



Association of Grassroot
Journalists of Kenya

THE AGJK COMMUNITY JOURNALISM AWARDS 2022 REPORT

“Building a viable
community media
space for inclusive
access to
information”

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BACKGROUND

The Association of Grassroot Journalists Kenya (AGJK) strives to promote flow of information and seeks to inspire successive generations of talented individuals to become dedicated journalists. AGJK encourages and promotes high standards of professionalism via the promotion of current and reliable reporting through a number of activities and platforms offered to community media across the country. AGJK seeks to promote media viability across community media in Kenya thus creating an engaged citizenry well informed with issues affecting them directly and indirectly. This contribution is made through capacity building for skill development to community, citizen and school journalists, advocacy, highlighting leadership and governance while building vital networks for strong partnerships to realize media viability in the field of community media. AGJK recognizes that there are many community media journalists spread out across community radio stations, television station, freelancers, bloggers and media practitioners who are dedicated to upholding highest professional standards in their journalistic work, producing and dissemination factual and relevant information to the Kenyan masses through different community-based platforms.

Community media in Kenya operates in a diverse media landscape facing complex challenges with regards to sustainability and viability. Persisting financial constraints coupled with the economic effect of the global Covid-19 pandemic has continuously made the operation of many community media outlets near impossible. Community media outlets have however braced the challenges and continued producing objective and relevant content for different target audiences in Kenya. With access to information critical during the pandemic times and the Kenyan general elections, community media outlets filled the information void by broadcasting timely information to keep communities healthy and to enhance civic education to the general Kenyan citizenry.

During the electioneering period, community media outlets played a very integral role in sensitizing the general public on democracy, voter education and spreading peace messages. Some community media outlets went out of their way to organize public engagement forums and debates as a way of giving their audiences a platform to critically listen and analyze manifestos from different political candidates at the ward and constituency levels.

OVERVIEW

The Association of Grassroot Journalists Kenya (AGJK) in collaboration with *The Aga Khan University (Graduate School of Media and Communications)*, *The Media Council of Kenya*, *Centre for Behavior Change and Communication (CBCC)*, *Action for Sustainability Initiative (AFOSI)*, *Horn of Africa Youth Network*, *Article 19*, *The East African Centre for Human Rights* among other partner organizations and institutions organized the premier **AGJK Annual Community Journalism Awards 2022** within the

framework of the AGJK strategic actions to professionalize the field of community journalism and the community media landscape at large.

The AGJK Community Journalism Awards which seek to recognize and award media excellence in the community media landscape are one of a kind and prestigious to community journalists as for years now, community journalists have always felt sidelined and sometimes discriminated since they are often referred to as “*local journalists*”. This first edition of The AGJK – CJA was received with a lot of admiration and regard as with the call for application and submission of stories receiving up to 299 entries from community journalists across the country.

The Gala Night Event held on **Friday 2nd December 2022** at the Aga Khan University was themed “*building a viable community media for inclusive access to information*” as it aims to promote and celebrate innovation and excellence in storytelling and to improve access to information in the context of community media.

The Awards seeks to promote practical and innovative story telling techniques for breaking down complex topics in order to improve access to information to the Kenyan citizen. The Awards further seek to demonstrate the importance of strategic collaboration, specifically multi sector public private partnerships that support community media in Kenya. The focus of these Awards was rewarding journalistic initiatives that address real access to information and highlight topics on health, gender, governance, business, sports, Covid-19, education, climate change, investigative journalism and developmental reporting.

OBJECTIVES

- Promote practical and innovative story telling techniques for breaking down complex topics in order to improve access to information for the Kenyan Citizenry
- Demonstrate the importance of strategic collaboration, specifically multi sector private-public partnerships that support community media in Kenya
- Recognize and award journalistic initiatives that address real access to information as well as stories that critical and sensitive topics in our communities.
- Enhance quality and diversity of content in community media outlets whilst adhering to the professional code of ethics and the media law.
- Illuminate innovative best-practice approaches both in management and practice towards a sustainable and viable community media in Kenya.

OUTCOMES

- The premier AGJK Community Journalism Awards had a total of 13 categories namely:

1. Health Category

This award recognizes journalists' ability to generate interpretative stories that go beyond medical terms to inform the public on health. Stories in this category will include Universal Health Care (UHC) Development in health innovation, Covid 19, Mental Health and the Big Four Agenda.

2. Agriculture and Food Security

This category seeks to recognize and celebrate journalists who plan and produce articles that capture current trends in agriculture, food security and production, research and innovation, and verify the data and sources in the story.

3. Business, Entrepreneurship, Technology and Innovations

This award recognizes journalists who accurately interpret the impact of policies and laws on businesses and business practice on the public, technological advancements and innovations.

4. Education Reporting

This award recognizes stories on education, the implementation of the new CBC curriculum and different aspects related to education in different communities.

5. Environment and Climate Change

The environment award recognizes journalists who have displayed in-depth knowledge of covering new developments in environmental conservation, climate change and the impact of environmental changes to human activities, water resources and access to water, environmental degradation and pollution among others.

6. Gender Reporting

This award will recognize journalists who have prioritized and provided an understanding of issues that seek to promote gender equity, equality, and empowerment of men and women in society. The concept of gender-sensitive reporting comes into play and focuses on such storytelling.

7. Governance and Advocacy

This award seeks to recognize outstanding stories on political issues, leadership, peace promotion processes and governance issues as well as educating the public on their role to ensuring good leadership and governance.

8. Investigative Reporting

This award recognizes journalists who will go beyond the surface, dig out facts and expose public interest matters. Using various tools and journalism tools, such stories will focus on matters that have great implication for the society, but which the actors don't want shared/known by the public. These may be great exposes on public interest matters.

9. Sports, Art and Culture

This award recognizes sports, art and culture stories that are balanced and informative, providing an understanding on the importance of sports, art and culture in talent search, policies, international image building and national development.

10. PWDs Reporting

This award seeks to recognize outstanding stories on people living with disabilities in our communities, their immense contribution in the society and the different challenges they face.

11. Covid 19 impactful stories

This category seeks to recognize impactful stories on Covid 19 and how journalists used their skills and platforms to create awareness.

12. Community Media of the Year

The award recognizes the overall best performing community radio station in the country.

13. Journalist of the year

The Journalist of the year award seeks to recognize and award the overall best and outstanding community journalists across the country.

- The awards attracted a total of 299 submissions in all the 13 categories by journalists from all over the country.
- A total of 35 journalists were awarded as either **Winner, Runner Up** or **2nd Runner Up**.
- The Gala Night Award Event was attended by a total of 113 guests (physically) with other guests following virtually as the event was a hybrid program.
- Media Excellence in the community media landscape recognized, awarded and celebrated by different stakeholders and partners during the Gala Night.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to promote practical and innovative story telling techniques, AGJK recommends that the AGJK Community Journalism Awards be held annually.
- After listening and rating all the 299 story submissions, The Judging Panel recommends that AGJK trains and equips community journalists with the necessary audio/video production skills for improved delivery.
- The Judges observed that there is need to train the new and upcoming community journalists as most of the winners in the different categories were journalists with more than 6 years of experience in the community media space.
- To further recognize and award journalistic initiatives, AGJK urges like minded organizations and partners not to shy away from being part of such initiatives.