters are facing and the impact deteriorating freedom of press has on journalism in times, where media is already under pressure by digitization and crumbling financing models. The documentary shows deep insight into media in Kenya. And it answers the question why the country dropped from place 69 to place 116 (from 180) on the press freedom index of reporters without borders.

Watch the piece [here](#).

Fhadel Alou, Niger

For his radio piece – “Gaya Niger Trafic Drogue et Insecurité”, Radio Fara’a

The jury said:

This radio report from Niger journalist Fadel Alhou, highlight the dangers of drug trafficking in the city of Gaya in Niger. Since it is not easy to report on such sensitive issues inside the country, it requires safety and protection for the journalist to take into account. Fadel has been dynamic and informative in his report, with many sources among populations, local authorities, and inhabitants. It warns against the generalization of a phenomenon hard to curb and that might have incalculable consequences on youth of that part of Niger. Not to mention the clear link with terrorism, a critical issue in the Sahel region. Also, Fadel ensured the audio quality of his report, and it was well-articulated.

Download the piece [here](#).

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