

There's a kid in the newsroom

Kids News Room (KNR) is finally here - the first ever South African news and current affairs programme for kids aged between eight and 12 years. The programme is a long-time dream of SABC's Head of Reversioning and Dubbing, Jacqui Hlongwane-Papo and is produced in co-operation with Amsterdam-based FreeVoice and SABC News.

KNR consists of a 10-minute news bulletin followed by 14 minutes of current affairs. As an SABC Education initiative, KNR will be screened for the first time on SABC 2 on Friday, 29 October 2004 at 16h00 and every Friday thereafter.

"Kids perceptions, perspectives, opinions and lives are very different to those of adults - they add enormous value to the development and transformation of our society. Although poised as future leaders, they seldom have their say, often lurking in our shadows as they grow. Kids News Room offers them a platform to turn our heads and put the focus of the world on their news!" says Hlongwane-Papo.

KNR is designed to be the face and voice of kids in South Africa today. An essential medium of communication for them to connect with the world, it is a vital link between them and other kids as well as with adults. The programme is a positively fresh package of unique, up-to-date, interesting and informative content that is relevant to kids in our ever-changing and volatile African society. This is the first ever platform for kids to have a say in the matters that truly matter to them.

"Kids of today are advanced with keen senses of intellect, ambitious minds, big hearts and a passionate hunger to share their world with others. They are curious to learn and to get actively involved in the development of their communities. KNR suitably feeds their desire and need to be visible to the world. It's their invitation to others to participate in the manifestation of their dreams," adds Charles Owen, SABC: Content Hub Head - Children.

For an 18-month period selected young journalists, editors and directors will receive on-the-job training provided by experts from Dutch 'Jeugdjournaal' here in South Africa. A team of nine young people, including news editor Robyn Smith and deputy editor Hasina Kathrada, have been appointed as producers on the show. The emphasis during production will be on multi-skilling so that staff become video journalists.

KNR was launched on Thursday, 28 October 2004 at the Hector Pieterse Memorial and Museum in Soweto to further highlight the journey, challenges and triumphs of South African children over the years whilst marking their significant progress in this 10th year of democracy and freedom.