

Raising the bar for community storytelling

In a country that is filled with a great pool of current events, research in recent years has found that strong local journalism builds social cohesion, encourages political participation, and improves the efficiency and decision-making of local government. There's seemingly a need for more community-based journalism, this not only increases the calibre of national news telling but ascertains there's no irrelevant reporting to the realities of the people who live in small communities.



Source: www.pexels.com

MultiChoice Group has given two regional TV stations – Mpuma Kapa TV and 1KZN TV – a grant to establish news bureaus in their respective provinces and improve their news coverage capability, particularly around the 2021 Local Government Elections. The grant comes on the back of Newzroom Afrika's agreement with both channels to assist in providing them with access to a much wider audience as well as editorial training and mentorship.

The grant covered production equipment such as cameras, lighting, sound and computers, and training and technical support. The two TV stations received their equipment between August and September this year. Commercially, Mpuma Kapa TV and 1KZN TV will also produce exclusive content and news services for Newzroom Afrika.



Newzroom Afrika launches initiative with 1KZN TV and Mpuma Kapa TV

Newzroom Afrika 8 Jun 2021



According to Siphwiwo Magoda, Head of News at Mpuma Kapa TV, the newly acquired equipment enabled them to broadcast in some of the most remote areas, including locations where the network is generally unreliable.

“Mpuma Kapa TV was able to broadcast live in Mthatha and surrounding areas, telling unfiltered and untold stories of hardship and failure of service delivery in these areas. We were also able to cross live from the Independent Electoral Commission’s (IEC) provincial results centre and conducted live interviews with the representatives of various political parties. A strong relationship with Newzroom Afrika ensured that our news team was fully utilised where needed. This resulted in revenue-generating opportunities before and after election day, with around four stories having been commissioned by Newzroom Afrika.”



Bay TV rebrands to Mpuma Kapa TV

Evan-Lee Courie 9 Feb 2021



Some 900km away in the Eastern Cape, CEO at 1KZN TV, Edwin Mncwago, echoes Magoda’s sentiments. “The additional equipment supplied by MultiChoice capacitated 1KZN TV to cover more voting stations and stories than ever before, while also assisting the channel to rollout daily half-hour news bulletins from 1 November, with updates the following morning,” Edwin explained. “Our team worked closely with Newzroom Afrika, and they even used a breaking news story from 1KZN TV. For the first time during an election, we had adequate equipment to successfully cover our broadcast area.”

Training and mentorship

Newzroom Afrika provided training to Mpuma Kapa’s electronic news gathering (ENG) operators on how to operate bonding units for live stories. “The training was so successful that we assigned them to cover the visit of politician Hellen Zille and Police Minister Bheki Cele to the Eastern Cape. The quality thereof was impeccable,” explained Malebo Phage, editor-in-chief at Newzroom Afrika.

In the run up to the elections, Newzroom Afrika also hosted Sibusisiwe Lwandle, Head of News at 1KZN TV, at their headquarters for a workshop and shadowing session. While the 1KZN news crew still needs to undergo training in order to effectively use the live broadcast equipment, Edwin said their relationship with Newzroom Afrika will elevate team confidence and provide the adequate training needed to manage such sophisticated equipment.

Sustainable investment

MultiChoice is an advocate for sustainable corporate social initiatives, and their investment in 1KZN TV and Mpuma Kapa TV spans many years.

Technical manager at 1KZN TV, Njabulo Shange, joined the station in July 2017 and admits that delivering a channel is complex, with many interconnected elements that cost money and require regular management and maintenance.

“I had to undergo a great deal of training to successfully support the channel and ensure minimum downtime should issues arise. Centrax – the service provider selected by MultiChoice to supply and install the video solution for 1KZN TV – arranged for me to take a flight to Gauteng and attend an intensive training for the broadcast system, Cinegy. I also visited the MultiChoice Command Centre to learn about the support channels available to us, and how the channel is ingested and broadcast through DStv,” he shared.

Head of Broadcast and Technical Services at Mpuma Kapa TV, Jamy-leigh Rooy, said that as the only community TV station in the Eastern Cape, she would not have had the opportunity to harness her love for broadcasting at any other channel.

“The assistance we received from MultiChoice has helped me tap into my passion for broadcasting and share these skills with others through mentorship. I started at Mpuma Kapa TV as an intern and today I manage the broadcasting centre. The partnership with Newzroom Afrika will afford me the opportunity to be exposed to the latest in broadcasting technology, which enables live storytelling from locations all over South Africa,” she added.

For Shange and Rooy – and many others like them – working in community broadcasting is so much more than a career, it’s a big part of who they are. Through the efforts of bigger broadcasters such as MultiChoice and Newzroom Afrika, they are able to continue pursuing a career they love.

“We pride ourselves on extensive investments in local content and talent,” said Collen Dlamini, Executive Head: Corporate Affairs at the MultiChoice Group. “Our hyperlocal strategy is positioned to elevate authentic local stories onto a global stage – and our news content is no exception.”

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