



SIMON CUMBERS MEDIA FUND

Judging Panel

The Simon Cumbers Media Fund judging panel is chaired by former RTÉ Director General and current chair of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Bob Collins. The panel includes representatives from the Cumbers family – Louise Bevan, Simon's wife and Brona Cumbers, Simon's mother. The panel also includes media and development experts; Brian Furey, Ross Church and Rodney Rice.

Below are short biographies on the judges:

Bob Collins (Chair)

Bob Collins took up position as Chief Commissioner of the Equality Commission on 1 August 2005. Mr Collins worked for almost 30 years at RTÉ and was Director-General there from 1997 to 2003. He was central to the development of RTÉ's policies and practices on equality and was a member of the European Commission's steering group on equality in television. He is the non-executive Chair of the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland – the regulatory body for all broadcasting in Ireland. He was formerly the Chairman of Connect-World - a body established to promote greater awareness of development issues in the media. Mr Collins is also a member of the Ulster Orchestra Society.

Louise Bevan

As Simon Cumbers' wife, Louise is very closely involved with the Simon Cumbers Media Fund. She also has a wealth of experience in newspapers and television broadcasting following a long career in journalism. Louise reported for major UK networks, including the BBC and ITN. She worked as a foreign correspondent covering the Gulf War from Iraq and Israel and filed reports from many parts of the world including Europe, the Middle East and Asia. In latter years, Simon and Louise ran their own television news and production company, Locum Productions, based in London, covering news stories and features around the globe, many in developing countries.

"Naming the Media Fund after Simon is appropriate in so many ways," said Louise. "It is exactly the kind of project that Simon would have loved to be involved in himself and a very fitting way to honour him."

Bronagh Cumbers is Simon's mother. In her words;

I have a personal interest and commitment to the success of the Fund. As a journalist, Simon was always eager to bring information and news to the attention of his audience in Ireland and the UK and, in particular, if it had an Irish involvement. I am determined to keep that information flowing as it relates to Irish development aid. Simon was personally involved in encouraging young students to consider journalism as a career and had spoken to classes at St. Patrick's Classical School here in Navan. It is in keeping with Simon's interest that I am keen to promote a student involvement in the Fund.

Brian Furey is a Project Manager at the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI). He has been involved in the broadcasting sector for more than 18 years having started his career in local radio as a producer/presenter. A graduate of IADT Dun Laoghaire, he joined the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland in 2003 working in the areas of radio licensing and training and development. In 2006 he was appointed as Commissioning Officer of the Sound & Vision Broadcasting Funding Scheme. Following the establishment of the BAI in 2009 he was appointed Communications Officer and oversees the communications and information provision functions of the Authority as well as representing the BAI on a number of industry fora.

Ross Church is a Press Officer at the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade. Prior to his appointment, Ross lived in Brussels for four years, where he worked for the European External Action Service (EEAS) as a Communication Officer for High Representative Catherine Ashton; focusing in particular on Press, New & Social Media and foreign policy research. Ross has a Masters degree in Political Strategy and Communication from the University of Kent and a Bachelor degree in Philosophy and Political Science from Trinity College Dublin.

For the final 30 years of his broadcasting career, **Rodney Rice** specialised in politics - home and abroad - and development issues overseas, presenting *Saturday View*, a weekly political review, and producing and presenting *Worlds Apart*, an annual multi-part series on issues in the developing world. His first introduction to development issues came with work visits to Kenya and Uganda in 1978, Thailand and Cambodia in 1979 and Zimbabwe and South Africa in 1981. Rodney has been a judge on the Simon Cumbers Media Fund since its inception and he is currently undertaking media consultancy work in the developing world on behalf of donors.