

Re-defining Local Content: How VJs are Changing the Concept and Appreciation of Television Local Content in Uganda

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Abstract

Video Jockeys (VJs, Veejays) are popular in Uganda, and are an integral part in the advancement of television local content. However, the current definition of local content does not recognise the work of VJs, and treats them as a threat to the industry. Yet, these contribute to the country's popular culture, through influencing consumption of audio-visual content and the meaning of local content to the audience. This paper argues that VJs have re-defined local content and that it might be a mistake to disregard them. It examines their contribution to the industry, which contribution is ignored and sometimes even fought because of the current definition of local content. Despite a general feeling in local content regulation that VJs are illegal and infringe on copyright and in many cases promote foreign content, this paper argues that formalized and properly regulated VJs can promote local content, if the concept is revisited. This paper is a result of 5 key informant interviews (KIIs) with key players in the television industry, and four focus group discussions (FGDs) with television viewers. Guided by Paul du Gay's Circuit of Culture, I discuss how the meaning of local content is shaped by the VJ's, and why a re-definition may lead to the achievement of local content quotas.

Keywords: local content, video jockeys, veejays, film translation, appropriation, television industry, popular culture

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Introduction

Names, such as VJ Junior, VJ Emma, VJ Jingo, VJ Son, VJ Emmy, among others, are popular household names in Uganda, especially with local language television viewers (Dipio, 2018). Although their popularity grew with their work on television, video jockeys (also known as VJs or veejays) have been around in the Ugandan content industry since the late 1980s, with translated foreign movies shown in makeshift video halls commonly known as *bibanda*. These are makeshift structures that “mushroomed in townships where low-income earners watch all genres of pirated movies at very cheap rates” (Dipio, 2019, p.166). As put by Achen and Openjuru (2012), the popularity of the VJs and their translated content is because much of the population was not well-educated to understand the foreign content in the original languages. They state:

Despite this popular use of English, only a few highly educated Ugandans speak it fluently and understand it well. The majority of the population, especially those in Buganda, find it easier to understand foreign or exotic cultural processes such as Hollywood movies when rendered or presented to them in their local languages (p.363).

The Ugandan VJs have successfully translated hundreds of films and drama series, ranging from Hollywood productions to Nigerian, Spanish, Indian, and Korean telenovelas. The

discussion of whether they are doing it legally will be handled later in the paper. With the increasing production of Ugandan local content, the VJs are slowly coming in handy, to provide the same service, by translating content produced locally to other local languages for the different audiences. They are, therefore, not only co-creating foreign content.

According to success and popularity of the VJs (Waliaula, 2014) has changed the viewership patterns of the television stations in particular, as well as the general consumption of audio-visual content in the country. This has had an impact on the understanding and appreciation of local content, and the ultimate implementation of local content quotas. It has led to calls to rethink the definition of local content as used in the country now, in appreciation of the role of VJs in local content (re)production. The work of VJs has repercussions to the perception and understanding of local content, and eventually implementation of the quotas.

This paper comes at a time Uganda is stepping up efforts to boost production and consumption of local content, fight content dumping, reduce loss of foreign exchange in foreign content acquisition, create employment for Ugandans, and promote the diverse Ugandan cultures (UCC 2019; Thoday 2018; *Broadcasting Policy* 2008). As shown by UCC (2019), this includes efforts to implement 70% local content quotas for the national television stations.

Literature Review

There are critical discussions on local content globally, including the influence of foreign cultures in many countries through the media (Böhme, 2019), influence of major content producing companies and stifling of the young cultural industries in developing countries, the creation of popular culture through a re-creation of VJ-ed content (Harrington & Bielby, 2000), translation of useful educative content into local languages (Valdivia et al., 2012), and general implementation of television content regulations (Duncan, 2017; Micova, 2013; Steemers, 2017). Most of these efforts do not cover the Ugandan content industry, and there is a knowledge gap of how the VJs are affecting the understanding of local content quotas in Uganda.

VJs and their role in Uganda have metamorphosed over time, changing mainly with developments in the socio-economic and political environments. The origin of VJs in Uganda can be traced back to the early Christian times, when missionaries exhibited Christian films from their countries, but translated into local languages. Dipio (2017) explains that the missionaries used film formats to evangelise to those who never knew Christ.

This was a routine experience for the local communities, some of whom came to the evening prayers mainly for the movies. The films shown were from the home countries of the missionaries

and were simultaneously translated to the benefit of the local audiences in the hall. The audiences saw and understood the film from the perspective of the interpreter behind the projector (p.148).

Although this does not fit into the classical description of what VJs in Uganda are now and how they work, it provides an attempt to explain how the practice started and helps us to understand how the VJs' art has changed over time. Although the VJs of that time provided live commentary, improvements in technology have now facilitated pre-recorded commentary of the content, including use of sound effects in many parts of East Africa.

Dipio (2019), in trying to help trace the origins of VJs, says the practice developed into an art since the 1980s, which was meant to satisfy the needs of the population that had migrated to the towns. Lagarriga (2007) is more specific, recording the start of VJ-ing in 1986. However, Adamu (2019) attributes the beginning of audio-visual translation in Uganda to VJ Lingo in 1988.

VJs now are artistes who use a local language to voice-over, provide commentary, or interpret content that is already produced in a language that the audience does not understand, or is uncomfortable with. Achen and Openjuru (2012) describe them as language mediators who "bridge the global context of Hollywood film production and distribution, on the one hand, and local knowledge and

tastes, on the other” (p.364). Uganda, with its many languages (Chibita 2016), has seen the growth in this practice to the different languages. This is not to say that VJs will always flourish in a country using multiple languages. The Tanzanian case develops this idea, with (Englert, 2010) proving that “the industry is more successful in Tanzania because of the existence of a national uniting language, that provides a bigger market and uniformity in understanding” (p.128). This is why Harrington and Bielby (2000) refer to such production as having “both international and rich in local adaptations and transformations” (p.25).

Localising the concept and practice, Lagarriga (2007) defines VJs as people “who have [sic] made it a profession to translate films into Luganda, the language most commonly spoken in Kampala and its surroundings” (p.1). Although the definition addresses the context of Kampala and surrounding areas, which is the epicentre of the practice, it has since spread to other parts of the country, including trading centres in villages; and the languages used have since diversified. The undoing of Lagarriga’s work is that there is now evidence that VJs are a global phenomenon (Waliaula, 2019; La Pastina & Straubhaar, 2005; Böhme, 2019).

The existence of VJs and their work is a big academic debate (Lindiwe, 2015). The major contribution of VJs is to make content understandable

to local audiences that do not understand the original languages used in content. In popular culture, this creates a relationship between the producers and consumers of this content (Harrington & Bielby, 2000). This is what Achen and Openjuru (2012) call localising content – making it fit the local situations and useful to a local audience. They add that viewers who do not understand the language cannot be locked out from consuming international content. They contend that:

In spite of the difficulties that many poor and uneducated Ugandans have in understanding the English used in the movies and the Western cultural context within which they are set, this has not hindered them from accessing Hollywood movies (p. 374).

Adamu (2019) notes that VJs did not come to fight the foreign content or foreign cultures, but merely to help audiences understand foreign content as entertainment. As such, they should not be taken as a force against cultural imperialism, but instead helping audio-visual audiences in the developing world understand the world around them by providing context, explaining issues with local examples, but also censoring content not palatable for local audiences. Adamu argues:

By “speaking” to the audience, the Hausa narration engages the audience in a personal encounter, as if talking directly to the viewer. This personalisation created avenues

for debate and discussions on the film in many conversational groups—thus immersing the audience in a way the original Farsi and English versions would have done (p.164).

As such, Sanchez, cited in Fuentes-Luque (2019, p. 818), says that VJs are multifaceted, having characteristics of “part actor, part cinema employee, his oral presentations drawing on the dominant traditions of contemporary stand-up comedians”. Both Krings (2013) and Waliaula (2019) support this view. They argue that this category of artistes are not just translators or voicers, but recreate filming texts, context, storylines, and sometimes make additions to spice up the content, and help audiences make meaning of the content in their local contexts.

There are many reasons for acceptability of the VJs, including their ability to bridge the gap between the audiences and the content. Like the news values of proximity and relevance, audiences like to consume media that addresses issues that are close to them, and that they can relate with. This is exactly what the VJs do in many countries. Audiences want a linkage between the stories they see in audio-visual content to their own challenges, aspirations and dreams – common issues, such as love, culture, development, and governance, among others. Adejunmobi (2015) shows that content from West Africa easily got audience in East Africa because most addressed issues include defying “local morality codes, Africans

seeking fortune abroad, men who sacrifice family members to become wealthy, and many more” (p.121).

Most of the available literature attempts to trace the origin of VJs and their relevance and contribution to the audio-visual industry. Not much is done to explain how their activities influence the definition, perspectives about, and understanding of local content. The above discussion does not clearly show how local content should be defined to take account of the role of VJs in creation and consumption of local content. For Uganda’s case, this gap is exposed more in the implementation of local content quotas, which is affected by the lack of appreciation of VJs in the definition of local content quotas by the regulatory framework. As regulation treats the practice as piracy and illegal, the audience is embracing them and influencing the nature of audio-visual consumption. This paper contributes to this discussion by showing the influence of VJs to the definition of local content in Uganda.

Methodology

This paper is a result of findings from five key informant interviews (KIIs) with players in the television industry, and four focus group discussions (FGDs) with television viewers in central and northern Uganda. The primary data collected from the two methods was cleaned and entered on a computer and analysed using Nvivo. Themes were created to help capture and structure the key ideas from the

information collected, from which this paper emanates.

Theoretical Framework

Guided by du Gay's (1997) Circuit of Culture, the paper discusses meanings that stakeholders attach to local content, and how these meanings are shaped by VJs, especially considering the context of a country without a unifying national language. The Circuit of Culture helps to define different moments in which cultural meanings can be read, from production to final consumption. It is relevant in this study because it helps explain the different perspectives to local content to the regulator, VJs as content producers and television viewers as the final consumers, who read this cultural artifact in different moments.

The Circuit of Culture theory suggests that culture can be studied through five inter-related processes of production, consumption, identity, regulation, and signification. For any cultural text to be studied, these five processes have to be taken into consideration independently, but also in relation to one another, and sometimes even overlap (Turner, 2003).

Key Findings

The respondents in this study were asked to place the work of VJs and VJ-ed content in view of the Uganda Broadcasting Policy definition of local content. They were also asked to comment on what they thought

about recognition of this category of artistes in the local content industry. Using the consumption moment of Circuit of Culture, the study intended to understand how audiences decode local content as a concept, in view of the works of VJs.

There was a strong view among respondents that VJ-ed content was actually local content. This position is supported by the idea that the VJs help to localise foreign content and make it meaningful and understandable by the local television viewers. One respondent in an FGD in Kampala argued: "For me, when those movies are translated into a local language, they become local".

VJs help change even locally-made content into other languages. One of the producers believes recognising and improving VJs can solve this problem. He explains:

If the VJs come in to translate a Luganda movie into English, that would be understandable. The VJ comes in to translate a Lugbara movie into Luganda; we have some languages which are common, that if we change into these four languages, at least it will be understood by the majority of people in the country. So, I think our VJs should also step up their act so that they also have people from different regions of the country. If I get a movie well-acted in Luganda and somebody translates into Runyakitara for people to understand, there will be an audience

that will like that (Actor 2, interview, 7th August 2019).

This excerpt from an interview with an actor points to the view that even within the national context, VJs localise content by translating from one local language to another. Although they are largely misunderstood to promote consumption of foreign content, this finding shows that VJs are useful in promoting the local content of any given country within.

Local content producers doubt the ability of VJs to affect their work, but rather play a complementary role. There has been a wide view that if not stopped, the VJs would instead continue to illegally acquire foreign content and translate it, making it more appealing to audiences than the local content that is being promoted. This study finds that producers who the policy professes to protect are not worried about the VJs, as one producer summarises:

I don't think the VJs are killing us. Those guys were here before us. They even made us love some genres like fiction, science fiction; no one understood science fiction here. But I now have seen some people are preparing to make science fiction. I think it is because of the VJs. The way we love action movies was spiced by the VJs. And also, I would say that they made us understand *Kung Fu* because we could not understand Chinese, but these guys came in and made us understand it (Producer 2, interview, 6th August, 2019).

Creating a fan base for audio-visual content in the country is the other major contribution made by VJs to Uganda's local content industry. A negative mindset is a challenge to the promotion of local content on television, as well as in other platforms. This study finds that many Ugandans believe that Ugandan productions are very local and unpalatable, thereby preferring foreign content. This negativity has affected their appreciation of the content, even with improvement in the production. Considering the big following of the VJs, the producers think that they can be used to promote local content through VJ-ing it, or even marketing it in the foreign content that they sell. Respondents believe that the VJs have built a fan base on their own, which can be used to change the mindset of that audience on local content. A producer respondent explains the role of the VJs in this regard thus:

Our organisation recognised the VJs as our link to the audience, because if you want to appreciate why peasants started watching TV, you have to understand the role of the VJ because before, people used to say that *Sunset Beach*¹ was for the educated, because the local people did not connect with it. So, VJs started translating for *Vision Group*². The next thing

¹ *Sunset Beach* is a 1997 drama by American NBC studios. It was one of the successful telenovelas globally, including an audience in Uganda.

² Vision Group is the major media group in Uganda, owning several newspapers, radio stations and five TV stations including Bukedde 1, Bukedde 2, Urban TV, TV West and Wan Luo TV.

we know is that TV stopped being for the middle class and the peasants came on board. This was because now, one of the critical barriers had been removed – language (Chairman, Film Club Uganda, interview, 13th August, 2019).

A section of producers believes that the VJs are carrying the bigger role of creating and supporting local content. Some of them even believe that VJs have done much more than the other stakeholders in the promotion of Ugandan local content. One of them says:

The VJs are appreciated, and they are doing a good job. But they cannot be fully held responsible for all our local content. There should be another effort to produce content that is Ugandan. At the moment, we look at VJs and musicians and we are happy about the local content. So, those are the only people carrying the whole local content quotas on their heads, but we can do more (Producer 4, interview, 8th August, 2019).

Results show that VJs are interested in supporting the efforts of local content producers and they are already doing so. Recognising them will only strengthen these efforts to improve the array of local content available to Ugandans. One producer who is already working with VJs to translate his content into other Ugandan languages explains how this is working so far:

The VJs are very independent, because some of them are

changing from Saul to Paul. This is because some of them have started making movies and they are seeing the problem they were creating that it is also affecting them... these people have shown their ability. They have shown their interest. They need to be assisted (Producer 2, interview, 6th August, 2019).

Discussion of Findings

The findings are guided by the current definition of local content in the Broadcasting Policy (2008), which Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) uses to implement local content quotas. The policy defines media local content as “content that recognises the cultural and linguistic diversity of Uganda, carrying themes of relevance to the local audience and produced under Ugandan’s creative control” (Broadcasting Policy, 2008, p.8). Although this definition can include VJs under ‘Ugandan’s creative control’, UCC disregards them, and does not consider VJ-ed content when measuring the amount of local content broadcast by television stations. A UCC official confirms that VJs are illegal and not acceptable in the definition of local content.

From the findings above, VJs help to simplify audio-visual content for the local audiences, and remove the power of the original producer to interpret the world for an audience, instead giving that power to the VJs (Krings, 2013). The content gets translated to any local language and becomes simplified to understand

for the intended audience. This argument arises from the definition of local content that encompasses the use of content that the local/targeted audience can understand and relate with. Framers of local content policy have always supported the view that it is meant to provide the television viewers within a given locality with content that they are able to understand and make sense of. This was meant to avoid content open to being misunderstood, especially through foreign languages and cultures. This appropriation and localisation of content needs to be introduced in the definition of local content to ensure that the contribution of VJs is captured.

Uganda is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country, with 65 ethnic groups recognised by the constitution. This means that even local content produced in one part of the country, or in one Ugandan language, may not be understood by another Ugandan. This is partly to blame for the low consumption of Ugandan productions locally, which has ended up discouraging some producers for the small market available. This study, for example, finds that many members of the public are uncomfortable with content produced in Luganda, which is the predominant language, and they do not consider this content local, but foreign. Leaving aside the politics of language (Chibita, 2009) which has always had impact on broadcasting in Uganda, even the official language, English, is not comfortably understood and

appreciated by the entire public. This is why local languages media (*Bukedde TV* and *Bukedde* newspaper) are the fastest growing media channels (ABC, 2021). *Bukedde TV* is making this development largely because of the translation of foreign content (mainly in English) into Luganda. Although some Ugandan English productions have gained an audience locally and abroad, the most successful locally are those that are mixed with a local language or those translated into a local language by the VJs.

The language factor features prominently from the respondents. In pushing for local content, proponents have emphasised the use of local languages as core to measurement and definition of local content, and yet it is ironical that they want to disregard the local language factor in the work of the VJs. One producer respondent said translated movies are local content because they come in the language that she understands. The producer's view is that even if content is made within the country, but in another language that an audience does not understand, it does not serve any purpose. This is mainly because the VJs re-create meaning (Dipio, 2018; Hook et al., 2011; Biltereyst & Meers, 2018). This falls under the 'creative control of Ugandans' talked about in the policy, and one wonders why UCC does not consider VJ-ed content as local content. The work of VJs is a creative process, where content is not just translated, but interpreted (Lagarriga 2007). This takes deeper analysis of

the content with the addition of some content and removal of some bits, to bring the storylines home. In Uganda, we have seen the use of local names and places in an attempt to localise the content.

VJs have transitioned with changes in society, the economy and the country's politics. Although they initially were more popular in translating movies for the video halls, they are now known for their work on re(producing) local content for the local languages' television, such as *Bukedde TV*, *TV West*, *Star TV*, *Baba TV*, among others. The broadcast industry regulator underlines the key role of television stations in promoting local content, which also rely on VJs for content that meets the needs of their viewers. Dipio (2019) is alive to this fact, explaining just how VJs have now become more important to the TV stations than to the video halls.

Although video halls are not as popular as they were in the late 1980s to early 2000s, the VJs have retained their importance as their services are now sought by local TV stations to translate popular series for mass TV audiences. Telenovelas that are aired on local channels like Bukedde TV and Star TV are translated into Luganda and other local languages. The VJ continues to enhance audience's (both non-English and English) enjoyment of movies, and making viewers actively involved in the viewing process (p.166).

Scholars, such as Gambier and Jin (2019) and Straubhaar (2007) argue that television stations that have content that is VJ-ed become more popular than the more traditional television stations. A lot has been written about MTV in the US, that has benefitted in both popularity and commercial growth. This can be explained in Uganda as well, especially with the increasing popularity of Bukedde TV 1, which has become the second most popular TV station across the country, and the most popular in central Uganda (IPSOS, 2017). This is partly because of their *katandika butandisi* (film translated into Luganda, and with a popular phrase *katandika butandisi*, meaning, it has just started). In a country faced with a mindset not supportive of the local content industry, promoting it on TV through the use of VJs makes it a worthy effort.

Respondents who discount the role of VJs say that what they do is just translation, and not actual content production. This category believes that the original culture, context, and value system in the content remain for the society where the original production happened, and that language is just a medium of communication. It brings back the popular view from McLuhan in his 1964 book, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, in which he coined the phrase "the medium is the message". According to him, the medium affected society/audiences in which it plays a role, and not just the content delivered, and that the

characteristics of the medium matter. It has been proven that VJs are part of the content, an important aspect of local content and its relevance to the audiences.

In an attempt to increase uptake of local content, UCC instead recommends the use of sub-titles on content instead of using the VJs. Although this is an internationally accepted way of making content relevant to communities that consume it, it may not be sustainable for Uganda. Despite universal primary and secondary education, Uganda's illiteracy rates remain high (UBOS, 2016). This means that it is even more difficult for many Ugandans to make sense of content when it is subtitled than when it is VJ-ed. The most viable alternative for Uganda, which has diverse languages is to use the VJs.

The biggest proponents of outlawing VJs is the argument that they do not acquire the proper rights for the content they translate, without regard for copyright laws. It is worth noting that infringement of copyright is not only affecting the foreign content producers. It is affecting local content producers whose content is being pirated. It is affecting the music industry, and even other consumers of foreign content through DVD distribution and electronic duplication. To deal with such a situation, it does not help to just outlaw VJs. The country needs to strengthen its laws and strengthen institutions that fight content piracy, such as Uganda Registration Services

Bureau (URSB), Uganda Police Force, Uganda Performing Rights Society, and other producers' and actors' organisations. It is also important to have the VJs properly recognised and regulated, and then sensitised against 'theft' of content, and if they do, the Uganda copyright law is strong enough to fight such, not just in foreign movies but in many other sectors. The copyright law in Uganda and elsewhere in the world requires that for other creatives' content to be used or adapted for broadcast, rights must be secured from the original producers. And indeed, most VJs in Uganda break this, mainly because they are not yet appreciated by the local regulatory framework. Considering their popularity, however, disregarding them in the local content creation process may be counter-productive to the industry.

How will quality of works by the VJs be guaranteed? This was a concern of one of the respondents who asked: "And then in the translation, what is lost? Are you giving the actual meanings?" Uganda's major experience with VJs has been on fiction movies, Chinese Kung Fu and action thrillers. In these cases, as well as in VJ-ing other content, the VJs are accused of misrepresenting some facts just to have an audience, or even doing it in a way that attracts an audience to content that is not good enough. Just like other professions and occupations, there are bodies that provide oversight, punishing those who go against good practice

training new recruits and provide counsel and mentorship. Such a body unfortunately can only be successful if the work of the VJs is recognised and clearly defined in the area of local content.

Lagarriga (2007) found that VJs in Uganda have an association with a leadership that can spearhead organisation of the sector. The challenge at the moment is that the VJs are illegal and, therefore, cannot be licensed or recognised in law. He gives examples of associations, such as Union of Film Operators and Owners Association, United Video Operators and Owners Association and Union of Videojockeys/Translators Association. These efforts show that the VJs are proud of their work and will do whatever they can to improve it, and fit into the mainstream of local content production. This paper argues that they deserve a chance, but only if they can be recognised in the conceptualisation of local content and their contribution formalised.

We now return to the definition of local content according to the Broadcasting Policy, which leaves a lot of gaps in regard to VJs. Although it does not outlaw VJs, it created gaps that have been exploited by regulators to side-line VJs as creative content producers, and as promoters of cultural and linguistic diversity. When VJ-ing content, these artistes have been found to put into consideration cultural diversity through linking the content to the local cultures in terms of names, cultural practices, and other

aspects that the audience can relate with. Some of them have even been seen to localise names of the actors, the foods, which all relate to cultural diversity (Adamu, 2019; Dipio, 2014).

It goes without saying that VJs use local languages to communicate the same message/content originally produced in foreign languages. Although the content remains in predominantly Luganda, VJs now also translate into Runyankore/Rukiga for *TV West*, Lusoga for *Baba TV*, as well as an attempt to translate into Kiswahili especially for border communities in Busia, Tororo, Arua, Adjumani, among others. I argue that this is a classical aspect of linguistic diversity, and that this diversity does not just relate to use of the local languages in original content production but reproduction of foreign content to help audiences understand it.

The most ambiguous phrase in the local content definition is “produced under Ugandans’ creative control?”. What exactly is Ugandan’s creative control? Does it include voicers and voice-overs? Does it consider the creative work done by VJs in reworking the foreign production to include sound effects, audio and video transitions? This needs to be stated clearly. Both UCC and the Media Council argue that VJs are illegal and not recognised under this definition, but without specific backup to the argument. The definition needs to clarify on creative control and how it is measured, as well as which talent is

included. Bhattacharjee and Mendel (2001) explain how Australia has removed this ambiguity by measuring ‘creative control’ through the contribution of producer, director, script writer, leading actors including voicers, among others. To talk about creative control without clarifying this aspect is counter-productive.

Behind the formulation of the Uganda Broadcasting Policy (2008) was the idea that local content is promoted to create jobs and employment for Ugandans in the creative industry. The work of VJs industry employs many people, including translators, voicers, sound technicians, translated video vendors, operators of video halls where these are watched, operators of video libraries where the DVDs are sold, as well as those who import the foreign content. In Tanzania, Englert (2010) writes that the industry employs hundreds, while in Uganda, the number could be as big as 300 (Lagarriga, 2007).

Government has made attempts to involve itself in regulating the operations of *bibanda*, the main access point of the translated foreign content (Lindiwe, 2015). She however argues that this intervention is not based on law or policy because the VJs are not captured in the current local content definition. This has included confiscating equipment in the *bibanda*, and recently, the arrest of a VJ over copyright infringement, among others. The video halls are also being looked at as ‘the other

spaces’ where individuals can socialise, express themselves but also detach from the usual challenges of life. This paper does not support the view that VJs should not be regulated, but advocates the recognition and streamlining, so that their work can benefit both viewers and the industry, with clear standards set out to achieve this.

This discussion calls for revisiting the definition of local content. Television local content, therefore, should be defined as creative audio-visual content that depict the regional, linguistic and cultural diversity of Uganda, telling the unique stories and local knowledge of the Ugandan peoples. Local content should be produced in Uganda and aimed at protecting the history, life and aspirations of Uganda and its peoples. This includes adapted and appropriated content.

Conclusion

The Uganda Communications Commission admits that the definition of local content is not written in stone, and may not be covering all aspects at the moment. What is agreeable to many respondents in this study is that the definition of television local content and how the policy works, should be aimed at making the industry a better one. From this study, one way of making the policy better is through reworking the definition of local content, to include and recognise the work of VJs. This does not mean that they should be open

to infringing on copyright and other legal provisions, but they should instead be allowed to operate openly in a way that is legal and acceptable. Considering their number and the work they have done so far, VJs are themselves local content creators as well as a useful resource in localising useful foreign content that Ugandan television viewers need – educative

content, development content, and general sensitisation of topics that are relevant globally, such as climate change, human rights, democracy, among others.

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