

Local Media Award

The jury would like to give all the entrants 'A' for effort and initiative in getting to Kurdistan, the Gambia and the many otherwise virtually unreported places – in itself no mean achievement in these straitened times for local media. In a category which can be dominated by BBC entries it was encouraging to see coverage from commercial media such as that of Heart 106 radio in the East Midlands on South Africa and ITV Wales on Nepal. However, only four entries truly succeeded in breaking out of predictable formulas, meeting the criterion of producing “compelling and imaginative content about the wider world”. These happen to be—future applicants and their editors might want to note—also the entries that gave the most creative space to voices from the developing world and not just “Brits abroad”!

Y Daith: O Gapel Salem i'r Deml Aur was a beautifully made S4C documentary following a family of mixed race and religion on their spiritual journey from Salem Chapel in Cardiff to the Sikh Golden Temple in Amritsar. While in the judges' minds it didn't quite square with the award criteria, its refreshing, inspirational quality was such that the jury felt that this very intimate take on global lives simply must be commended. It was that rare thing – an entirely positive film which made the foreign feel familiar.

Coping with Climate Change/Coventry Evening Telegraph gave over a week's worth of features to the impact of climate change on Burkina Faso, culminating in coverage of a protest march through Coventry against a new E.On coal-fired power station (the energy firm is based in Coventry). The paper's environment reporter was able to interview a whole range of people affected by climate change in one of Africa's poorest and hardest-hit countries – it is impressive to find the viewpoints of African climate scientists given prominence in a local paper! The Telegraph acknowledged the support of Christian Aid for this coverage. The jury thinks that such sponsorship is inevitable but editors walk a fine line here in ensuring proper journalistic balance and avoiding propaganda.

MAG Diary/BBC Radio Manchester ran across a week an audio diary from the Manchester-based Mines Advisory Group (or MAG) worker Tom Morgan reporting from Laos on the continuing aftermath of the Vietnam War bombing. Morgan, who has a natural radio voice, received some rudimentary training from a BBC producer and managed to come up with some stunning radio - giving a haunting sense of place with unexploded ordinance or UXOs littering the landscape and young Laotian women de-miners talking matter-of-factly about their unusual and potentially dangerous role. From the masseur who had learnt his new trade after being blinded by an unexploded mine to the liaison officer in the wartime visitor centre, listeners would have been grabbed almost physically by graphic experiences of living in one of the most heavily bombed corners of the world – 35 years after the war had ended!

But our winner was **E-Waste/BBC London 'Inside Out'**, in which producer/director Mark Jordan exposed an illicit trade in dumping old televisions, computers and other E-waste in Africa, with criminals easily evading green legislation requiring Britain's hazardous electrical waste to be dismantled within the UK. Doing the shooting himself, Jordan filmed a dump site in the “Sodom and Gomorra” slum in Ghana where he discovered toxic E-waste bearing the names of leading UK firms, hospitals and in one case a police authority! This short report nevertheless gave appropriate prominence to Ghanaian campaigners and environmental protection officers. This was a very original investigation with a very clear North/South connection. It was heartening for the jury to see “Inside Out” with limited means at its disposal fulfilling one of the BBC's great purposes, namely of bringing the world to the UK. In this case London viewers were enabled to see the impact of their lives on those of some of the poorest people in the world.

Jury panel:

CHAIR: Paddy Coulter, Director, Oxford Global Media
Hugh Levinson, Editor World Programmes, BBC Radio Current Affairs
Sally Ann Wilson, Deputy Secretary General, CBA
Caroline Diehl, Chief Executive, Media Trust

