

HANA shines at AISI Awards

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Article blurb Awards galore as writers smile all the way to the bank.

HANA journalists were among those feted last night for their excellent coverage of the Information society and the ICT development issues in Africa.

The African Information Society Initiative (AISI) and the Stockholm Challenge Awards were conferred at a gala ceremony at the ongoing GK3 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The annual AISI media Awards are organised by UNECA with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation, International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD).

The event organisers say the awards are aimed at individual journalists and media institutions based in Africa that promote journalism which contributes to a better understanding of the information society on the continent.

Speaking at the Award ceremony, Ms. Aida Opoku-Mensah, who is the UNECA's Director for ICT, Science and Technology said: "Although the media in Africa are beginning to report on ICT issues, there is still a wide gap in their knowledge and comprehension of the subject in relation to development trends within their national contexts."

Four of the 14 finalists came from HANA, a niche news agency focusing on ICT4D stories and which has consistently reported on the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) since its inception in 2003.

Emily Nyarko from Ghana and Timothy Kasonde Kasolo from Zambia were first and second prize winners respectively in the multimedia/web media category for their articles "Developing ICT enabled education ? the future for Ghana" and "Deploy ICTs for economic growth."

Meanwhile, Nigerian Remmy Nweke was the runner-up in the reporting on ICT research and innovation category with his expose entitled "Biofuel: option for ICT penetration."

Kenya's Zachary Ochieng, currently editor of the HANA team in Kuala Lumpur and HANA journalist of the year 2007, wrapped up HANA's wards haul with his second prize winning article "Finally, Kenya government rethinks 30 percent rule" in the reporting on ICT policy category.

The first prize winners were presented with trophies, merit certificates and cash rewards of US\$3000 each while their runners-up took home merit certificates and US\$ 1500 each.

Commenting on the achievements of HANA journalists, Prof Fackson Banda, who is the HANA team's chaperone at the GK3 assignment said: "The recognition means HANA serves as a very good training ground. It also provides one of the most successful platforms for journalists to showcase their talents". HANA is now a successful brand, that is recognised by the types of journalism awards we are winning."

This is not the first time HANA has been honoured. Besides winning the HANA journalist of the year Award, both Remmy and Zachary have been winners of the Siemens Profile Awards on Science and Technology Reporting. Early this month, HANA journalists Gervais Henrie, Rebecca Wanjiku and Ansbert Ngurumo were nominated for the African ICT Achiever's Award organised by Forge Ahead.