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Promoting human rights and democracy through the media since 1993.

# **Children's Views on South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC) Editorial Policies**

**Submitted for and behalf of the children below**

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## List of Contents

1. Structure of the Children’s Submission .....	1
2. About MMA and Child Participation.....	1
3. Children’s views on SABC News.....	2
4. Children’s views on SABC Local Content.....	3
5. Children’s views on SABC Programmes .....	5
6. Recommendations to the SABC.....	8
ANNEXURE A .....	10
ANNEXURE B .....	11
ANNEXURE C .....	12

## **1. Structure of the Children's Submission**

This submission is guided by the principle that children are active agents who, if given the opportunity and in accordance with their evolving capacity, have the ability to meaningfully contribute to various complex matters that affect their lives. Like all other citizens, children have a crucial role to play and have a critical voice to add to the development and dialogue that takes place in the country.

This submission outlines the views of children who watch the SABC and whose feedback has been pulled together and submitted as part of the civic participatory process. The About Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) and its Child Participants Section provides information on the organization and the children behind the submission. Findings are presented in three categories: (1) Children's views on SABC News, (2) Children's views on SABC Local Content, and (3) Children's views on SABC programmes. The last section lists recommendations for moving forward.

## **2. About MMA and the Child Participation Process**

Media Monitoring Africa ("MMA") is an NGO that has been monitoring the media since 1993. We aim to promote the development of a free, fair, ethical and critical media culture in South Africa and the rest of the continent. The three key areas that MMA seeks to address through a human rights-based approach are media ethics, and media quality and media freedom. In the last 24 years, we have conducted over 200 different media monitoring projects – all of which relate to key human rights issues, and at the same time to issues of media quality. MMA has and continues to challenge media on a range of issues always with the overt objective of promoting human rights and democracy through the media. In this time, MMA has also been one of the few civil society organizations that have consistently sought to deepen democracy and hold media accountable through engagement in policy and law-making processes. MMA has made submissions to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DJCD) on matters relating to Public Broadcasting, as well as numerous presentations to Parliament Portfolio Committee on Communication as well as the National Council of Provinces. In addition, MMA has made

submissions to Broadcasters, the Press Council, the South African Human Rights Commission and the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA). MMA also actively seeks to encourage ordinary citizens to engage in the process of holding media accountable through the various means available – all of which can be found on MMA’s website ([www.mediamonitoringafrica.org](http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org)).

Since 2003 we have been working with children to ensure not only that their views are considered by the media but also that they are able to have a say in matters that directly impact them in policy matters. For these reasons, we worked with children and provided them with a platform to make their own submissions on SABC Editorial Policies. MMA met with three groups of learners who focused on different sections of the policies:

- On 13 September 2017, Barnato Park High School focused on the News
- On 15 September 2017, Parkhurst Primary School discussed local content on SABC
- On 18 September 2017, Troyeville Primary School focused on SABC programming

We worked with 10 children from each school and each group discussed the following: (1) Who watches the SABC or not? (2) What do they watch? (3) What would they like to change and what would they recommend to SABC? Their views were based solely on their consumption of SABC content and the following is a summary of these discussions.

### **3. Children’s views on SABC News**

*“I watch SABC news because they come in different languages”*

- Barnato Park High School pupil

We asked children how many of them watched SABC News. Six out of ten children in Barnato Park High School watched SABC news regularly and the remaining four occasionally watched the SABC News. Those that did watch the news viewed Morning Live, Zulu/Swati, Tsonga/Venda and SABC 3 Primetime news.

Many of their reasons for watching SABC News overlapped and the following were the most commonly raised:

- SABC news bulletins are more informative
- SABC news comes in different languages
- SABC news report more on celebrities
- The news stories are relevant to the children's life
- They liked the informative economy news

However, the children did have some concerns about SABC news. The following dislikes were from the views of the children who watch regularly and the ones that only watched occasionally:

- They get their news online so they do not need to watch
- They do not like soccer highlights
- The news bulletins are very short
- Their coverage of children is too little
- SABC news are not catchy
- SABC news studio are dull

Children suggested that if SABC can fix or improve the above concerns they would be happy with the SABC news and those children who only watched SABC news occasionally would watch more regularly. Furthermore, the children demanded that the SABC represent them in more positive ways and take the views of children and youth seriously when reporting about them.

#### **4. Children's views on SABC Local Content**

Children were presented with the list of SABC 1, 2 and 3 programmes for the month of September and they were asked which ones they watched. They were also asked to add local content that they liked from the SABC that did not appear on the list we provided. Thereafter, we discussed why they watched the programmes that they did. The discussion centered around four categories namely: educational, entertainment, informative and edutainment. The list below shows how children categorized the local content they watch on SABC.

<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Informative</b>	<b>Educational</b>	<b>Edutainment</b>
<b>Isidingo</b>	Kids News	Gelezanathi	Mzansi Insider
<b>Kose Kuse</b>	Sports buzz	Bonisanini	Yo-tv
<b>Generations</b>	Daily Thetha	YilungeloLakho	Takalani Sesame
<b>Muvhango</b>	SABC news		
<b>Skeem Sam</b>	Gospel Avenue		
<b>City Ses'la</b>	Expresso		
<b><a href="#">Sports@10</a></b>	Cutting Edge		
<b>My perfect Family</b>			
<b>Jabu" Jungle</b>			
<b>Zaziwa</b>			
<b>Real goboza</b>			
<b>Uzalo</b>			
<b>TjoviTjo</b>			

The children all agreed that lots of the local content they received was purely entertainment. Despite being satisfied with the entertainment programmes that SABC provides, they want the SABC to introduce programmes that are more educational. This could include programmes that teach them about the Apartheid regime, for example.

*“I want to watch educational programme about the history of South Africa e.g. Apartheid motivated Local content, we want to know what happened as some of us are not really informed about it”*

- Parkhurst Primary School Pupil

While discussing local content, language was also a key issue that was discussed. There were five languages spoken as a home language in the group and this included: isiXhosa, Setswana, isiZulu, English, and Shona. In this discussion, we aimed to unpack whether home language was a determining factor when watching local content.

Languages spoken at home	Number of learners
isiXhosa	4
Setswana	2
Isi Zulu	2
English	1
Shona	1

From the conversations had, none of the children watched the SABC because of the languages they spoke at home. In fact, the children shared how they actually watched local content because they wanted to learn other languages in order to communicate with their peers in their peers' home languages.

*"I watch Muvhango to learn Xivhenda. For the fact they use subtitles it helps a lot"*

- Parkhurst Primary School Pupil

While addressing the matters of learning other languages, the children also indicated that they would prefer local content programming that focuses on different cultures and that these are presented in the language most relevant to that culture. This will also play an important role in learning other languages.

*"SABC should introduce cultural programmes that focus on all cultures in South Africa. For example, Vatsonga cultural programme which is presented in Xitsonga. The Same principle must be applied to the other cultural groups."*

- Parkhurst Primary School Pupil

## 5. Children's views on SABC Programmes

*"I want to see more children's programming such as cartoons after school, during the week"*

- Troyeville Primary School Pupil

Children listed TV programmes they watch on SABC 1, 2 and 3. After that, we asked them to slot the programmes they watched under the following categories: educational, informative, entertainment or edutainment. This categorising exercise helps us understand how each programme fulfils a particular need for the children. The list below shows how children categorized the programmes on SABC.

<b>Entertainment</b>	<b>Edutainment</b>	<b>Informative</b>	<b>Educational</b>
Isidingo	Hectic 99	News	Discovery Science
Bold and Beautiful	Baobab tree	Real Talk	Each one Teach one
7 de Laan	Schumer and shine	Trending SA	Living Green
Muvhango	Fury tales	Afternoon expresso	Hug a tree
Generations	48 Hours	Big cook	
Skeem Sam	Words and Numbers	Now or Never	
<u>Uzalo</u>	Yo-Tv	Morning Live	
Naruto	How do they do it?		
Parks Africa	wire app		
Dennis	The lion Guard		
Big Bang Theory	Survivor		
Days of our live	Blue collar Millionaire		
Cinderella	Tree fugo		
Velaphi	Takalani Sesame		
Thandeka's diary	China diaries		
How to steal 2 million	Top Billing		
Dragon ballz	Dtv		
The intern			
Gospel gold			
The Final cut			
Amazing race			
The Smurfs			
Teen wolves			
Mary Mary			
Selimanthuzi			



From these diagrams, children still prefer to watch a lot of entertainment followed by educational programmes. They want entertainment programming because it helps them relax after a long day at school and on the weekends. In addition, entertainment programmes also helps them bond with their siblings.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations to the SABC**

After these lengthy discussions that we had with the children regarding SABC news, local content and SABC programming, the children made some recommendations, which are listed below. These were ideas identified by the children for the SABC to help them maintain children as audiences, and for the SABC to improve its programming and news reporting. The children stated the following:

- We want to see more children programmes
- We want to see good stories about children from other countries
- We want to see more educational programmes like the ones that will teach us about the Apartheid
- We want to see more programmes including Cultural programmes in South African languages
- We want to see more children's programmes in the afternoons (weekday) and in the mornings on the weekends
- SABC needs to respect, promote and not violate our rights to dignity, privacy, freedom of speech and our right to participation
- SABC should only use pictures that do not violate our rights to dignity and privacy
- We want journalists to put more effort into getting information before broadcasting a story about children.
- SABC should stop stereotyping us based on gender and origin
- SABC should not interview children when they are still emotional or traumatised; they need to be given time to heal.
- SABC should now show children's identities when something bad has happened to them

On behalf of the children that participated in writing this submission, we would like to thank the SABC for the opportunity to make this submission on the editorial policies. We would also like to request the opportunity to make an oral submission if the SABC conducts oral hearings.

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ANNEXURE A

SABC Policy Submission Children's Workshop NEWS- Barnato Primary School				
Duration in min	Time	Activity Description	Objective of Activity	For Preparation
10	14:00-14:10	<b>Ice Breaker</b>	To get all workshop participants relaxed, to know each other and to create a generally friendly environment.	Facilitator to prepare
10	14:10-14:20	<b>Item 1: Introduction.</b> Why are we here? Tell learners about the SABC reviewing its editorial policy. What role are they going to be playing	To introduce to those attending the purpose of the workshop .	SABC Editorial policy documents
10	14:20-14:30	<b>Item 2: Discussion.</b> The role of the SABC. Ask learners what they understand about the SABC. How is it different from the etv, DSTV etc? Facilitator will summarise the mandate of the SABC.	Give the learners an idea of the SABC mandate to South African especially the children.	SABC mandate Documents
20	14:30-14:50	<b>Item 3: Activity:</b> What is news? Children will write on a piece of paper of what is news to them . The facilitator will pick 5 piece of paper and discuss it with learners. Then the facilitator will go through the process of the news production, the decision that are made, what influence these decision emphasising the choices that journalists and editors make in news production.	The aim is to educate the learners of how news is made.	
15	14:50-15:05	<b>Item 4: Discussion.</b> Do you watch SABC news? Learners will raise their hands for us to count how many watch and how many do not watch. Children will write one word answer on a flip chart about what they like and on a separate flip chart write what they do not like about SABC news. Those	The aim is to determine whether learners watch SABC news and which SABC channel do they watch. What factor determine the channel they watch.	
20	14:55-15:15	<b>Item 5: Discussion: Present and talk</b> to learners about the previous SABC news adult monitoring 2016 results to get their views and whether the results reflect their views on how SABC news should report on Children.	The aim is to see if the learners are able to link the results with what they are watching on currently watching news	
15	15:15-15:35	<b>Item 6: Activity.</b> Based on the 2016 monitoring results and their idea of SABC news. Children will write on the flip chart on how they want to be represented and how they want to be portrayed in the news.	The aim is to get learners to give general view about the SABC news	
15	15:35-15:50	<b>Item 7: Activity.</b> Children will be given a list of demands made by media monitors to various editors in 2015 on how they want to be represented in the news . Learners will decide whether they want the same demands or add more demands. They will write down the list of demands they want SABC to attend to together with a statement of demand.	The aim is to get learners to give general view about the SABC news	
10	15:50-16:00	<b>Item 8: Activity .</b> Children will write a <b>Statement of Demand</b> after comparing the their demands with the demands of the media monitors made in 2015 together with their list of demands to be considered as part of the SABC's News Editorial Policy. They will need to review the list and determine whether they are happy to submit it as it is.	Learners to list their demand for the SABC	
<b>Closure: Thank the children for attending and participating and close</b>				

## ANNEXURE B

SABC Policy Submission Children's Workshop				
Programmes- Troyville Primary School				
Duration in min	Time	Activity Description	Objective of Activity	For Preparation
10	13:00-13:10	<b>Ice Breaker</b>	To get all workshop participants relaxed, to know each other and to create a generally friendly environment.	Facilitator to prepare
5	13:10-13:15	<b>Item 1: Introduction.</b> Why are we here? Tell learners about the SABC reviewing its editorial policy. What role are they going to be playing	To introduce to those attending the purpose of the workshop .	Document about Editorial Policy
10	13:15-13:25	<b>Item 2: Discussion.</b> The role of the SABC. Ask learners what they understand about the SABC. How is it different from the etv, DSTV and etc. Facilitator will summarise the mandate of the SABC	Give the learners an idea of the SABC mandate to South African especially the children.	Documents about the Mandate
35	13:25-14:00	<b>Item 3: Activity. What TV programmes do you watch?</b> Children will List/write the TV programme they watch. They will slot the programmes they watch under the following categories; educational,informative, entertainment or edutainment. After they slotted the programmes, we will have a discussion about why they watch those programmes	The aim is to determine whether learners watch SABC programmes, which programmes do they watch and why. Also to get an idea whether they understand which type of program they watch	
35	14:00-14:35	<b>Item 4: Discussion.</b> What kind of the programmes are lacking that you want to see? Children we will list the kinds of programmes they want to watch. E.g if they feel that Educational programmes are lacking they will indicate that they want to see more educational programmes. they will also indicate when they want to watch the lacking programmes. children will be given a Clock to slot in the types of the programmes they want to watch and when. After they slotted the programmes, we will have a discussion about why they want the programmes they have listed and why at those particular times	The aim is for children to recommend some of the programmes they would like to watch on SABC and when they want to watch it.	
10	14:35-14:45	Closure: Recap on the workshop.		

## ANNEXURE C

SABC Policy Submission Children's Workshop				
Local Content and Language- Parkhurst Primary School				
Duration in min	Time	Activity Description	Objective of Activity	For Preparation
10	10:00-10:10	<b>Ice Breaker</b>	To get all workshop participants relaxed, to know each other and to create a generally friendly environment.	Facilitator to prepare
10	10:10-10:20	<b>Item 1: Introduction.</b> Why are we here? Tell learners about the SABC reviewing its editorial policy and what role they are going to be playing.	To introduce to those attending the purpose of the workshop .	Document about Editorial Policy
10	10:20-10:30	<b>Item 2: Discussion.</b> The role of the SABC. Ask learners what they understand about the SABC. How is it different from the etv, DSTV and etc. Facilitator will summarise the mandate of the SABC with a focus on diversity, language and local content.	Give the learners an idea of the SABC mandate to South African especially the children.	Documents about the Mandate
20	10:30-10:50	<b>Item 3: Activity.</b> What language do you use at home? After the children have answered this, they will be given a program of local content on SABC television stations from which they will have to pick out what content they watch and pile them as a group according to different categories on a flip chart paper. A sample of all local content SABC programming from the week of 14 to 21 September will be used to pick out the content. There will be four categories namely: Information, Entertainment, Education and Edutainment.	The purpose of this discussion is to gather the language used at the children's homes so that the answers could feed in to the discussion on item 4.	Facilitator needs to extract the week-long program of SABC television stations and pick out which content is local
20	10:50:11:10	<b>Item 4: Discussion.</b> How many watch the content they have picked because that content uses the language they speak at home? Follow on discussion about how much of the content they have picked represents the language they speak at home.	The aim is to get an overall idea of whether the content the learners watch meets their language needs	N/A
20	11:10:11:30	<b>Item 5: Discussion.</b> Why are the learners watching or not watching content from the other categories?	The aim is to understand why the learners watch or do not watch certain content. This discussion also feeds into Item 6.	
20	11:30-11:45	<b>Item 6: Discussion.</b> Bearing in mind the gaps and also the pile of categories done on Item 3, what kind of local programs would you like to watch on SABC television stations and in what languages?	The aim is to understand the gaps in content and also get an idea of what the learners would like to watch and in what languages.	N/A
25	11:45-12:00	<b>Item 7: Activity.</b> Learners are given a pie chart drawn on pieces of paper to get them to curve out what portions/percentages of categories should make up their ideal SABC television viewing experience.	The aim is to get an idea of what learners feel would be ideal television for them using percentages of categories.	Facilitator needs to print out the Pie Chart
		<b>Closure:</b> Thank the children for attending and participating and close		