

BNL and ZBS win big at 2012 MISA Awards

By Gregory Gondwe: @Kalipochi

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Blantyre Newspapers Limited (BNL) and Zodiak Broadcasting Station (ZBS) triumphed over all other media institutions in Malawi to emerge as the Best Print and Electronic Media House of the Year respectively at the 2012 MISA-Malawi Annual Media Awards. The winners were announced at a ceremony marking this year's World Press Freedom Day (WPDF) commemoration in Lilongwe on Saturday, 5 May 2012.



The two media houses not only emerged as the best media houses in print and electronic media, but their journalists also scooped the most individual awards. Out of a total 36 categories for both print and electronic media, BNL journalists took 15 individual awards in the print sector while ZBS scooped 12 in electronic media.

Journalist of the Year

This year's MISA-Malawi Journalist of the Year was awarded to BNL's deputy chief reporter, Theresa Chapulapula.

Chapulapula earned the accolade for her investigative piece that exposed scam at the state run Malawi Housing Corporation (MHC) scam in which high profile government and former ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) officials, including Peter wa Mutharika, bought houses at prices below their market values. This is also the story that earned her the best investigative story for the print slot.

"Power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely. This saying applies to government officials who abuse their power and indulge themselves in corrupt activities. This story talks about government officials who were involved in a housing scam at the Malawi Housing Corporation. MHC ended up losing 105 million kwacha in the process," this is according to the citation read by the chief judge.

BNL's Ralph Tenthani scooped the newly introduced Best Columnist of the Year category for *Muckraking on Sunday* which appears in *The Sunday Times*.

BNL winners

Other winners from BNL included:

- Jacob Nankhonya - Photo Journalist of the Year
- Joy Ndovi - Sports Journalist of the Year
- Theresa Chapulapula- Investigative Journalist
- Charles Mpaka - Human Rights Journalist
- Gabriel Kamlomo - Global Partnership for Development Journalist
- Wezzie Nkhoma Somba - Maternal Health
- Isaac Masingati - Child Rights Award
- Charles Mpaka and Isaac Masingati - Human Resource for Health

The Daily Times correspondent Tiwonge Ng'ona was awarded the Women Empowerment Award while another correspondent, Binson Musongole won the Water and Sanitation Award.

ZBS - Best in Electronic Media

While BNL dominated the printing awards, ZBS swept most of the awards in the electronic entries. The station was voted the Best Electronic Media House of the Year for the sixth consecutive year.

Pilirani Phiri scooped the Best Business and Economics Journalist Award, Global Partnerships for Development Award and Talk Show Host of the Year, for his vernacular interviews called 'Tiuzeni Zoonu' (Tell Us the Truth).

The radio's editor, Teresa Ndanga and Winston Mwale won two awards each, while Priscilla Malamula, Steve Zimba, Noel Mkubwi and Stonald Kuphunda got one each.

ZBS managing director, Gospel Kazako said they owe this to Malawians who believe in what the radio does.

"We will not falter and they should expect the best from us. And we dedicate the award to our listeners," declared Kazako.

A feeling of satisfaction

On the other hand, BNL general manager, Tikhala Chibwana said he was excited with the success of his youthful team as it gave a warm feeling of satisfaction to win so many awards including the Media House of the Year.

"Credit goes to the youthful team which is doing a fantastic job. Last year, I missed the awards. That was the time we lost our managing editor Edward Chisambo, I am glad that in honour of his spirit we can say we are keeping the fire burning," said Chibwana in an interview.

Other winners

In a new category this year, introduced by the US Embassy and MISA-Malawi, for the Best Columnist, Blogger and Radio Talk Show Host of the Year which aims to promote online journalism and critical analyses of issues mostly done by experienced columnists and talk show hosts, was awarded to Kondwani Munthali, a news analyst at Nation Publications Limited.

Journalists that emerged victorious were awarded prizes including laptop computers, Samsung Tablets, recorders, home theatre systems and a LCD plasma screen.

Additional awards

The 2012 awards included [news award categories](#).

Best Farm Radio Programme which aims to recognise the role that agricultural broadcasters play in improving the lives of

smallholder farmers; and to motivate agricultural broadcasters and profile of farm radio programming as a key in agricultural extension and advisory services was awarded to Lazarous Mgomezulu of Lilongwe based community station, Radio Alinafe.

The Best Human Resources for Health Award which realises the need for retention of qualified and experienced health professionals in the country and rewards journalists who aim to improve knowledge and analysis of current trends and issues in human resources for health among other key priority areas was co-won by BNL's journalists, Masingati and Mpaka as well as Priscilla Malamula of ZBS.

The eight categories supported by the UN included best journalists for both print and electronic in the area of reporting on Hunger & Poverty; Universal Primary Education; Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment; Child Mortality; Maternal Health; HIV/AIDS, Malaria & Tuberculosis; Environmental Sustainability and Global Partnership for Development.

These awards focus on the Millenium Development Goals (MDG) targets and the main objective is to motivate journalists to critically analyse progress and challenges in our efforts to achieve the MDGs.

The MISA/UN awards will be offered annually until 2015 alongside MISA Malawi's traditional awards which also covers both print and electronic sections for the best investigative journalist of the year award and awards in Business & Economics; Human Rights; Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Judges

The 2012 Committee of judges included:

- Baldwin Chiyamwaka, who headed the panel and is deputy country representative for VSO International
- Owen Kadewere, lecturer at Malawi Institute of Journalism and assistant information specialist at TEVETA
- Ellard Manjawira from the Department of Journalism and Media Studies at University of Malawi - The Polytechnic
- Mike Chipalasa, award-winning journalist and communications officer at Malawi Human Rights Commission
- Mandala Mambulasa, Human Rights lawyer and board member of MISA Malawi
- Kusali Kubwalo, communication manager at UNICEF
- Shorai Nyambalo of the UN
- Aubrey Chikungwa, national director of MISA-Malawi, who also served as secretary to the panel of judges.

View the [full citations and winners](#)

Updated at 9:26am on 9 May 2012.

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