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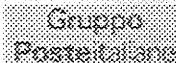
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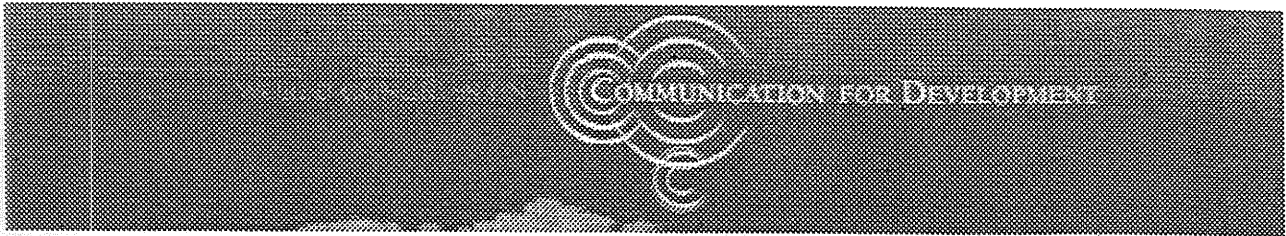
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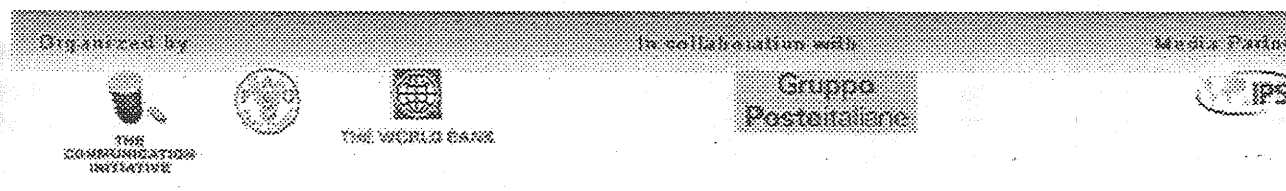
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**Title:** Community Television for Sustainable Development: A South African case study

## **1. Introduction**

Communication for development lies at the very heart of an initiative currently underway in South Africa to establish a network of community television stations. These stations will be non-profit, community-owned and fully participative both in production and in target audience. The stations are required to provide programming that supports and promotes sustainable development, participatory democracy and human rights. They will also be expected to perform a key role in helping to address the very serious developmental challenges facing South Africa at present, most notably poverty, hunger, HIV-Aids, gender inequality and the marginalisation of rural populations. The pending arrival of community television in South Africa, in 2006, follows more than ten years of advocacy, political change and policy development. Elements of this process, including the sustainability of such a value-laden endeavour, remain contested.

In capturing the current state and development of community television (CTV) in South Africa, this paper fulfils a number of WCCD conference objectives. It presents an example of a nascent sector that is already largely committed to the principles of communication for development and which now stands on the brink of putting them into practice. This process, together with its outcomes, will undoubtedly add a fresh piece of the experiential mosaic that the discipline has built up globally over the last 30 years. Presenting South Africa's experience will allow WCCD delegates to analyse and evaluate the innovative and even unique aspects of this new initiative as well as the deeply participative research effort that accompanies it. Finally, it is hoped the WCCD conference will enable South Africa to take its place in the global communications for development family, to participate in ongoing scholarship and to share its experiences and challenges.

## **Methodology**

This paper, together with the more detailed report<sup>1</sup> on which it is based, is the result of a research process led by South Africa's statutory research organisation, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). The work contained in this paper has

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<sup>1</sup> The title of the full report, still in press, is: *Re-visioning Television: Research on the policy, strategy and models for the sustainable development of community television in South Africa* by Adrian Hadland, Mike Aldridge and Joshua Ogada, (Cape Town: HSRC Press)

been informed by a process of participation and collaboration that has involved many key members and organisations within the CTV community in South Africa. Researchers have had particularly direct access to the activities and strategic planning of the Cape Town Community Television Collective, the body that is driving the CTV process in the Cape. The Cape Town collective illustrates perhaps most clearly the direct correlation between the objectives of communication for development and the principles underpinning community television in South Africa. This aspect will receive special attention in the paper.

A national workshop, a regional workshop together with a series of sectoral workshops were held during the course of 2005 which helped root the research in the real needs and priorities of people involved in, or wishing to become involved in, community television. Feedback and inputs from the workshops have been incorporated both into the main report and into this paper to make it an inclusive and participative work reflecting the experiences, needs and beliefs of many community television stakeholders in South Africa. In addition, two other formal collaborative partners have taken part in this work, Greater Durban Television (GDTV), one of the pathfinders of CTV in South Africa, and funding has been forthcoming from the statutory Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA).

This paper will undertake three tasks that its authors believe will be of value to WCCD delegates: It will describe the evolution of CTV policy in South Africa emphasising the accent on development objectives and values; it will present some of the influential global models used in designing South Africa's CTV system and it will describe the current state of CTV in South Africa together with the three preferred models - the entrepreneurial model, the user community model and the sector mobilisation model – presently in favour. Analysis will take place within each section.

## **2. The evolution of community television policy in South Africa**

By 1990, apartheid had finally begun to collapse in South Africa. The liberation movements had been unbanned, Nelson Mandela had been released from prison and activists of various kinds began preparing for the country's first democratic election. With national television and radio operating within a state monopoly at that time, the task of dismantling and deregulating it soon commenced. The prospect of South Africa's first democratic election being contested with the state broadcasting media still largely at the behest of the National Party – the political party that invented

and then enforced apartheid - gave added urgency to the reform of the sector. It soon became apparent that the reform process would not be easy.

On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1990, two thousand people marched on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) offices in Auckland Park, Johannesburg. The demonstration was a watershed moment. It marked the determination of progressive media workers to resist the top-down reform of broadcasting initiated by the National Party government in its dying days. The march was principally a protest against the appointment of the Viljoen Task Group, a body headed by Christo Viljoen then chairman of the SABC, intended to investigate the future of broadcasting in South and Southern Africa. As the task group commenced its work, the African National Congress (ANC), later the majority party in South Africa's first democratic government, issued a statement setting out its views on the democratisation of the airwaves: "The ANC stands for the genuine freedom of the airwaves which will create space for public, commercial and community broadcasting to flourish to the maximum in a dynamic and diverse broadcasting environment" (ANC statement, 29 October 1991). As it turned out, even the ANC conceded the Viljoen task group made some useful recommendations, including the establishment of an independent regulatory body, but the ANC statement clearly shows how the notion of community broadcasting was beginning to infiltrate formal policy processes.

A series of influential conferences in the early 1990s brought in international experience and gave substance to early outlines of progressive media policy. Most important were the Jabulani! Freedom of the Airwaves conference held in Amsterdam in August 1991 and the University of Boputhatswana media policy workshop of September 1991. At the Jabulani! Conference, community broadcasting was defined as "initiated and controlled by members of a community of interest, or a geographical community, to express their concerns, needs and aspirations without outside interference and subject to the regulations of an independent regulatory body" (Louw 1993: 307).

Also important was the ANC's media charter, circulated in 1991. The document drew heavily on earlier conference debates and highlighted issues like the equitable distribution of media resources, diversity, access, skills, ownership and affirmative action. Agreement on the charter, described as a "crucial turning point within the ANC's approach to the media" (Teer-Tomaselli, in Louw 1993: 228) was adopted by the party's top decision-making body, the National Executive Committee, on January

13, 1992. The ANC Media Charter, which was a “deliberately Utopian, statement of intent”, included a clause stating: ‘All communities shall have access to the skills required to receive and disseminate information’ (Teer-Tomaselli, in Louw 1993: 231). The charter endorsed the idea of media as a vehicle for empowerment and for its anticipated role in education, training and development (Teer-Tomaselli, in Louw 1993: 237). These remain key objectives for proponents of community broadcasting.

Discussions in South Africa were certainly informed by happenings not only around the world but elsewhere in Africa. These included the 1991 Windhoek Declaration, a statement of principles drawn up by African journalists calling for a free, independent and pluralistic media. But it was the Free, Fair and Open Media Conference in Cape Town in early 1992 that tied many of the loose threads of progressive media policy discussions together. A formal proposal was drawn up which was presented and tabled at the multiparty political negotiations, known as Codesa (Convention for a Democratic South Africa). The Free, Fair and Open Media conference made a number of resolutions on the nature of community broadcasting. It agreed that the role of this sector would be to promote a diversity of voices, ideas and interests. According to the conference, community broadcasting should be “based on the ideals of participation, community ownership, non-profit, community interest and enables the community to express their needs and aspirations through access to the airwaves” (Louw 1993: 325). The conference also noted that while community broadcasters should be owned by their community, it should also have access to public sector funds, technology and training.

The conference resolutions were to have a major impact on policy and, in September 1993, the Transitional Executive Committee – which was effectively ruling South Africa at the time – approved in principle the creation of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The IBA was formally established on 30 March 1993 by an Act of Parliament. It was within the IBA Act that much of the preceding media policy debate was encapsulated and that definitions and roles were spelled out in law for the first time (IBA 1993).

While the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) Act (1993) was later overtaken by the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa) Act of 2000, it was a pathbreaking piece of legislation and much of it remains embodied within the Icasa legislation. The IBA defined a community broadcasting service in the same way as the Jabulani! Conference: It had to be fully-controlled by a non-profit body

and run for non-profit purposes, should serve a particular community, should encourage community participation in selecting and running programmes and could be funded by donations, grants, sponsorships, advertisements or membership fees. The Act identified two different types of community: a geographical community or a community of interest (including institutional, religious or cultural communities). The legislation limits cross ownership in the media sector and does not allow one media group to own more than 2AM and 2FM stations. There is a 20% maximum on foreign ownership of broadcast media.

Not long after its formation, however, the IBA was hit by financial scandal that led to the closure of offices, a reduction of staff, the slowing down of license processing and, eventually, a new economic regime and tighter financial controls. In 2000, the IBA was absorbed together with the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority into the newly-established Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa). In November 2004 Icasa set the stage for the inception of permanent community television stations in South Africa through its Position Paper on Community Television (Icasa 2004). This document sets out various submissions on community television that it received from interested parties. It also establishes the regulator's policy with regard to issues ranging from frequency allocations to viability, licence applications, principles and obligations in terms of language, news, actuality and children's programming, local content and independent production.

### **3. Community television in South Africa and Sustainable Development**

In sketching the development of media policy, the values and intentions of community broadcasting in the South African context become evident. Just as it had done with a range of issues, so Icasa's position paper also outlined the key role community television is expected to play in relation to democracy and sustainable development (Icasa 2004). Indeed, the regulator's vision for community television anticipates a critical role in the processes of social cohesion, identity formation and in the consolidation of democracy. From the way it is owned and operated to the programming it chooses to air, community television in South Africa is expected to be both the model and the catalyst for broader social transformation.

According to the Icasa position paper, an onus is placed on community television stations to broadcast programming that "supports and promotes sustainable development, participatory democracy and human rights as well as the educational objectives, information needs, language, culture and entertainment interests of

participating groups such as women, youth, civic and sport interest groups” (Icasa, 2004: 18). Stations will also be expected to “promote the development of a sense of common purpose with democracy” (Icasa 2004: 18).

There is a degree of ambiguity, or flexibility, about the applicability of these notions. This can be appreciated by the development of different approaches to community television in South Africa by different interest groups, as illustrated below. Does the promotion of a democratic common purpose mean, for instance, that the station must represent disparate groups within society? Or does it mean that principles of democratic action should be promoted, for example by encouraging voting in elections or by airing debates about political issues? Whatever the interpretation, it is clear that the station must afford its constituency a sense of democratic action and unity of purpose in striving towards this ideal.

Within this same injunction to promote a sense of democracy is also embedded the developmental goal of improving the “quality of life” (Icasa 2004: 18). Once again there arises a terrain of uncertainty as stations are urged to air programming that not only supports development goals but also enhances the democratic project. There is a lack of clarity concerning the identity of the beneficiaries of this injunction: audiences or participants-producers? The ambivalence could affect how organisations applying for community television licenses are evaluated and therefore which groups get to gain access to this new mode of communication.

Community television stations will also be obliged, according to the position paper, to focus on grassroots community issues. These issues must fall under areas such as development, health care, basic information and general education, environmental affairs, local and international content and the reflection of local culture. The categories are not exclusive and the broadcaster will be expected to cover other areas of interest or information that may be relevant to the community. It is clear that the station must reflect a multiplicity of issues rather than being based on a single area of interest, for example education. It is significant that the term ‘international’ is included because it locates the local community within the context of an international information environment. There is then a need to reflect international issues in programming, which content can then also be sourced from other countries.

Additionally, community television in South Africa must promote “identity, culture and character” at its geographic level of operations and provide “regular news services;



actuality programmes of matters of public interest; programmes on political issues of public interest; and programmes on matters of international, national, regional and local significance” (IBA 1993:16). These considerations mean firstly that community television in South Africa fits into the context of being a player in the arena of national television services where it is separate and distinct from the other players. At the same time it has an obligation to reflect and build cultural identities at the local level and be responsive to public needs.

Building on the policy and legislation that is its genesis, Icasa has specified certain principles that underlie community television. The first of these is public access, a notion that is supposed to obviate the divide between broadcast professionals on the one hand and the public at large on the other. In Icasa’s terms, this means that “the viewer becomes the broadcaster” and the role of community television is to act as a “responsible civic custodian” in ensuring that anyone who chooses to appear on television must do so in a responsible manner (Icasa 2004: 16).

This definition of access is unclear with regard to how persons engage with television, for the notion of simply appearing on television – i.e. appearing in front of the camera – is different to the process of producing programming, which requires training to be effective. The word ‘appear’ is vague and does not specify the level of representation that an individual might enjoy. It could mean simply that a person is part of an audience at a show, or that they have a very brief opportunity to state their opinion. In addition the IBA uses the words “anyone who chooses to appear on television” (IBA 1993: 6), which implies that everyone has a right to appear, provided perhaps that they do so in a way that is acceptable to the station’s management.

The principles underpinning the law amplify the nature of viewer participation. There are requirements in terms of local origination of programming and secondly for community participation in “the production and management of communication systems and in the ownership and control of the means of communication” (IBA 1993:17). This means that there must be mechanisms in place for members of the geographic community served by the station to participate in its activities at all these various levels in addition to their right of access through simply appearing on television. There is therefore an onus on the station to engage in training activities that will empower citizens to participate in the station a meaningful and effective way. There is however no directive to engage in training activities *per se*, so these might be outsourced to a separate entity, for example tertiary education institutions. A

further stipulation for community involvement is through the selection and provision of programmes, which must take place through the medium of programming councils or committees that are representative of different sectors within the community served by the station. These committees must both select programmes to be shown in terms of Icasa's content regulations and provide programmes – presumably through programme acquisition.

No criteria are given for programme selection other than the content quotas set out in the Icasa position paper, so policy and methodology in this regard will be left up to programming committees. The committees would however have to take into account citizen's right of access, in other words the right of persons from the community to appear in programmes. This raises the question of how committees will determine what programmes get shown and when. When, for example, can an individual from the geographic community demand that a programme that he or she has made must appear on the channel because they have a right to such access? Icasa's position is that viewers have a right to appear on television but the manner in which they do so is not spelt out (Icasa 2004).

In the South African context community television is expected to play an important role in sustainable development by participating in job creation and skills acquisition. The sector is to provide entry-level training for a new generation of media producers and broadcasters. The financial realities require community television stations to operate as lean, cost efficient organisations with a small, highly skilled staff. There is however the possibility of relying on a decentralised network of community producers. In this way, community television provides more opportunities for community producers, whether independent or NGOs. In this respect community television is different from a South African community radio station where staff produce the majority of programming. Community television is also in a position to unlock much needed income from advertising and sponsorship for organisations providing training and media access to aspirant filmmakers.

Community television finds itself emerging onto the South African broadcast landscape at a difficult time. Two proposed regional television channels are demanding airspace and the frequency-hungry migration from analogue to digital transmission is imminent. Icasa has nevertheless made space available for community broadcast channels on the frequency spectrum. What is now given, however, is that even within the considerable constraints of the technological and

economic environment, community television is expected to assume a vital role in the promotion and achievement of sustainable development. It is expected to do this through contributions to skills development, employment, the communication of information and through the partnerships that arise from the operation and servicing of a community broadcast outlet. And while this role is unlikely to change, there remains a considerable degree of latitude in the choice of model that will reflect the principles and objectives outlined in the policy and in the Position Paper. Activists and planners have been studying international experience to identify features and best practices that may prove useful in the construction of a uniquely South African model. Perhaps most influential have been the models outlined below.

#### **4. Global models**

In a recent national planning workshop held in Pretoria in November 2005, models from seven international territories were considered to have features that could be of great value in determining South Africa's approach to community television.

Naturally, a range of issues play an important part in determining a model's suitability from the specific dynamics of media environments and the distribution of populations to the maturity of the technological infrastructure and the level of socio-economic development.

Models from Australia, North America, Europe and Asia were considered by policy planners and activists in the search for features and best practices that would assist South Africa establish a viable community television sector based on progressive, development-oriented principles. Below are listed some of the more influential models and some of the features that might contribute:

##### **Australia: C31 Melbourne**

Australia has a wealth of experience with community television. Boasting about ten stations spread across the country, the community television sector has entrenched itself firmly in the Australian media landscape. Australian community television is built on the *consortium model* that brings together different players including media NGOs and community groups in a partnership that has yielded success. Partnerships and stakeholders are an integral part of any community television initiative. The nature of these partnerships can take different forms that ultimately define the character of the initiative. The governance structure includes representatives from the local community, government and non-profit organisations (C31 Melbourne 2005). In the South African environment, this kind of structure would be useful, given the necessity

to include as many constituencies as possible. Community radio in South Africa has, however, long been cautious about government involvement through funding. The sector has always been wary that with financial support comes the risk of undue influence. It would be logical to assume that community television would have the same concerns. Furthermore, Icasa regulations do not allow for government representation.

### **USA and Canada: Public Access Television**

In North America, public access television arose out of the needs of communities to have their voices heard. At the same time it allowed government to showcase its services. Public access television in the US has grown steadily over the years to the point where it now comprises over 1800 stations. Support for public access television in the United States is legislated, meaning sustainability is assured. Although it is unlikely that the policy-making institutions in South Africa will deem it necessary at any time soon to legislate financial and/or material support for community television, the formation of partnerships with local government and potential partner institutions can guarantee the success and sustainability of community television. Of particular interest is the model of the Media Access Center, frequently associated with public access television. This model formalises the relationships between stakeholders and centralises much-needed resources and skills. In South Africa there is potential that such centres could be housed in the hundreds of Multi-Purpose Community Centres already established by government in recent years. This model could provide access to communities through participation, could build capacity through training offered and could even provide a cultural hub.

### **Europe: Open Channels**

Like Public Access TV in the US, Open Channel television is a public service in Europe legislated and supported by governments as well as by commercial media through a percentage of license fees. In 1997 six European countries – Germany, France, Britain, Poland, Norway and Sweden got together and signed the Berlin Declaration on Open Channels for Europe (Open Channels for Europe 2005). This declaration formalised the existence of open channels in Europe. Offener Kanal Radio +TV of Germany is a typical example of the European Open Channel system. Its existence was established through legislation and government provides 15% of the television license fees it collects. Dublin, too, has begun the process of setting up community television, whose focus is on affording public access to transmission, training and production (Dublin Community Television 2005). The educational

element is strong in the Dublin approach, which plans to provide educational access from basic literacy all the way to advanced level. This is a counter-hegemonic approach that challenges the norms and values of commercial television that in its view seeks to homogenize audiences to the detriment of local specificities and points of view. Dublin aims to play a central role in civic life by televising council debates and proceedings to enhance government transparency (Dublin Community Television 2005). It is a function community television in South Africa would do well to emulate.

### **South Korea: a development fund for broadcasting**

In RTV, South Korea offers an example of community television in the context of a technologically advanced environment, characterised by satellite broadcasting and high levels of media saturation (RTV South Korea 2005). RTV is run by the Citizen's Broadcast Foundation – a civil society organisation mandated with this specific purpose. The station is funded by the Digital Satellite Broadcasting Company - the platform company of Korea's digital satellite broadcasting capability – and from public funds such as the Development Fund for Broadcasting distributed by Korean Broadcasting Commission. RTV also accepts contributions by individual citizens, firms and foundations and generates revenue from its own production and other activities. The existence of the development fund is of particular interest to South African observers as is the training afforded by Korea's Citizen's Network Center. In the case of South Africa, where the issue of access is paramount and there is a dearth of trained and qualified personnel, this is a key concern.

### **Fiji: dependence on external funding**

CTV Fiji was established in 1997 and has an audience of 95,000. It broadcasts in 3 languages via VHF and the main focus of programming is education and information. The governance structures of CTV Fiji consist of representatives drawn from the community (Nandi CTV Fiji 2005). Funding for the station remains a weak point with heavy reliance on grants from international agencies and in-house initiatives such as quiz shows which provide some revenue, through advertising and sponsorships of the shows. TV Fiji underscores the possibility of operating within a linguistically diverse environment. Whereas this may be perceived to be expensive in terms of programming and staff training needs, Fiji has shown that there are substantial payoffs in terms of audience size and loyalty. Dependence on external funding however calls into question the levels of accountability to the local community. Although this can be achieved, it is preferable to rely on local funding.

### **New Zealand: Triangle TV**

Triangle TV in New Zealand offers a good example of how community operates in that country. The channel was established August 1998 and broadcasts via UHF on a government-owned channel. Triangle TV's main focus is access, public service and ethnic television programming. The station does not own any production facilities, relying on facilities owned by independent producers or housed at other media institutions (Triangle TV 2005). Although the lack of production facilities may be seen as a weakness, it has great strength in terms of lower running costs. If production facilities are available in the market and through partners and stakeholders at competitive rates to the extent that this can be outsourced then it reduces the costs of running community television substantially. However this would require a network of independent producers who are well enough established to attract sponsorship or even have independent access to production facilities.

### **South Africa: Current CTV initiatives**

At the time of writing there are several current community television initiatives in South Africa. Three essential models are apparent, the entrepreneurial model, the user community model and the sector mobilisation model. These modes of organisation have arisen within the context of the Icasa regulations governing community television operations in the country. This paper will sketch some of the activity going on in different initiatives focusing particular attention on the Cape Town model.

### **Soweto TV**

The entrepreneurial model is evidenced by Soweto TV (Soweto being a large suburb south west of Johannesburg). The aspirant station aims to provide a community forum where programming is made by Sowetans for Sowetans. Soweto TV intends to broadcast for eight hours each day with programming including live event broadcasts, talk shows, news, locally produced, low-budget documentaries and dramas. The transmission footprint that the station hopes to reach includes Soweto and parts of Johannesburg and is estimated to include as many as four million people. The station is being run by a small group of activists as a non-profit entity. Soweto TV members and partners have previously participated in the establishment of community radio stations as well as in private, commercial television stations. They intend leveraging technology to establish a "do-it-yourself" television station that will eventually obtain a permanent license to broadcast to Soweto. The station

intends to engage with other NGOs in Soweto specifically in the HIV/Aids sector through programme production.

### **Cue TV**

Cue TV is an initiative of the Journalism and Media Studies at Rhodes University and is produced by final (fourth) year journalism students only. It is run and funded by the institution and is intended to expose and give students practical experience in actual production and broadcasting. Cue TV is a user-group driven initiative and so falls short of being a true community television project as participation is limited to students and the project is run by departmental staff. These participants decide on the nature of the content and the institution owns the means of production. The course is primarily aimed at enhancing students' production skills rather than training them in community broadcasting (Banzi 2005a). In previous years Cue TV has obtained special events licenses. However, the transmission area was limited only to the small Eastern Cape town of Grahamstown. Cue TV is a user-community initiative based on a community of interest (namely the producers themselves rather than the audience). Although the project has the benefit of institutional support through Rhodes University and students who are committed to furthering their education through their involvement, it has no relationship with or accountability to its audience.

### **Bush TV**

Another example of a user-community driven initiative is the Bush TV project at the University of the Western Cape. Bush TV made its first appearance at the University of the Western Cape as an exercise in teamwork and life skills for students in 1998. The exercise resulted in a 26-minute programme about student life and issues such as the student riots over financial exclusions. The project was assisted by the Community Video Education Trust, which provided video production training for the volunteers, the Student Representative Council which provided the camera and the Audio-Visual Department which made its editing facilities available to the volunteers (Banzi 2005b). After the initial Bush TV production there was a lull in its activities as some of its main proponents had left the institution. It was revived in 2004 by the African Film Society to raise levels of awareness and appreciation of African films among students. Bush TV broadcasts comprised of 85% in-house productions and 25% short films that were usually about 15 minutes in length. Programming was provided by the volunteers who came up with the ideas/concepts and who then made the items. Programmes included news, sports, entertainment, and cultural and

academic updates. There were also 'in-depth' discussion shows, magazine shows, film and music reviews.

### **GDTV**

Greater Durban Television (GDTV) was initiated in the mid-1990s at what was then the University of Natal, Durban (now the University of KwaZulu Natal). The broadcast took place under the banner of the Visual Voice Confest 1995. This conference-cum-festival was oriented around the subject of community access media and provided an opportunity to put theory into practice by establishing an experimental community access television station (Aldridge 1996). The GDTV initiative lay dormant for almost ten years until it resurfaced in 2004 in response to the publication of Icasa's position paper. Consequently GDTV made use of an agreement between the community television sector and the SABC, signed in 1998, whereby the public broadcaster committed itself to supporting the development of community broadcasting. As a result, the Durban branch of the SABC provided GDTV with a studio and attendant equipment for the broadcast. Despite the temporary nature of its broadcasts GDTV is an ongoing project. Approximately 100 volunteers participated in the last broadcast (Haysom 2005). The channel intends pursuing a Webcasting model that will run concurrently with the broadcasts to reach viewers via PC networks and cellphones.

### **Cape Town CTV Collective**

The Cape Town Community Television Collective is a grouping of community media NGOs that began meeting to co-ordinate a CTV channel for Cape Town in 2004. Due to the principles and modus operandi of the collective, this is perhaps the best example of the close correlation between the objectives of communication for development and the principles of community television in South Africa. The configuration of stakeholders was developed by the now defunct Open Window Network (OWN) in the 1990s and is based on an Australian model (Melbourne Community Television) that sought to bring together NGO stakeholders and their resources into partnership with community groups. The founding organisations of the Cape Town group are all engaged in entry-level, audio-visual or arts training, video production, community broadcasting, film and video distribution/exhibition and audience development.

The Collective intends building CTV capacity in Cape Town through developing a network of production facilities that coalesce to deliver content to a broadcast point. The Collective is very focused on building community support through consultation



and awareness-raising in the Cape Town Metropolitan area. The group intends to establish a non-profit legal entity to ensure community and stakeholder representation in governance and to ultimately apply for a long-term CTV license. The resulting channel is intended to serve the information, education, communication and entertainment needs of people living in the greater Cape Town Metropolitan area. The Collective produced a Discussion Document (Thorne 2005) on which it has based its activities. Among other aspects, the document describes a set of principles and values that the Collective has adopted to guide its way forward. These are worth stating as they hold particular relevance to the notion of communication for development. Each principle is followed by a short authors' note.

#### Principle 1: Preamble

*"We recognise that the majority of South Africans, the historically disadvantaged, have been deprived of media ownership, control and production in their own interests. Community TV is one important avenue for redressing this inequality to ensure that the Cape Town community takes ownership and control of this valuable resource for their own empowerment through communication, entertainment and information sharing."*

The preamble situates CTV primarily as an empowerment vehicle intended to redress the inequalities of apartheid by situating media ownership, control and production in the hands of historically disadvantaged South Africans. This places the Cape Town initiative within a particular historical context and lends it a specific political purpose, as opposed to the more general provisions of access and the promotion of human rights for all that are commonly found elsewhere in the world.

#### Principle 2: The Right to Communicate and the Communication of Rights

*"Access to information and the ability to communicate are fundamental human rights in the information age. Community media ensures that all citizens have access to the information and communication channels necessary to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities, to share political, cultural, artistic, spiritual, and individual expression, and to promote a culture of human rights and responsibilities."*

CTV is different to both commercial and public service television in that it is based on a human rights perspective, i.e. enabling the public to express their views and opinions through television as well as through receiving information that serves their communication and information needs. The way to sustain those rights through CTV

takes different forms and South Africa will have to develop its own model for doing this on a sustainable basis.

### Principle 3: Equity and Social Justice

*"We believe in the fundamental equality between all people and are therefore committed to redressing the imbalances created in the past, towards the creation of a more just and equitable media and communications environment for all. In the current social, economic and political context, special priority must therefore be given to black, working class communities. This should be balanced against the principle of diversity whereby no group will be excluded."*

This statement attempts a balanced approach wherein both past and future are mentioned in terms of the channel's social justice aims. While the black working class is privileged as a beneficiary group, allowance is made for the channel to represent a wide array of interests. The principle of diversity is defined in an open manner, the Collective's membership policy constrains universal participation to programming, as certain social categories (such as business, religion and government) are excluded from membership and therefore governance. CTV is also expected to play a vital role in social development. It strives to provide a communications channel through which communities of interest can express their needs and provides access to information that will help them empower themselves. An essential component of empowerment is participation.

### Principle 4: Diversity

*"We are committed to engaging a wide range of community perspectives, including those of groups that have historically been marginalised; to promote healing and tolerance and encourage communication across barriers of race, culture, physical ability, language, class, gender, age, and sexual orientation."*

This is a wide-ranging commitment that is inclusive and which again addresses the concern of rectifying the injustices and imbalances of the (apartheid) past. It is also a positive statement in that it asserts the necessity to promote constructive outcomes across social divisions.

### Principle 5: Community Cultural Development

*“Community media has a powerful role to play in Community Cultural Development as a means of enabling alternatives to the cultural values imposed on communities by top-down and commercially driven forms of media.”*

The notion that cultural values are “imposed on communities by top-down and commercially driven forms of media” is misleading because there is a dialectical relationship between communities and media, so these values are not necessarily imposed. The term “top-down” indicates that Cape Town CTV will have a “bottom-up” approach that opposes the bottleneck found in commercial and public media where decision-making structures act as gatekeepers that impose their agendas on media producers and media participants.

#### Principle 6: Community ownership and control

*“A community broadcasting service is defined as a service which is owned and controlled by the community it serves. This includes participation by representative community structures in the management of the station as well as access to training and production facilities.”*

Because of Icasa’s prioritisation of geographic areas for granting single frequency CTV licenses, the community this particular station serves largely consist of the people of Cape Town. If the definition of geographic community is described by the possible total broadcast footprint, then the channel’s community will consist of those of the approximately three million people who live in the greater Cape Town area. The potential for reaching this audience will depend on cost and technical factors, including the number of transmitter sites and signal strength. By limiting membership to representative organisations in the identified sectors the Cape Town CTV station will draw legitimacy from the standpoint of community ownership, provided that it can demonstrate representation that is sufficiently diverse to reflect a credible broad front of civil society participation. Access can be defined not just in terms of training and production, but also in access to the airwaves through programme provision and public participation.

#### Principle 7: Technology and standards

*“CTV shall aspire to delivering the highest quality programming without jeopardising the principles of access and affordability and the space for learning, innovation and experimentation. While every effort will be made to ensure access to ‘broadcast*

*quality' formats, participants should be allowed to produce in any formats available to them."*

The question of formats is a technical parameter rather than a principle of CTV; but the desire to produce quality programming should guide the implementation of CTV technical standards. The point of aspiring to high standards is a very necessary developmental objective that serves participants, viewers and funders alike.

#### Principle 8: Civic Participation

*"The media has a powerful role to play in promoting democratic involvement in public life. This is achieved through its ability to provide citizens with access to information. Community media encourages participation in local decision-making by providing services that enable community problem-solving and dialogue with elected officials or decision-makers. This contributes towards social transformation and change as well as people-centred and therefore sustainable development."*

This principle promotes engagement with and dialogue between citizens and government structures through the medium of CTV. As such it is a positive contribution to the role of CTV in society.

#### Principle 9: Programming Mandate

*"CTV programming has a local focus and is directly answerable to the information, education and entertainment needs as articulated by participating groups and in the language of these groups. Cape Town CTV will serve mainly as an access point for citizens and organs of civil society that are non-profit entities to exercise their right to communicate. In doing so it will also ensure opportunities for emerging, independent and progressive producers to develop and air their productions that are in line with the principles and values of the Collective."*

This point defines one of the most critical areas of CTV operations: the programming mandate. The principle articulated here places responsibility for programming in the hands of "participating groups", which are elsewhere defined in terms of the criteria set by the Collective for membership. Aside from the founding bodies the Collective defined membership in terms of inviting "like-minded" people representing public sector organisations with a development orientation to participate in its CTV initiative. Programming would then be responsive to the needs of these sectors, as enunciated by their representatives in the programming forum. The criterion of representivity,

that persons engaged in channel governance stand as representatives of broader organised interest groups, is a commonly-accepted democratic principle. The exclusions are not expected to apply to programming content, where for example religious programming is a 'must-have' in terms of Icasa policy. Moreover the station will have to court some level of involvement from the excluded sectors in order to be sustainable.

## **6. Conclusion**

The imminent licensing and launching of South Africa's first community television stations herald a new era in the country's media sector. Even though elements of the proposed model remain contested, the regulatory framework, the current state of policy and the general consensus in most areas indicate the imminent arrival of a mode of communication that is expected to make a substantial contribution to development in the country.

In the mapping of the Cape Town model's founding principles which emphasise community ownership, civic participation, community cultural development, diversity and social justice, it is clear that CTV sets out to have a direct impact on sustainable development objectives. These principles, while not always spelt out as clearly with other CTV projects or initiatives, nevertheless reflect the general development-centred focus. This was made clear, for instance, at the 2005 national workshop in Pretoria. Indeed, the long-standing commitment of many of the sector's current stakeholders to progressive notions of the role of community broadcasting, is perhaps what makes the South African experience unique. It is an experiment in development, sustainability and media that arguably places South Africa at the frontline in the field. At stake is the establishment of a participative, community-run, non-profit, democratic venture that is both a model and a catalyst for development.

In capturing the current state and evolution of community television in South Africa, this paper has contributed to a number of WCCD conference objectives. Principally, it has illustrated the importance of communication for development in the design of CTV in South Africa. It has also contributed a case study that delegates may find useful in their own comparative analyses in terms of content, context and methodology. It provides the starting point for a useful longitudinal study in how initiatives of this nature fare in implementing and in realising the weighty developmental objectives that underpin their existence. Finally, it is hoped the WCCD conference will enable South African communicators and analysts to take their place

in the global communications for development family, to participate in ongoing scholarship and to share its experiences and challenges.

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