

**TEXT 1****If western journalists get Africa wrong, who gets it right?**

*There's been much criticism of the way the west covers the continent, but are African journalists doing a better job?*

- 1 The Kenyan writer and graduate student at Harvard Law School Nanjala Nyabola recently caused a bit of a stir with her article asking 'Why Do Western Media Get Africa Wrong?' Reading through the piece, which was both interesting and informative, I couldn't help but wonder: Just who does get Africa right? Is there even such a thing as getting Africa right?
- 2 First let me say that I agree with many of Nanjala's criticisms of media coverage of events on the continent. As she says, much of it is devoid of nuance and context and seems oblivious to the danger and absurdity of reducing and compressing the tale of a continent of over a billion people and 54 countries, their existence, history and stories into one simple, superficial, easily regurgitated cliché. 'The hopeless continent.' 'Africa rising.' 'Magical Africa.'
- 3 However, it is not just western media that is guilty of reporting in this manner. African media commits many of the same sins though, given the fact that most only broadcast to discrete home audiences, it is easy for them to escape censure. While Africans in almost every country on the continent have opportunity to be regularly appalled by their portrayal on CNN, Al Jazeera and BBC, it is rare that Kenyans will flip the channel to check what Nigerian journalists are reporting about them.
- 4 Few African media houses are actually trying to cover the continent for the continent. Many have their hands full reporting (or not reporting) news at home and think of Africa as part of the rest of the world, taking their cue on reporting on it from the western outlets. Few African countries send reporters outside their home countries, choosing to rely on the same western reporters they delight in bashing.
- 5 Nanjala also points out that in most western reporting of Africa, 'the Rest is necessarily set up in opposition to the West' resulting in coverage where 'issues or situations are rarely, if ever, analysed for their intrinsic impact or worth. Events or situations are analysed as what the west is not.'
- 6 As last year's elections in Kenya approached, the country was inundated by western journalists, many undoubtedly there in anticipation of a repeat of the 2007/8 post-election bloodshed. Most Kenyan media-folk were appalled, having themselves determined to practise something called peace journalism. In any case, their resultant, overly uncritical reporting of the election seemed at least partly motivated by the desire to prove to their western counterparts that Kenya was not another African basket case.
- 7 To be fair, when assessing their performance, one has also to consider the environment that African media operates in. Many work under severe government restrictions, with limited resources. Shrinking budgets are, however, a worldwide phenomenon. Much has been made about the phenomenon of journalists parachuting (not literally) to crisis spots for a few days and filing reports with neither context nor understanding. However, as Suzanne Franks noted, "an important gap in the way that Africa is reported is not just the disappearance of regular correspondents, but also of longer, more considered television documentaries."

- 8 "As current affairs coverage has declined, the only television outlet left for factual programming about Africa is on the news. So the kind of explanations and background context that would once have been contained in a 30 or 40 minute programme, now have to be compressed into a two or three minute package. It also means that the nature of what is covered will be dictated by news priorities. TV news, which is how most people find out about the world, is an event-driven operation. In the absence of resident correspondents, a highly professional reporter is flown in when disaster occurs and expected to deliver something within days if not hours."
- 9 African news outlets are also part of the problem, perpetuating and disseminating as they do western perspectives, biases and stereotypes. (Let me hasten to add that by no means are all western journalists or all journalists working for western-based outlets guilty of this.)
- 10 Maybe media, whether western or African, should just cover stories in Africa, as opposed to seeking African stories.

[Adapted from the original written by Patrick Gathara <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)> (24 January 2014)]

## TEXT 2A

### **Cigarette packaging: Ministers launch fresh review**

The government has announced an independent review of cigarette packaging in England, amid calls for action to discourage young smokers. A review, led by paediatrician Sir Cyril Chantler, is set to focus on Australia, the first country to legislate for standardised, unbranded packaging in 2011. A study in the state of Victoria found that, not only did it make smokers more likely to think about quitting, it also worked subconsciously – smokers felt the cigarettes were of poorer quality.

Over the years tougher and tougher measures have been introduced to discourage smoking from bans in public places to forcing shops to sell tobacco products under the counter. "Every major public health expert agrees plain packaging would help the battle against cancer, against young people taking up smoking. This is fundamentally about children's health. Two thirds of people start smoking when they're children and it's one of the most important public health issues we face in this country," said Public Health Minister Jane Ellison.

Cancer Research UK said a move to plain packaging would "save thousands of lives. Stopping cigarettes being marketed to children as a glamorous and desirable accessory is one of the greatest gifts we can give the next generation," it added.

More than 450 doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals have signed an open letter saying they also 'welcome' the move. "Cigarette packs are now the key marketing tool employed by the tobacco industry to attract and retain customers," they wrote.

[Adapted from: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>>]

AND

**TEXT 2B**

**Blowing Smoke in Africa: Big Tobacco and Child Smokers**


As the popularity of smoking has slowed in the developed world, it has spread rapidly in developing countries. And as the West has tightened regulations and tried to push Big Tobacco out of the limelight, cigarette companies have turned their attention to African markets, and young people are taking up the habit. It is estimated that between 82 000 and 99 000 young people start smoking each day across the world, the vast majority in developing countries, and smokers who start as children are more likely to become lifetime addicts as the number of cigarettes required to establish a nicotine addiction is lower than in adults. Tobacco dependence is regarded by many as a paediatric disease, but action to combat the spread of smoking addiction has been slow.

[Adapted from: <<http://thinkafricapress.com/health>> by Ravi Jaipaul]

**TEXT 3**

digital camera for annual holiday card: \$399

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**TEXT 4**



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**TEXT 5**

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