CHILDREN, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY ON SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNITY RADIO

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With the global rise of community radio, children and youth are increasingly participating in the production of radio programs. Youth radio is on the rise in the developing world, and international radio networks feature the voices of children, often focusing on disadvantaged groups such as children affected by war. Some examples include Radio Gune Yi in Senegal, a nationally aired program produced for and by children in villages and outlying areas of the country; street children in Haiti started Radyo Timoun, which broadcasts a mix of Haitian rap, news, interviews, commentary, and live music; the Butterflies Radio Project in India features 7- to 18-year-old street and working children who broadcast a 30 minute program featuring news, popular music, and interviews; in Peru, youth child rights reporters work with a network of local radio stations; and the Talking Drum Studio in Sierra Leone produces programs designed to encourage peace and reconciliation (The Communication Initiative, http://www.comminit.com).

The increase in youth radio production initiatives is not reflected in academic studies. This article attempts to begin to fill this gap in the literature by advancing an understanding of youth media engagement in South Africa through a description and analysis of the Children's Radio Education Workshop (CREW) project in Cape Town, South Africa. Further to describing what is essentially the only children’s radio training program in South Africa, this article attempts to expand the theoretical base of work on children and media production. The main research questions for the present study were thus:

RQ1: What is the nature of CREW?
RQ2: What role does CREW play in terms of youth identity formation?

Entertainment and educational television programs are available in South Africa for children, and most radio stations carry children’s programming, usually storytelling and dramas. But, even with the postapartheid media policy liberalization, children’s participation is often still absent. Bush Radio is the only radio station that trains children in broadcasting, with a 6-hour on-air product, as part of their Children’s Radio Education Workshop (CREW). Assistant station manager, Adrian Louw stated the goals of the project:

Nobody wants children in the studios because they’re going to break the studios. We’ve had fewer breakages with the kids than with the adults in terms of headphones for example. We don’t want to turn them into DJs or even radio broadcasters. We simply want them to understand media. And whether it is through radio or eventually through TV or the Internet, we’ll give them the understanding of media and how media operates, that’s the aim of CREW essentially, not to make them broadcasters. It’s cute to have my kid on air. Yes it’s cute, but that’s not why they’re here. It’s to give them an understanding of media. And when they become lawyers, doctors or
whatever they’ll understand how to use media and how important media is and communicating is. (A. Louw, interview, August 20, 2002)

This article will first provide some historical background, particularly with regard to children and their role in the liberation struggle, as well as to Bush Radio and media in South Africa, essential context to the CREW project. Following the methodological section, a description of CREW is provided, along with analysis of each of the radio programs within the project. The analysis demonstrates how CREW serves both as an alternative educational project, and a space within which the participants forge a common identity.

A Short History of Children in South Africa

Children and youth played a key role during the liberation struggle in South Africa. Mobilized in political organizations and at rallies, thousands were tear-gassed, shot, and detained. Some children even joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the military wing of the African National Congress. In a repressive political context where other forms of mobilization were restricted, schools became sites of struggle and recruiting grounds for political organizations (Bundy, 1987).

The state’s offensive against black South Africans in the 1970s and 1980s extended to black children, then numbering about 43 percent of the African population, which totaled around 80 percent of the total population (census figures quoted in Bundy, 1987). When protests against apartheid escalated in 1984, the government tried to crush these through a sustained maximum force policy aimed directly at children and youth. Between 1984 and 1986, over 1,000 children had been wounded and hundreds more were killed by police in township confrontations (Brittain & Minty, 1987). Many youth were recruited to join armed wings of political organizations as guerilla fighters, and those who remained in school led school boycotts and stay-aways.

This generation of South African youth can be described using Mannheim’s (1952) notion of a “social generation.” They did not merely coexist in the same time and space, but developed a sense of common or group identity. On the other hand, children born in the late 1980s have often been referred to as a “lost generation” because of their inability or unwillingness to participate in political action. The children in postapartheid Cape Town who listen to and make the radio programs that air on Bush Radio (http://www.bushradio.co.za), belong to this generation, often accused of being politically unaware, detached from their history, and motivated by popular culture. Their apartheid counterparts embraced the alternative education provided by political organizations to understand liberation politics and to resist with implements more sophisticated than petrol bombs (Bundy, 1987). Today, these youth embrace the alternative educational experience that Bush Radio offers, as a tool to carve out new opportunities in which ideas of self and other are imagined, produced, and lived. Whilst schools were once sites of political struggle and the negotiation of generational consciousness, spaces like Bush Radio are becoming the new cultural arenas.

Brief History of Bush Radio

During apartheid, the main newspapers catered to the country’s white minority and sided with mining capital (Jacobs, 1999). Television and radio broadcasting were owned
and controlled by the state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) and biased in favor of government (Tomaselli, Tomaselli, & Muller, 1987). Except for the ANC’s Radio Freedom, the democratic movement overlooked broadcasting as a site of struggle. The underground radio station of the ANC, Radio Freedom, was founded in 1967 and broadcast daily on shortwave from neighboring African states. As part of the ANC’s cultural wing, Amandla, Radio Freedom provided the only alternative to the strongly censored SABC, merging political content and news with popular music of many banned artists.

At the same time a coalition of students and activists in Cape Town, called the Cassette Education Trust (CASET), produced and distributed cassette tapes containing speeches from banned activists, local music, and revolutionary poetry in the early 1980s. CASET fulfilled a basic news function in its coverage of political meetings, rallies, and demonstrations. By spreading information about insurgency in one part of the country to another via these cassette tapes, they increased solidarity and support for the liberation movement.

CASET evolved into Bush Radio after the first national democratic elections in June 1994. The subsequent liberalization of the airwaves and the formation of an Independent Broadcast Authority (IBA)² made provision for community radio as a formal structure, intended to give previously disadvantaged groups access to the airwaves. Today Bush Radio broadcasts 24 hours a day on 89.5 FM, with a balance of 60 percent talk and 40 percent music. Talk shows and documentaries deal with issues including health, gender, governance, democracy, and children. The station predominantly targets the largely black communities of the Cape Flats, an area that refers to a sandy stretch of land about 50 miles long on the outskirts of the city, to which blacks were forcibly removed during apartheid.

The role of Bush Radio is further explored through an examination of the specific components of CREW, following the methodological section.

**Methodology**

In the exploration of CREW, the present study employed the qualitative methodology of participant observation, conducted at Bush Radio for 6 months, as part of a larger study (Bosch, 2003). In addition, in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with the assistant station manager and managing director of Bush Radio, and also with the two project coordinators, and the two project facilitators, of CREW. These six individuals were selected as they had the most contact with the project, and were also the only ones authorized by management to conduct interviews on the topic. The interviews dealt primarily with the positioning of CREW within the broader Bush Radio structure, the reasons for the development of the project, the anticipated outcomes and the perceived successes or strengths, within the context of youth development in South Africa.

During the course of the 6-month period, the researcher also listened to the weekly radio programs, in order to supplement information gained from the interviews. Children were not interviewed (though reference is made to their on-air interactions) for various ethical reasons, and because this study does not deal primarily with their experiences of the program, but rather provides a descriptive and analytical account of the CREW project. As the present study was concerned with issues of identity and participation, a qualitative methodological approach seemed the most appropriate.
Discussion of Children’s Radio Education Workshop (CREW)

About 60 children turn up at Bush Radio on Saturday mornings to learn all aspects of radio broadcasting. Children were originally recruited from local schools, but as news of the project spread, the station received individual applications, and usually selects applicants from a waiting list. On an average Saturday, one sees children between aged 6–18 years old writing scripts, editing their recorded sound, discussing topics for the program, and running all aspects of the live on-air broadcasts in the on-air studio. The children represent a diverse city: they’re black, coloured, and white, Muslim and Christian, middle and working class, and there are even some refugee children (mostly from the Congo). The group is divided into several smaller groups: the Bush Tots comprises fourteen children aged between 8 and 12 years old. The Bush Kidz are a group of sixteen children aged 10–14, The Bush Teenz range from 14 to 18 years old, and Street Philosophy are youth aged 16 to 20. The Alkemy project (a loose acronym for Alternative Curriculum Mentoring Youth) is a nonbroadcast component, comprising ten youth between 17 and 20 years old who meet on Saturday afternoons for what is effectively a reading and discussion group.

The overarching approach is that the children produce radio with minimal adult interference. They are trained in various aspects of research and production, but are expected to generate their own topics, handle the equipment themselves, though there are minor variations in the specific requirements of each group. While the Bush Tots is essentially an open-ended discussion with some segments like recipes or poetry, the Bush Kidz are required to include at least one interviewee, and are encouraged to consider more serious topics which have in the past included substance abuse and HIV/AIDS. For the Bush Teenz, packaged pieces such as minifeatures and vox-pops are encouraged, and their show is more structured, with a career slot, interviews and discussions with listeners. The Street Philosophy group are encouraged to dabble in experimental sound projects such as radio diaries and narrative pieces.

Each group has a young adult facilitator, responsible for generating discussion, assisting with technical aspects, and providing guidance at each stage of production. Two coordinators, Nazli Akhtary and Shaheen Ariefdien, are responsible for the overall organization of the project, and are also program facilitators. Akhtary and Ariefdien are both graduate students, in education and anthropology respectively; the other two facilitators, Nashira Abrahams and Rifqah Khan, were also young students (law and sociology) at the time of their involvement in the project. Bush Radio (and CREW) is funded mostly with external donor funding, with some funds generated from advertising and services (e.g. outside broadcasts, advert production, studio rental).

Bush Tots

Through exposing children to the inner workings of radio, the medium is demystified to some extent, particular for the younger members of CREW. According to Nashira Abrahams, one of the project facilitators, the Bush Tots have quite an open and unstructured program, in which the children introduce their own topics.

Basically what they do on air most of the time is taken up with discussion, and it’s whatever they want to talk about. Whether it’s where babies come from to what happens to your food when you swallow it, whatever they want to talk about. And
sometimes they’ll have a recipe in-between, or talk about something that happened at school. (N. Abrahams, interview, August 27, 2002)

During one program I listened to, the Bush Tots read their own poetry, explained how to make Fathers' Day cards, shared a cookie recipe, and discussed the significance of the public holiday, Youth Day on June 16. The themes that emerge from the Bush Tots program are thus quite broad and deal with a combination of serious and light subjects. The main intention is to give children the confidence to speak on radio, as well as basic technical skills. During another program, children brought up the topic of role models.

And of course they all got that right, someone to look up to or someone you want to be like. And when asked who their role models were, I remember one of the girls said, it’s my mother and my grandmother and Britney Spears. Or my role model is my father and DMX. (N. Abrahams, interview, August 27, 2002)

This alienation of South African youth from their local or national cultures impacts their openness to cultural offerings from abroad. “Ironically these youth then use these new cultural forms—rap music associated with the US urban black ghettos, Levi jeans and rave culture associated with suburban white youth of Europe and North America—to redraw lines of distinction among themselves that often cut at right angles to the old forms of affiliation linked to ethnic ancestry” (Dolby, 2001, p. 2). This is an important issue for South African youth, especially given the political history of the country. The cultural ban during apartheid prohibited foreign artists from performing in South Africa. After elections in 1994 there was a sudden flood of visits from international musicians, foreign music and music videos, and a host of other imported cultural products.

The discussion on role models is one example of how the CREW project plays a crucial role, both off and on-air, in interrogating affiliations to popular culture. Such topics become significant in terms of educating children about local history and culture. For example, after the program in which the children identified American musicians as role models, they were engaged in discussion and asked to reflect on how relevant such role models are for them as Africans, with facilitators attempting to develop a kind of critical consciousness, by initiating a discussion about the relevance of overseas role models.

The children are thus constantly encouraged to question their statements, to give preference to local music and to interview local musicians. Rifqah Khan is another volunteer who has worked with the children, and is responsible for their training around content.

What we do generally is anything around content on air and it could be anything from why are we looking at gossip and at J-Lo and how relevant is it to us. Just posing questions so that they can think about it. Are we looking at our local artists, and what is the value of that. And then looking at things like recipes. What is appropriate for our target community who may have limited resources. Why you are talking about the issues you’re talking about. And how open and conscious you are being about your environment. But also just thinking about issues, whether it’s gender issues or race issues; even within the groups we try to make them aware of their own prejudices. (R. Khan, interview, August 23, 2002)

On the surface then, the Bush Tots program is about training children to use radio equipment and allowing them to broadcast their discussions. But on another level, the
program demonstrates the potential to engage children at quite a young and crucial age about broader issues relating to their cultural identity.

**Bush Kids and Bush Teens**

This secondary aim of the project operates within the other programs as well. For example, the issue of race and racial prejudice emerged during one Bush Kids show, and similar discussions occur on the teens show.

One of the little girls talked about her auntie getting married, and her cousin was in the studio with her that day and he told the children, you know, she’s getting married and I’m very happy for her, but she’s marrying a white man. And all of them just looked into the mike and said, No! And we just sat there and we said okay, what should we do? And we just decided to leave them and what they did was they handled it in their own way. And one of them said—doesn’t she like being black? And this little girl who’s sitting there and talking about her auntie just went—No she does like being black, but love sees no color! (N. Abrahams, interview, August 27, 2002)

Here we observe children engaging in a process of reflection with what is still, in South Africa, considered to be a rather sensitive topic. In this way the children use the medium of radio to negotiate the cultural terrain as they engage in a type of learning very different to that they might encounter in any traditional classroom. As these issues emerge via the microphone, the children are later “debriefed” as certain issues are further discussed in the off-air postshow analysis, when they play back their tapes.

While the emphasis in the Bush Tots lies mainly on demystifying the medium and familiarizing themselves with the technology, the Bush Kids and, to a greater extent, the Bush Teens, move beyond this to use the medium for personal and political self-expression. For example, during one program, the teens discussed issues such as bullying at school, the generational gap and HIV/AIDS. Far from just entering into a loose discussion on these issues, their program was structured much the same way a debate might be, with clear evidence of their reading and research off the air. These issues, seldom given “airplay” in the mainstream classroom, were thoroughly explored on the air.

**Street Philosophy**

The Street Philosophy group also engages with complex social issues via their radio diaries. Facilitator Nazli Akhtary explained what their productions consist of:

They put packaged programs together. So they spent a month off air and produced fifteen-minute documentaries, which were personal accounts of family life, issues of race at school. The radio diaries were an example. They had a bunch of other radio diaries that they followed and they had specialized training in how to put it all together. They edited, they put together the sound, everything. (N. Akhtary, interview, August 21, 2002)

The radio diaries make exciting listening as the teens reflect frankly on their relationships with friends, parents, siblings, and other family members. Their contemplations are entertaining and engaging, with atmosphere and sound effects recorded at home and school, and music interspersed throughout. Some of the diaries reflect on race and culture
in South Africa, and the teenagers present daily dilemmas with thoughtful analysis and insight, sometimes beyond their years.

They've just produced a series on generation gaps but each of them took a different angle. For example Thando spoke to his grandmother about sex and just asked her questions very openly and she would answer. Wendy spoke to her parents about the drug scene, the clubbing scene, what it was like then and what it's like now. And then we also worked on this piece on racial differences among today's youth, Gabrielle being white and Leonie being coloured and them living together and being brother and sister. (N. Abrahams, interview, August 27, 2002)

This group's radio programs thus play a crucial role in their identity formation as they grapple with issues of history while growing up within the context of racial struggle in South Africa, dealing very frankly with issues of race and difference. It is perhaps here, with this older group, that Bush Radio's role as facilitator of cultural identities emerges most strongly. The teens seem to embrace the medium even more readily than their younger counterparts, and display a familiarity behind the microphone that seems to allow them to raise and discuss issues they may not approach as easily off-air. This group has also typically been the most culturally and racially diverse, with clear divisions not only between race, but also between class groupings. Much of what is "learned" then, is not so much the skills acquired, but the process of working together on collaborative projects and in doing so perhaps occasionally addressing fears and stereotypes about the "other."

Alkemy

The Alkemy project is the group that follows Street Philosophy. Alkemy comprises a Saturday afternoon seminar, where youth between 17 and 20 years old engage in dialogue on various topics. The program was set up by CREW facilitators Nazli Akhtary and Shaheen Ariefdien, who found that many black youth could not gain access to tertiary institutions like the University of Cape Town (UCT) due to academic and financial exclusion. While student enrolment at universities increased after the end of apartheid, there was a high drop-out rate from black students, particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, not adequately served by the national financial aid scheme (Bunting, 2006). Moreover, those who did gain entry often failed. The Alkemy founders believe this was because their parents were unable to buy books or newspapers, or because they came from high schools with no libraries. Their idea was to expose these youth to academic texts and to verse them in the language of the academy, to prepare them for university. During one staff meeting, Ariefdien explained that the name arose from the notion that gold can be created from a base metal through the process of alchemy, and similarly and figuratively conceptualizing disadvantaged youth as the raw materials for the production of gold.

Alkemy participants were initially recruited from Bush Radio's hip-hop show, with the promise of improving aspirant rappers' rhymes. The project consists of two groups of eight, which rotate on a 12-weekly basis. The facilitators describe the project on the station website as follows:

The ultimate aim of this project is to conscientize our youth and focus on their development. It serves also to foster and develop youth leadership and youth
mentorship. What we wish to instill, within our youth, is a sense of pride, a sense of dignity, and a sense of self worth. More than this, we wish to enable youth to see beyond the confines of their neighborhoods, beyond the confines of the chaos and disorder they find themselves enveloped in everyday. The approach taken will be quite different to other projects in the past. The approach will focus on using music, hip-hop in particular, as a means of communicating social change. Through a series of seminar sessions, workshops, and field trips, we wish to prepare youth for a future in which their participation is key. (Bush Radio website)

From a pedagogical point of view, students have not been provided with the space to imagine their world in sociologies other than that of the dominant racial common sense bequeathed to them by apartheid (Soudien, 1998). This project is an attempt to cultivate critical thinking and reading skills with high school students.

The Alkemy group comprises eight black youth, participating in an 18-week program. The compulsory reading list includes *Manufacturing Consent* (1988) by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, which critically analyzes how media transmit culture and values via propaganda; Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), which deals with how mainstream education perpetuates a culture of silence; and Frantz Fanon’s *Black Skin, White Masks* (1973), which discusses the effects of colonialism on the African psyche, all deliberately chosen, according to Akhtary:

I think the choosing of the books may be biased. The first set of good books we got were—there were a lot of hip-hop albums named after books. And we thought we’d draw a link to get them interested in reading the book even though sometimes the hip hop album has nothing to do with the book. How we get them to read it is to say if you read this book you’ll see the thread in the lyrics. *Things Fall Apart* that’s a Chinua Achebe book and that’s a Common album. Then there’s *The Art of War, Like Water for Chocolate, Machiavelli, The Prince*, that’s some of the connections we drew. So we started out with those books and those are some of the connections we drew. I suppose the focus is a lot of political science sort of alternative. I don’t know if they really know that it’s leftist politics but a lot of the people that come in, are sort of there. But the thing for us to be careful of is not to impose our views; the other thing we try to get them to do is when they read, to read between the lines. (N. Akhtary, interview, August 21, 2002)

This selection of critical texts presents, as Freire (1973) says, the opportunity for youth to read the word, and to be able to connect the word with the world. Alkemy encourages youth to read and become familiar with various texts, but also to question them, and most importantly, to link their reading to a broader national and global context. The participants are also required to write analytical papers, drawing on these books. Pedagogy is reinvented as a cultural practice, opening up new spaces in which students can experience and define what it means to be able to both read and produce texts, negotiating theoretical discourse, but also theorizing for themselves (Giroux, 2000). One might argue that Freire’s intention was for people to begin to understand how they are positioned structurally in order to engage their worlds. We see this at play here, as the Alkemy youth are removed from their localized context and immersed in a much broader context where education becomes attainable. Of course, one might argue that the “world” which the youth are encouraged to read is itself limited to the selection of texts deemed
“alternative” by the project facilitators. But this is certainly a world broader than that which their current contexts allow exposure to. Through this reading, the participants move outside of the political rhetoric of the liberation struggle which still hangs over their heads, to a point of critical media literacy with a broader cultural studies understanding of global politics, as well as a more nuanced understanding of texts, audiences, and the semiotics of media constructions.

Akhtary said that a range of topics is dealt with, but that African identity is often at the top of the list. This becomes increasingly important within the broader context of identity construction in South Africa after apartheid and during the forces of globalization.

The very first lesson we do is the whole idea of identity but in an African sense. A lot of people in South Africa don’t think of themselves as being African. But where do they fit in with the rest of the continent? One of the books around that was The Heart of Darkness and that was actually required reading and it took a while to get through it. For some of them it was really hard to read. For some of them it was especially difficult especially if you haven’t read a whole book before. And then some of the things around that was the value of African life, again the whole thing of identity. When you have stories looking at Africa it’s all famine, National Geographic [like National Geographic], and you look at the pictures to match. And also stories written about First World countries and Third World countries and looking at the disparity in the representation. That’s where we wanted to take the whole idea of reading between the lines. (N. Akhtary, interview, August 21, 2002)

The facilitators see Alkemy as congruent with Bush Radio’s broader mandate of providing its audience with views alternative to the mainstream. In his key works Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) and Education for Critical Consciousness (1973), Freire demonstrates how critical consciousness is the ability to perceive social, political, and economic oppression and to take action against the oppressive elements of society. In this case, the action youth are encouraged to engage in is discussion, debate, and a constant critique of their society. In at least one specific instance, this backfired for the facilitators and Bush Radio management, when participants designed a T-shirt slogan that read “Ten Years of Demockery,” a critique of the new (black) government’s slow delivery of election promises such as housing and employment. Senior radio station management, some who were members of the ruling party, found the slogan offensive and racist, and the managing director refused to fund the initiative. This implies that the participants may have been encouraged to think critically, but that there were at least some (perhaps not so) invisible parameters governing the extent of their critiques.

Education in the Freireian model is also the practice of liberty because it frees both educator and student as they begin to learn, the one to know self as a being of worth and the other as capable of dialogue. I frequently heard Akhtary and Ariefdien discuss their preparations for the workshop and their expectation of difficult questions from the group on the week’s reading. Their workshops are not so much one-way lectures, but conversations guided by the facilitators, who are as much participants as facilitators. This is very different to the former system of “banking education” (Freire, 1970).

Other key components of Alkemy are to introduce youth to rap lyrics that contain messages of social change, and to provide them with the necessary skills to write their own; to develop the concept of youth leadership and youth mentoring; to organize field
trips and to introduce a peer helper system. One example of the latter is that Alkemy members work as facilitators of the CREW on-air components.

One role Alkemy (and by extension, CREW) plays is to provide a space for diverse youth to interact in small groups in which they can confront cultural or class issues, which are not dealt with in the classroom. In this way there is no dominant culture at Bush Radio to which youth must conform—instead they together create a new youth culture, centered around music and radio production.

The popularity of this project can be attributed to the fact that facilitators situated the educational experience within the lived experience of youth (by using hip-hop as a common point of departure), which Freire (1973) identifies as a critical element in conscientization. At least three of the participants in the first round went on to gain acceptance to university during 2005. Though one critique of the project is the failure to sustain it beyond one round of applicants, partly as a result of the highly developed and personalized nature of the relationship between the participants, the facilitators, and the radio station itself, and, according to managing director, Zane Ibrahim, partly as a result of a lack of funding for the project. While CREW is currently on the air, the Alkemy project is not active.

Conclusions

The various components of CREW play a crucial role in validating the voices of young people in South Africa. While the project has much potential, a few challenges remain: first, the project does little by way of audience development and audience research, and it is unclear whether youth audiences are listening or not. One might make the assumption that radio station staff and parents listen, for obvious reasons, but based on anecdotal evidence it seems that youth, even the children themselves do not listen to their own programs. While it is the participatory process that is most important, producing an entertaining product can also be considered important to truly demystify the product.

Further, the children’s freedom in selection of topics is debatable, particular as the radio station is largely donor funded. Stereotypical topics such as gender and AIDS surface more than one might expect. Similarly, while many other projects have been cut due to lack of funding (for example, an antidrugs project run in the schools), it appears that CREW presents an attractive package with which Bush Radio can secure external funding. One might also argue that the relatively small numbers of youth involved in the project make it difficult to generalize about youth and their interaction with media in South Africa, even though the youth involved at Bush Radio do represent a diverse group, racially and culturally.

But despite its flaws, this remains one of few projects in South Africa that creates a physical and intellectual space for young people from varying backgrounds to leave their cultural baggage behind in order to work together to create a unique media product. Providing an outlet for their creative and political expression, Bush Radio creates a mediated space for youth in the new political dispensation to form a generational consciousness. The on- and off-air products allow them to forge a common identity, develop a sense of community, and gain membership to a new social generation. In a society where youth are increasingly bombarded with foreign images and role models, Bush Radio’s CREW project allows them to explore alternative identities.
The components of CREW thus represent more than just a radio program. They signify the potential for the production of a critical consciousness, in a Freireian sense. In particular, situating educational activity in the lived experience of participants, developing consciousness that is understood to have the power to transform reality, and the approach of dialogical education, key elements of CREW, all contribute to making this a unique educational project.

NOTES
1. All names of interviewees quoted in this article are published with their permission.
2. The IBA merged with the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) in July 2000, to form the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), which is the current regulatory authority.
3. One of the four major racial groups delineated under Apartheid, the majority ethnicity of the Western Cape, the term refers to black South Africans of mixed race, though many self-identify as black.
4. Formerly Soweto Day, Youth Day commemorates the protest in which many youth were gunned down by police while protesting Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in schools.

REFERENCES
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