

Issue II Nov 2011

UGANDA **MEDIA** Review

Media and Corruption



Corruption and the media
The scourge of the brown envelope
Using new media to fight corruption
Digital migration in Uganda
Media in the era of advertiser recession



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RUGANDA MEDIA Review

MEDIA AND CORRUPTION

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FOREWORD

It's not an understatement to say that in Uganda today, corruption is taking centre stage in media debates. As a critical strategy in a country's anti-corruption crusade, an effective media is timely in charting the path to follow in curbing corruption. The media's role is to raise public awareness about corruption, its causes, effects and possible remedies including investigating and reporting incidents of corruption. It is also crucial for the media to educate people about their rights. Informing citizens of the types of corruption within their social, political and economic systems to be able to fight it more effectively and develop their own strategies is also the role of the media.

Engaging the public in the fight against corruption is justified in forcing those in authority to act and giving the people further courage to speak out and stand up for transparency and accountability. Empowering the media is a dynamic strategy in holding leaders accountable and involving more people in the anti-corruption campaign. To restore good governance and trust, there is need for all stakeholders to be definite in their efforts.

Fostering democracy and the rule of law, including promoting human rights have been the cornerstone of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) support to Uganda for more than three decades. KAS supports a number of organizations in Uganda. As far as media is concerned KAS has worked to create an independent, professional and openly democratic media. For this cause, KAS has supported such long-term partners like the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF). Since its inception 17 years ago, UMDF has been partnering with KAS in implementing media training programmes designed to create a journalistic workforce that is well- educated, independent and equipped to promote good governance, openness and transparency in the conduct of public affairs.

In 2011, the hub of activities implemented by UMDF with support from KAS was another critical concern, "Bracing journalists to fight corruption". So as to raise awareness, stimulate interest, and encourage research into corruption and media development issues, the thrust of this second issue of the Uganda Media Review is Media and Corruption.

The Uganda Media Review has become a leading publication to compliment academia, government, private sector, think tanks, and civil society on media debates in Uganda.

UMDF, whose founders were all beneficiaries of KAS scholarship, continues to appreciate and cherish its long term partnership with KAS. Special thanks to the contributors of articles in this journal, for providing an analysis of the character of corruption and legislation to fight the vice, and for other insightful pieces on other aspects of media. The staff of UMDF is also hereby appreciated for their commitment.

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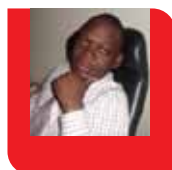
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Gloria Laker is a Ugandan journalist who has worked as a journalist for 15 years and has focused on peace journalism. Ms Laker did a lot of work facilitating nonviolent communication between the Ugandan government and Lord's Resistance Army rebels (LRA), and is believed to have made a significant contribution to improved communication through her positive and peace oriented media reports bringing to the current peace in northern Uganda. Currently, she is the Coordinator Peace and Development Journalism Project in Uganda funded by the US Embassy Kampala. In 2009, she won the BBC Communicating Justice Radio competition in Uganda with a story on how former LRA child mothers are making beads for a living.





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THE CORRUPTION HYDRA-HEAD AND THE UGANDA MEDIA

This second issue of the Uganda Media Review takes a special focus on Corruption. The topicality of corruption in Ugandan society is evident. Any engagement with the phenomenon of corruption assumes that as Ugandans we share common ethical values and attitudes that shape and justify our judgmental basis. By exposing and reporting on corruption in its various forms, we declare our belief in a standard of minimum acceptable professional conduct and integrity in public service and private practice.

Regular exposés of collusion and financial misappropriation in high places abound in the media ad nauseam. Procurement procedures in public institutions are flouted and accountabilities doctored. Commissions of Inquiry are routinely set up but remain events to be remarked upon by cynical Ugandans as their findings and recommendations are consigned to the archives.

Oversight organs operating under the legal and regulatory frameworks multiply in number to the envy of the wider world, but the will to prosecute cases with compelling documented evidence is wanting. Only recently has the country witnessed some attempt to bring the powerful before the Anti-Corruption Court.

But how do media report corruption? Indeed media inform, educate, entertain, and guide society. The various forms of media are lively expressions of the social dynamic. Media cannot divorce itself from society, from which it earns the *raison d'être*. The struggles for media freedoms become inseparable from society's own existential struggles. So when society bleeds at the spectre of corruption, media must not remain aloof but must mirror this rot in society and guide the nation by pointing out the architectural frameworks of corruption, and prescriptions for a more just society.

Of course, corruption can sound amorphous, too complex to tackle. Often media celebrate the direct reportage of government action and pronouncements on aspects of the vice. But the paucity of bold investigations into corruption betrays the challenge that many media organizations face. It is this gap that training organization like UMDf sought to address when they take on interventions to build capacity of journalists to report on corruption.

Corruption is no longer limited to the urban areas and high profile government departments. It is widespread in local governments. It is a cancer mutating as it spreads, and the patient, Uganda, needs round the clock monitoring. Media therefore cannot afford to reduce on the government monitoring, or to be cynical about the cardinal ideals like truth telling, freedoms, peace and seeking justice. Media that does not believe in these ideals is cynical media that has lost a sense of direction.

Cynicism in the media manifests corruption. Corruption begins with the divergence between the ideal and the actual, with the situational contradiction between what ought and what is. In other words, corruption is both the state and process of falling short. Corruption within the media begins with a failure to properly appreciate its roles and responsibilities, with the resultant loss of perspective.

Several papers inside this review address various aspects of corruption. John Bosco Mayiga makes interesting theoretical reflection on the widespread problem of corruption in the media. Gawayia Tegulle also takes a different approach to the same problem building from a series of training workshops he conducted with journalists on corruption. And Gerald Businge, gives insights into how new media can be deployed to fight corruption.

The other articles address issues ranging from media trends such the craze of the youth audience; legacy media in an era of advertiser recession, and the community radio as an increasing endangered platform. The review also discusses how the vernacular press in Uganda framed the Libyan revolution and whether the frames constitute a corruption of aspects of journalistic ethics. There is also an article that looks at the challenges to digital migration.

The Uganda Media Review is but a modest attempt to encourage Uganda media practitioners to debate issues that concern media from time to time, and to share experiences and observations on emerging media issues in the increasingly globalised world.

Dr. Michael Kakooza



Corruption and the Media: Who will watch the watchdog?

Gawaya Tegulle

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has said – and written – a lot about corruption. But in the context of this article, two statements stand out.

The first is more recent, falling in 'just the other day' category: in an interview in the Sunday Monitor he said 'it is easier to create an army than fight corruption'.¹

The second was way back in 1986 when he had just been sworn in as President for the first time in January 1986, three days after taking over power.

"The major problem in this country," said he "is that the guardians themselves have to be guarded. We require, at all levels, a leadership that has the moral authority to lead. The leadership cannot have that authority if they are themselves tainted with corruption. I condemn corruption in all its forms and I wish to emphasize here that corruption can only disappear if the leaders are themselves clean. Only then can they exercise that moral authority, and only then will corruption be stamped out...in the name of our revolution, therefore, I beg our leaders to change their ways."²

The first statement is a reasonable admission that the fight against corruption is no easy task. The second is an even bigger problem and manifests a moral dilemma that Uganda faces: a leadership that has no moral authority to fight corruption because the leaders themselves form the first line of culprits and are largely reluctant to fight the very thing that keeps them in power and ensures that their banks give them a clean bill of wealth at the end of every month.

The dilemma of absence of moral authority to fight corruption is as big a problem for the politicians (particularly the executive and the legislature who are known as the First and Second Estates respectively)³, as it is for the Fourth Estate, otherwise known as the media.

The term "Fourth Estate" was a christening by Edmund Burke⁴, worldwide acclaimed British statesman and a renowned orator who pleaded the cause of the American colonists in the British Parliament and defended the parliamentary system. Burke emphasized the role of Three Estates in Parliament and in calling the reporter's gallery the Fourth Estate, declared that it was even more significant and more potent than the others.

At the back of Burke's mind was possibly the fact that as custodians of information and watchdogs of society, the media wields immense power and is therefore an important and indispensable tool in social and political transformation if that power is used aright. In the fight against



Former Vice President Gilbert Bukenya at the Anti-Corruption Court

corruption therefore, the media is critical. But, back to President Museveni's assertion a quarter a century ago about guardians that need to be guarded, the media itself must be free from corruption if journalists are to play their normative role in eliminating corruption from society.

One of the important monthly activities of the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) in 2011 has been the countrywide training of journalists in how to report on corruption in all the major regions of the country; with an average of 20 journalists across all types of mainstream media (radio, television and press) in attendance at each workshop.

The trainings last three days (four, if you count day one, the reporting day). The bulk of the workshop is devoted to building the journalists' understanding and appreciation of corruption in terms of theory: what it is, what causes it and how it is manifested – the nature and types of corruption. The three main forms of corruption: political (otherwise known as grand corruption or corruption of greed), bureaucratic (also known as petty corruption or corruption of need) and electoral corruption (this one speaks for itself) are explained, as well as the other forms like bribery, embezzlement, fraud, nepotism, extortion and favouritism.

There is also plenty of time spent on understanding key corruption drivers: the things that fuel corruption and keep it alive and well, and what interventions are necessary to combat corruption.

1 See 'It is easier to create an army than fight corruption', Sunday Monitor, April 11, 2010.

2 Quoted by ACODE in "Keeping Them Honest: Making Sense of President Museveni's 'Efforts' To Fight Corruption", Kampala, 2010

3 "In modern day, the Judiciary, which is of course not comprised of politicians, is loosely regarded as the Third Estate. I use this nomenclature and categorization rather carefully, for the simple historical reason that the original First, Second and Third Estates were the Clergy, Nobility and Bourgeoisie respectively."

4 B.1729, D.1797; an Anglo-Irish statesman, author, orator, political theorist and philosopher. Served many years as a Member of Parliament in the House of Commons, Britain.



There is a lot of emphasis on the policy and legal framework for fighting corruption, in which journalists are given insight into the policies, laws, initiatives and institutions put in place by government to combat corruption; and there is plenty of discussion on how much political will lies behind these efforts and whether or not the efforts in question are actually bearing fruit. Journalists also look at the legal aspects of corruption – the corruption offences and how the anti-corruption court functions. The last part of the workshop focuses on the professional and practical aspects: how do you investigate corruption and how do you present your story for broadcast or publication?

However the most interesting – and depressing – session of all is arguably the one at the end of Day Three; a session in which journalists are split into [usually] three groups and each group considers three simple questions. One, is there corruption in the media? Two, if yes, in what form is it manifested? And three, what needs to be done for corruption in the media to be minimized?



Ministers: John Nasasira, Sam Kutesa and Mwesigwa Rukutana appearing before the Anti-Corruption Court

The interesting bit about this session is that it is interesting to watch the faces of the journalists as they go into a frank discussion of the problem of corruption within their midst. The depressing bit is that come plenary, all groups consistently present the same answers: regardless of whether you are in Gulu or Fort Portal; Mbale or Mbarara, Soroti or Jinja, Arua or Kabale, Mukono or Hoima.

Same old story everywhere: “Yes, there is corruption in the media. And oh, we take bribes to write or suppress stories, we are biased, we favour certain politicians over others...”

Possibly the only heartening bit is that the media practitioners are frank about the existence of a problem, are clearly unhappy about the state of affairs and they seem genuinely willing to help fight it so that they establish a moral high ground on which to premise their efforts to eliminate corruption from Uganda.

It is also critical to note that the journalists understand some of the causes of corruption within their ranks and suggest that

if these are addressed, then the media should be much cleaner.

The biggest problem, the journalists say, is hands down, the poor remuneration of media practitioners, particularly those upcountry. To be fair, in a country where the economy has not yet been effectively decentralized, much of the money available remains in the capital city, Kampala. Most of the journalists work for radio stations, most of which are not yet going concerns and attract low revenue. But the lack of formal journalism training and a general incidence of low education levels also means that many of the journalists upcountry find it difficult to muscle their way into well-paying jobs in any sector. This means their negotiating leverage is low or non-existent and the media owners are happy to pay them peanuts, confident that the journalists have no choice but to accept it.

In order to make ends meet, some journalists naturally find corruption inevitable. A bribe here, an extortion there; a bit of fraud today and a kick-back tomorrow will keep bread on the table and also ensure that the journalist can afford to pick his bill at the bar every evening after a drink with the boys.

Bias or partiality takes a typically political form: state-owned media or those owned by politicians and businessmen with allegiance to the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) deliberately marginalize the opposition politicians, denying them space and airtime to advance their cause, especially towards or during general elections. The reason here is both political and economic. Political because keeping the Opposition out of the media is important for the continued good health of the ruling party. And economic because media that offer space to opposition politicians are often denied government advertising, something critical in a country where Government is the biggest spender since the private sector is still nascent and is in fact struggling.

The general trend is that much of the time the media suffers from corruption of need (akin to bureaucratic corruption), rather than corruption of greed. But the reality is that unless the causatives are addressed – especially better pay for the media, education opportunities for those without formal journalism education and arguably a change in media ownership that translates into media



practitioners owning their practice - the media will find it difficult to keep corruption out.

This assertion agrees with the diagnosis of corruption provided by Mbaku on bureaucratic corruption in Africa – simply replace 'bureaucrats' or 'civil servants' with 'journalists':

*"In Africa, bureaucrats attempt to increase their level of compensation by lobbying lawmakers and politicians and by engaging in other activities to influence the political system and maximize benefits accruing to them. Many civil servants also illegally increase their compensation by providing services to interest groups that seek favors from the government. Political coalitions seeking ways to subvert the existing rules to redistribute national income and wealth in their favor can achieve their objectives by bribing civil servants whose job is to enforce state regulations and implement national development plans. If bureaucrats discover they can earn more income from providing services to groups seeking state favors than from their regular (public) jobs, they may pay more attention to the demands of such interest groups than to the proper enforcement of state laws and regulations and the effective implementation of national development plans. In societies where civil service compensation levels are relatively low, a significant part of the public employee's total compensation may be derived from engagement in outside activities, resulting in a significant increase in bureaucratic corruption."*⁵

One key conclusion from these workshops is that because there is corruption in the media itself, the Fourth Estate hardly has the moral authority to condemn politicians for corruption.

In the workshops, journalists also agree on a rather delicate point: that many journalists do work for intelligence agencies – like Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence (CMI), External Security Organisation (ESO) and Internal Security Organisation (ISO). But there has been no unanimity on whether that constitutes corruption – by virtue of amounting to conflict of interest - and the jury is still out on that bit.

Part of the problem for the Uganda case is that there has been too much focus on public sector corruption for the simple reason that it occasions the abuse of power and resources in the public domain, for private gain, to the great detriment of the public. Because of that, society has not paid enough attention to the high incidence of corruption in the media and the civil society, two critical mostly non-state actors who must perform at high levels if the fight against corruption is to be won.

Robert S. McNamara⁶ has variously argued that for any campaign against corruption to be successful in Sub-Saharan Africa, certain characteristics should be common in the plans against corruption. His suggestions on how to control corruption in the region, inter alia, include to: first, encourage a free press and electronic media to forcefully report to the public on corrupt practices in the society and secondly, organize civil society to address the problems of corruption brought to light by the process of transparency and the activity of the media.

This cannot be possible when the media itself has allowed

5 John Mukum Mbaku, *Bureaucratic Corruption in Africa: The Futility of Cleanups*, Journal of Social, Political and Economic Studies, 1994.

6 Former President of the World Bank and Ford Motor Corporation

corruption in its midst and when civil society is as corrupt as the politicians they condemn.

It does not therefore seem unreasonable or uncharitable to assert that the media has lost focus; and has relegated its watchdog role to the garbage bins of history, more interested

in making ends meet from day to day than pursue the nobler, long-term objective of being a lighthouse for society.

A discussion board on an Indian blog⁷ has discourse worth noting. One member, Surya posts a concern about a very disturbing trend in India – which arguably echoes what is happening in Uganda:

"The role of media has changed completely over the period. Earlier their mottos were to educate people and bring out the issues in front of the government, and compel them to think over them seriously in favor of common man. But then democracy has empowered media in a very different way. Today media is behaving selfishly and vaguely. They are working more as the tool for creating publicity stunt by great politicians, capitalist and other great celebrities. They have lost their power and value and are evolving more as entertainment channels than as NEWS channels."

Mnksh257 responds:

"I completely agree with you. The responsibility of media is not less than the ruling government. As the media is growing in the democracy, they are taking the advantage of the democracy for their own benefits...they are becoming selfish and forgetting their work towards nation..."

Over the past year, quite a few incidents have made the papers, of journalists facing the law over corrupt acts inconsistent with their duty to the public, and at least three have been carted off to jail. But these seem to be just those who have violated the 11th Commandment: Thou shalt not be caught.⁸

The lack of an efficient legal regulatory framework is possibly part of what fuels corruption in the media. Even though the Press and Journalist Act 1995⁹ provides for a Media Council that, inter alia, regulates the conduct of journalists, the Council has remained a shadow of the normative, and doing nothing much beyond what is politically convenient for the government. Even though there is such a thing as the Independent Media Council, which is more suited to the task, its operations are undermined by the absence of legal mandate that would transform its decisions into categorical imperatives which would be more useful. This is definitely an area for reform.

Uganda's media will definitely want to get back to the drawing board and assess the direction it is taking. There are those that will need reminding that journalism, beyond being a job or a business, is actually a noble calling, the practice of which must transcend financial or political considerations. And the doctrine of social responsibility¹⁰ needs to be re-birthed in the soul of journalism, if integrity is to return to this profession.

7 www.proud2bindian.in

8 Springs from a pre-1900 cheeky claim, American in origin, that there were certain "extra commandments that God left out of the Bible".

9 The Act is due to be amended, vide The Press and Journalist (Amendment) Bill 2010, to bring forth draconian dispensation calculated to make media practice in Uganda impossible, unless journalists are singing the praises of the state.

10 Acting with concern and sensitivity, aware and mindful of the impact of your actions on other people – adapted from www.entrepreneur.com



The Scourge of the Brown Envelope in Ugandan Journalism:

Some theoretical reflections **John Bosco Mayiga**

Introduction

It is not common that journalists make news. By the very construction of journalism, journalists depend on sources other than themselves to legitimate events and issues as news. But when a mainstream newspaper carries two headlines “*Journalists arrested over extortion*”¹ and “*More Ugandan Journalists Arrested in alleged Extortion*”², in as many days, it points to a fundamental problem. For a profession whose legitimacy to inquire into the workings of other aspects of social life is constantly questioned, and whose own structural shortcomings are often cited, relying on a credibility system to claim the moral high ground is as critical as its own claimed role in society. Therefore, when journalists, whose role is to illuminate society’s asymmetrical power relations on behalf of citizens, are caught in the very acts they are supposed to expose, it is as ironical and regrettable as it is indefensible. Probably none other than Daniel Kalinaki, Managing Editor of *The Daily Monitor*, captures this mood better: “We must all worry when journalists start to steal and extort – for they represent the last of the honest, good people”.³ In this article I put corruption in journalism in a broader context, arguing that wayward practices such as extortion, bribery and

content-influencing gifts are prevalent not only in Uganda, but generally in African journalism (and the rest of the developing world). Drawing from the different theorizations about the (mal)practices, I suggest that beyond the usual conclusions about the possible causes such as poor pay, a generally corrupt society or the incompatibility of the Eurocentric journalism ethics with African culture, we need to go one more step – into the very heart of journalism, that is, the journalist- source relationship upon which the occupation of journalism and its ideologies such as objectivity, impartiality and independence are constructed. Therein, probably, lie the answers.

World-wide concerns about corruption in journalism

Two months before the Ugandan journalists I have referred to in the previous section were arrested for extortion, the U.S. based Centre for International Media Assistance (CIMA) of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) had released a report entitled “*Cash for Coverage: Bribery of Journalists Around the World*”⁴. The report highlights world-wide acts of bribing journalists and the worrying trend of near legitimization of the culture of journalists exchanging news with material gifts from sources – otherwise known as cash for news. It surveys a number of countries, from Pakistan, South Africa, Cambodia,



Corruption in the media in which ever form is ruining the profession

Ukraine, China, Nicaragua, Lebanon, and of course other African countries including Uganda. The report discovers different continental and country-specific names that journalists use to refer to the practice, from “*Red envelopes*” in China, to “*Brown envelopes*” in many parts of Africa, from *Soli* in Ghana to *Jeansa* in Ukraine, *Ndalama yamatako* in Zambia, *Zakazukha* in Russia, *Mermelada* in Peru, to *Blocking papers* in Cambodia, which is a reference extortionist journalists use to extract money from their victims in exchange for “blocking” (withholding) a damaging story. For someone familiar with the Uganda’s mediascape, these world-wide practices are not strange to Uganda. More often than not we have seen journalists ‘taking events’ organizers hostage’ demanding for transport refund, facilitation, and all sorts of references. Through my many year of working with journalists across the country, I personally know “journalists” who have been arrested, and some convicted by courts of law for extortion, I have witnessed many debates in which Ugandan journalists

1 See *Journalists Arrested Over Extortion*, Daily Monitor, November 9, 2010, at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1049802/-/clpckz/-/index.html>

2 See *More Ugandan Journalists Arrested in Alleged Extortion*, Daily Monitor, Nov 9, 2010, at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/-/688334/1049960/-/clpbdeuz/-/index.html>

3 See *Be very afraid when journalists turn to extortion*, Daily Monitor, November 9, 2010 at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/OpEdColumnists/DanielKalinaki/-/878782/1050936/-/tj58g7z/-/index.html>

4 A copy of this report, authored by Bill Ristow, can be downloaded from <http://www.cima.ned.org>



justify demanding money from their sources. CIMA's report, using the analogy of the 5Ws and H, captures the extent to which these practices have become almost as cultural as the inverted pyramid. "From the "Red Envelopes" of China to the "Brown Envelopes" of Africa; from "extortion journalism" to a "sitting allowance"; from a few dollars for "facilitation" to a few million to put a news outlet on a retainer, the phenomenon of cash for news coverage can seem as much as part of the craft as the who-what-when-where-why lead paragraph" (Ristow, 2010:7).

Isn't it then ironical that journalism, with all its moral and ideological power has its own vulnerabilities? The CIMA report again captures this irony: "For all the power journalism may have to topple government and expose the inner secrets of giant multinationals, it can also be an exceptionally fragile institution, vulnerable to the petty greed or strained economic circumstances of a single reporter or editor" (Ristow, 2010:7). At the heart of the discussion therefore, are the causes of this vulnerability. For Ristow (2010), it is personal greed or economic hardships. But there has been several causes advanced, especially from an African perspective.

The scourge of the brown envelope in Africa

In December 2010, the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communications at St. Augustine University of Tanzania published a special issue of the *African Communications Research* dedicated to bribery and corruption in African journalism.⁵ A number of articles in the issue discuss the different dimensions of the corruption in media debate, such as the ethical issues, the material survival issues and the different forces that are brought to bear on the media. However, Terje Skjerdal (2010) summary and contextualization of the various researches in Africa that has been conducted on this issue is significant in the sense that it offers a one-stop shop for understanding the thinking about this problem. Just like the CIMA report, Skjerdal delves into the nomenclature of this phenomenon, extracting localized names such as *mshiko* in Tanzania, *keske* in Nigeria, *gombo* in Cameroon and Chad; as well as some English ones referring

5 See *African Communication Research*, Vol 3 No 3, 2010.

to journalists' love of money, food and drinks, such as *cocktail journalists*, *Hilton journalists*, and *cash and carry journalists*. In the next section, I delve into some of the reasons advanced for this phenomenon.

Is it poor pay?

Skjerdal (2010) notes that poor pay is the "overwhelmingly dominant" explanation for the brown envelope practice. He finds that most of the research in Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon and other countries cites poor salaries for journalists as the cause of the phenomenon. Hayes M. Mabweazara's (2010) article "*When your take home can hardly take you home: Moonlighting and the quest for economic survival in the Zimbabwean Press*" captures this dilemma. Basing on his research on Zimbabwe, he argues that "material deprivation" has the consequence of subverting "conventionalized notions of professionalism and ethical standards" (2010: 431). Whereas it can be argued that Uganda's income levels for journalists have significantly improved, this only applies to a small elite group of permanent employees of mainly capital city based newspapers and television stations. The majority of Ugandan journalists, especially those working for the various radio stations scattered across the country, the many upcountry journalists freelancing for the major newspapers can be said to suffer "material deprivation". Where some radio stations pay as little as Shs 1000 for a story and regional newspapers pay Shs 2000 for a print story that comes out once a week, the argument that a journalist's moral and ethical integrity can be stretched to the limit can be viable. And this is the common story. There have been strong arguments against priming the low pay factor. Dr Peter Mwesige, a veteran journalist and media scholar, once argued that when he started working as a reporter, he was a typical journalist earning peanuts, but never demanded money from sources.⁶ Indeed Landamo and Skjerdal (2009) in their study of Ethiopian journalists reject the low pay argument, citing international comparative studies in which the material conditions of journalists leave a lot to be desired, but the ethical standards remain in good

6 From personal discussions with Dr Mwesige over corruption in the media.

shape. Ethical consciousness, or lack of it, they argue, is the decisive factor, and journalistic corruption is more prevalent in those countries where it is generally accepted as a culture. The import of this argument to the Ugandan situation is that if we prime the low pay issue, we shall be legitimating the practice of taking brown envelopes, but if we emphasise the ethical and professional standards that journalism demands, we shall be making the practice an exception rather than a norm, and therefore isolating those that practice it from the normative status.

Is it the politico-social context?

There have been strong arguments that the ethical behaviour of journalists reflects the general ethos of the context within which they practice journalism. Daniel Kalinaki, earlier cited in this article seems to proffer this view: "Today's Uganda is very different from that of the 1990s or even 1996. Cabinet is littered with crooks; businesses compete to evade the highest taxes; parents sell their own children for sacrifice; wives steal from their husbands; and employees steal anything their can lay their hand on from their employees". He further writes: "Many journalists have gone from being skeptical to being cynical. They look in their broken mirrors and see the empty power they wield. Then they look around them at the fat crocodiles whose thick skins no longer feel the brunt of published revelations about their latest scams. And when they turn to God to renew their faith, they discover that the once humble village priests are now Hummer-driving pastors with armed bodyguards".⁷

Similar views are found in other research, with Muhammed Jameel Yusha'u (2009) articulating the premise of this argument, that "journalism cannot be practiced outside the culture and political system in which it is practiced" (Cited in Skjerdal, 2010:388). Accordingly the journalism of countries with strong clientele systems like Nigeria or patronage systems like Cameroon will reflect those cultural practices and trends in the work of journalists,

7 See *Be very afraid when journalists turn to extortion*, Daily Monitor, November 9, 2011 at <http://www.monitor.co.ug/OpEd/OpEdColumnists/DanielKalinaki-/878782/1050936/-/tj58g7z/-/index.html>



and therefore corruption in journalism reflects the general corruption levels in that particular country. Of course this argument is deterministic. It removes the responsibility from individual journalists and places it on structural factors. That journalism is changed rather than changing society for the better, undermines the ideological power of journalism to change society through the exposure of uses and misuses of power, and other structural injustices in society. This view subverts the efforts invested in emphasizing professional and ethical consciousness as the basis of practicing good journalism. There is no question about the fact that Ugandan society, especially its polity is rotten to the core. For the last two years Uganda has ranked high among the most corrupt countries, ranking 130th out of 180 nations in 2009⁸ and 127th out of 178 nations in 2010.⁹

Is it a clash of cultures?

Skjerdal (2010) points to a cluster of researchers who argue that the Western ethical values are incompatible with African traditional values leading to a clash of cultures. This, they argue, explains the irony that journalists who criticize corruption still pander to what are considered to be corrupt practices. He observes that for such researchers, “rejecting gifts and incentives collides with the value of African hospitality or solidarity, or simply contradicts the very basics of survival for media workers, which is to make ends meet” (2010:390). Therefore for some like Hilda Mupfurutsa (1999) there is need to develop an appropriate “African ethic” that is suited to “African journalism”. For Kasoma (1996), such an ethic should essentially be “community-oriented” as contrasted with the “individualistic-minded professional norms of the North” (cited in Skjerdal, 2010:391). These different clusters of arguments imply the complexity of the problem, and the elusiveness of finding answers. Given that true journalism should be independent of interests and power centres it interrogates, no “African ethic” however authentic it may be, that does not articulate this independence, would make a meaningful alternative. In the next section, I argue that all this theorization probably glosses over the

8 See http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009

9 http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2010

main contradiction in which journalism itself is imbued, that is, the asymmetrical power that sources hold over journalists in a symbiotically structured relationship. This power manifests itself in different forms of vulnerabilities depending on over-arching structural realities of a given society. It therefore affects the journalism of both developed and developing countries, but taking on different forms of corruption. In the African context (as in other developing countries) it takes on a material form (bribery, gifts, facilitation, extortion etc) to reflect the struggles of basic survival. In the Western countries where problems of basic survival have largely been overcome, it takes on an ideological form in which the Western media always reproduce the dominant ideology as espoused and defined by their sources. This in itself is a form of corruption.

May be it is in the journalist-source relationship!

Discussions of brown envelopes as a scourge in journalism emerge out of the discourse of professions, which imposes certain minimum ethical standards on forms of social organization regarded as professions or occupations. Since the turn of the 20th century, journalism has been a subject of this discourse and today’s professional ideologies of objectivity, independence and canons such as the confidentiality between reporters and their sources emerged out of that discourse. Therefore in order to understand the significance of this relationship, I will delve into sociology where professions have been a subject of inquiry. In classical sociology the study of professions was located in what is commonly known as the structural-functional approach, in which professions were seen as specifically structured institutions with special characteristics and special functional value to society. A profession like medicine or law was seen primarily in terms of its contribution to the health or justice needs of society. Terence Johnson (1972) however sought to challenge this dominant approach by looking at professions as sites of power. In his book *Professions and Power*, he cites the inadequacy of the structural functionalist approach for glossing over the ideological power of professions. For Johnson, a proper understanding of professions should focus on the power dynamics within professions, and how that power is controlled, exercised and how it affects the relationship

with the outside environment. Johnson argues that within occupations, there is inherent tension or uncertainty between producers (professionals) and consumers (clients), and power is always used as a resource to resolve that tension. Forms of occupational control, he argues, are determined by how, or in whose favour, the tension or uncertainty between consumer and producer is resolved.

The level of uncertainty, he further argues, determines the level of autonomy that a particular occupation can command. He proposes three types of occupational control: the collegiate form, where the producer exerts authority over the consumer in determining the needs of the consumer and how they are to be met (like medicine, law); the patronage form, where the producer depends on the a powerful consumer with wide social bases of power (like the royal artist or when a corporation solicits professional services); and the mediative, where a third force, such as government, mediates in the relationship between the producer and consumer in cases where the services are deemed too critical to be left to the natural process (social services that are provided by professionals such as national healthcare).

The importance of Johnson’s model is that it helps us locate the power dynamics within the journalism profession and how such dynamics affect the exercise of journalism. In this particular paper, using Johnson’s typology, I argue that the professional ideologies of journalism such as objectivity and credibility, and professional practices like having to depend on credible and mostly institutionally legitimated sources, locates journalism within the patronage type in which the inherent tension between journalists as producers and sources as consumers, is resolved in favour of sources. As earlier argued, in this particular case, journalism as a profession loses its autonomy to the forces that it depends on. This nature of relations inverts the balance of power in which the journalist as a professional becomes the client, and the sources the patron.

Some Western scholars have highlighted the vulnerabilities that this inversion of power creates, especially in Western societies. Stuart Hall et al (1978) emphasise loss of autonomy and the power to define news, which is ceded to powerful institutional sources. In this case, journalists become secondary definers of news, while their sources become the primary definers. Unlike professions like law, medicine or architecture where the professional is the authority, journalists depend on other authorities to define



their product. This dependence makes journalists vulnerable to ideological manipulations and hence play into the hegemonic process in society. Todd Gitlin (1980) argues that professional and routinised practices of journalists, as well as their close socialization with their sources, creates an unconscious role in which journalists become purveyors of hegemonic thinking which they reproduce through news frames that reflect dominant thinking.

This inverted power relations is exacerbated by the rapid commercialisation of media institutions. Commercialization shifts the logic of production from the claimed professional ideologies to a market logic, which in many cases contradicts professional imperatives. Therefore professional ideologies play a double role, first, they make journalists clients of their sources, and second, they cause a form of alienation among journalists who find that the professional imperatives within their media houses shift according to the demands of the market. This means that journalists lose not only their independence, but also control over their work.

The importance of focusing on this powerlessness both inside the news organisation (since power is lost to the bureaucratic structures that serve market interests) and outside the news organization (since power to define news is lost to the news sources), is that it helps us to understand the production of a form of subjectivity, that is susceptible to different forms of power. As I argued at the beginning of this section, this susceptibility manifests itself in different forms, depending on the nature, materiality and demands of a particular society. Material conditions, the structure and demands of a particular society determine the nature of vulnerabilities that professional ideologies and practices, especially the journalist-source relationship, produce. The nature of society and its needs become the dynamic, while vulnerability becomes the constant. In whatever case, it creates a patron-client relationship. From Todd Gitlin's (1980) argument about the ideological and hegemonic role of the media in industrialised societies, we can argue that the professional constructions of the media make them vulnerable to the manipulations of the ideological and hegemonic demands of capitalist logic. In the case of Africa, the vulnerability created by the professional construction of journalism makes journalists susceptible to institutionalized practices

such as clientelism and patronage, which ultimately produces the cash for coverage phenomenon.

This type of analysis might help us to understand the problem of brown envelopes more deeply. While not rejecting the dominant research theorizations about the phenomenon, I argue that methodologically that they are not sufficient to explain why the phenomenon is widespread amongst journalists, and not other professions. For example while teachers and nurses are some of the lowest paid ranks in Uganda, cases of them subsisting on their clients are not as significant as the case of journalists. The answer may be in the fact that in the patron-client analysis, the balance of power is still in the favour of the teacher (because of his/her authority over knowledge) and the nurse (because of her authority over health). Their clients, in this case the student and the patient respectively, if you take them as a generic group, do not necessarily command wide social power bases to make the teacher and nurse vulnerable.

In this paper, I have argued that current research about the brown envelope phenomenon excludes an important area of investigation, that is, the constitutive elements within the journalism profession. I have used arguments from sociological studies of professions, as well as critical media studies to emphasize the importance of the ideological constructions of professions in understanding the cash for coverage phenomenon.

I therefore conclude that the methodological approach as well as the scope of investigation needs to be stretched beyond the dominant areas of inquiry such as poor pay (material conditions), ethical contradictions and a clientele culture, into the very constitution of journalism professionalism within which ethics such as not taking inducements from sources are constructed. In order to be able to achieve this, a power-relations analysis becomes a useful tool in illuminating the contradictions upon which journalism as a profession is constructed. In the case of the brown envelopes in Africa, a detailed analysis of the symbiotic relationship between journalists and their sources, and the power transactions within that relationship, would widen the understanding of why journalists expect payment from their sources in exchange for coverage.

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Using New Media to Fight Corruption

Gerald Businge

Introduction

Corruption is a leading concern affecting the lives of Ugandans. Many people are not sure what to do if asked for a bribe, forced to buy medicine that should be free, see shoddy work on a road or school building, are denied a job in favour of someone who is less qualified, or even land on information that some public funds have been misappropriated.

The media institution plays an important role in investigating and reporting on corruption, its causes, consequences and possible remedies, informing the public about corrupt activities, both within the government and among public officials, as well as within the private sector. The media also promotes anti-corruption efforts of civil groups as well as action by official bodies in charge of investigating or prosecuting corrupt acts like the Judiciary and the Inspectorate of Government.

To effectively play these roles however, media practitioners need to have easy access to information, freedom of expression as well as a cadre of professional and ethical investigative journalists (Melin, 2009). Media practitioners and indeed members of the public can exploit the Internet and mobile phone tools to demand a more transparent, accountable and better government, as well as easily access to and sharing of information. The government can also utilise new media tools to showcase its activities and expenditures (making information easily available), while Civil Society organizations (CSOs) can compile and interpret government expenditures to facilitate better appreciation of the issues and statistics

New media tools for better journalism

Journalists who cover government and other topical issues for established newspapers, radios and television stations now have the opportunity to become more independent publishers of speciality blogs and hyperlocal¹

¹ The term hyperlocal connotes having the character of being oriented around a well defined, community scale area with primary focus being directed towards the concerns of its residents. Use of the term originated in 1991, in reference to local television news content. Hyperlocal content, often referred to as hyperlocal news, is characterized by three major elements. First, it refers to entities and events that are located within a well defined, community scale area. Secondly, it is intended primarily for consumption by residents of that area. Thirdly, it is created by a resident of the location (but this last point is discussed because for example a photo can be hyperlocal but not locally produced)- Wikipedia August 2011

news websites. The websites can be owned and operated by the media house employing a particular journalist, or owned and operated independently by the journalist with links to or from the website of the media organizations where they work. Such websites play an important role in the emerging news and information landscape by allowing the journalist(s) to go beyond the space, airtime and gatekeeper limitations of traditional media to publish as much and as often as they wish. Anyone with an enabled cell phone can access web-based information from anywhere in the world. A journalist in Uganda can easily publish a personal blog or create quality online news sites using powerful and easy to use web publishing platforms like Wordpress, Blogger, Webs, Joomla, Drupal among the many others that provide complete content management systems. Journalists covering the corruption beat, or expert journalists and particular desks in media houses to explore and publish corruption stories in more detail and more consistently. These new media platforms also allow for more interactivity by allowing members of the public to post comments, articles, information or tips. This way, the public can thus contribute greatly to stories investigating corruption.

Media houses and individual journalists can also create corruption specific pages on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, MySpace where the public keep alive the corruption discourse as a follow up to published stories. There are chances that commentators will provide new information or new insights to the corruption story which the journalist can pick up as new leads.

Mobile phones as a reporting and dissemination tool

The convergence of technologies now allows journalists working on corruption stories to use mobile phones to record audio, video or take pictures in less invasive ways when dealing with difficult or sensitive sources. This is particularly important with investigative stories.

Journalists and media houses may also encourage people to use their mobile phones to report corruption related incidents. Investigation desks can devise simple formats like use of toll free telephone



short codes or online forms, which the public can use to send such information in a secure manner. Likewise, media houses and other organizations can communicate corruption related news and information to more people through their mobile phones by sending information or data to those who opt to subscribe for news and information on corruption, or establishing databases which members of the public can access for information they may need.

Mobile phones are emerging as the leading medium of today. According to the latest report from the Uganda Communications Commission, Uganda had 11.6 million mobile phone subscribers by the end of 2010. Most people use mobile phones on a daily basis to send or receive information through phone calls, sms (short message services), while some smart phones can be used to browse the internet; store, play and share audio, video, images on and off line.

Many media houses in Uganda, especially radio have integrated mobile telephony as a platform for listeners to contribute news, views, stories and feedback through call in and sms. Media houses employ these functionalities on reporting and discussion of corruption related issues. But more investment is needed in real multimedia systems like databases that archive and deliver information and data to journalists and members of the public interested in public accountability and or corruption related issues and facts.

It is also possible to send voice sms (voip) to people's mobile phone numbers although this is not yet widespread in Uganda. This can be an effective method to raise public awareness to a corruption issue and to prompt their individual reactions. President Yoweri Museveni's campaign team exploited this functionality with success during the 2011 general elections. Museveni's recorded voice appeal for votes was sent to millions of Ugandan cell phones. He also sent a 'thank you voice message' soon after polls closed, leaving many wondering how the President had known their telephone numbers. To many it was magical. Media houses too can explore this method of reaching out to people, since Ugandans like many African people are more of a talking and less of a reading population (Businge, 2010).

Applications are available for people to call in (free or charged) and report a corruption related issue to a database where the reports are reviewed and forwarded to the relevant offices for follow up. Journalists can also tap from such reports to follow up stories or compile trends. There are already a number of applications like Frontlinesms² and freedomfone³ which are making interactive mobile phone communications between an

2 Frontline sms FrontlineSMS is a free open source software platform that enables large-scale, two-way text messaging using only a laptop, a GSM modem, and inexpensive mobile phones. Once installed, it acts as an SMS gateway that enables users to send and receive SMS and can be used for data collection, coordination or monitoring. www.frontlinesms.com

3 Freedom Fone is an information and communication tool, which marries the mobile phone with Interactive Voice Response (IVR), for citizen benefit. It provides information activists, service organisations and NGO's with widely usable telephony applications, to deliver vital information to communities who need it most. Freedom Fone is a project of The Kubatana Trust of Zimbabwe. www.freedomfone.org

organisation and members of the public an affordable reality.

There is big potential in using mobile phones for to improve service delivery, increase public participation in governance, holding governments accountable and promoting transparency. Mobile phones have helped create an informative, connected, innovative, and converging society in different parts of the world (Johan Hellstrom 2010).

New media tools and platforms can help in exposure of government without fear of being closed down as most utilize global platforms. They can also easily allow anonymous contributions for those that wish to contribute information about corruption activities but don't want to be identified. Since they give chance for more public involvement and information delivery in quantity and style, the new media tools have potential to promote public understanding of corruption issues and drive the demand for accountability in government.

However, journalists and media houses must become conversant with these media skills, tools and platforms, if they are to improve their output, facilitate better public engagement, increase scrutiny of government and business scrutiny.

Online applications that can boost corruption reporting

Several new media technologies now make it possible to link mobile phones with online in many ways that improve how we can reach people and how people can keep engaged in the news and information sharing cycle. People can now tweet using their mobile phones

The Ipaidabribe.com website in India

and thus become part of the instant messaging global platform of more than 6 million people⁴. There is an sms short code (number) for every country where

4 January 2011, Twitter was known to have over 6 million users



you can send the sms and it will appear as tweet. So if for example an officer in the ministry of lands is asking for a bribe before they verify you title, you could immediately text an sms to twitter. You can even text/tweet anonymously, thus avoiding victimization in case you are reporting your boss or a person who might harm you. However, while media houses can use such tweets as tips, journalists need to be cautious on how they take information from social media by always undertaking efforts to verify before publishing claims made on social media platforms. A media house or anti corruption agency can also customize a crowd sourcing⁵ application like Ushahidi⁶ (testimony in Swahili) to generate reports from people across the country by sms and automatically publish them on a website, plot those reports on an online map, generate charts and comparisons that help understand corruption related issues and incidents.

* ClickFix (<http://www.seeclickfix.com/>) also offers a variety of platforms for citizens to report their concerns including corruption in all its forms. Citizens can report issues through the organisation's website, mobile apps, widgets, and voice mail while media houses and other bodies can get specialized applications to allow them collect citizen responses of any nature.

Civil society support

Civil society organisations can also compliment the media in setting up new media based initiatives to fight corruption. In India, a Bangalore-based non-profit organisation has set up a website www.ipaidabribe.com (IPAB) where citizens can report incidences of corruption and bribery. The organisation also offers tips and counseling on how to avoid paying bribes to greedy government bureaucrats (Google News, 2011).

The Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad has set up a toll-free helpline for citizens faced with official corruption to report immediately. Such efforts can be replicated by the Uganda media, government and or civil society organisations.

"Corruption happens when you have a situation where people can exercise discretion with no accountability," says T.R. Raghunandan, the former civil servant who founded IPAB. "For instance, to file a complaint with the police, it's up to the officer to exercise discretion. Whereas if you could file a complaint online, you are removing that possibility." There are many more examples that Ugandans can draw inspiration from on utilising new media to improve fight against corruption.

Panamanian journalists are developing the "My Transparent Panama" platform as a model digital tool that can be used to cover crime and corruption. Based on the Ushahidi platform, the project is an online

5 Web, mobile phone and social media tools can be utilized to source information, data of views generally from members of the public, say as opposed to a journalist going out to interview one or a few people. This is what is known as crowd sourcing, because the journalist or media house depends on the many people spread in areas where the issue in question is of concern to report on the matter at hand.

6 Ushahidi was originally developed to map reports of violence in Kenya after the contested December 2007 election results. The Ushahidi platform provides tools for communities to crowd source real-time information using SMS, email, Twitter and the web.

digital map that plots citizen-provided information on fraud, corruption and other crimes. The project is a collaboration between citizen reporters facilitated by civil society organizations and professional journalists who use the reports to write up stories for both online and their media houses, thus showing how journalists can collaborate with civil society organizations to fight corruption using new media tools.

In Uganda, the Grameen Foundation runs Question Box and Community knowledge workers (CKW) initiatives which could be replicated or tapped to fight corruption. Question Box is a free telephone hotline service, in local languages, where callers are connected to a call centre where an operator with access to internet and a database can look up the question and provide the information requested. Question Box works with a network of CKW in the field who use mobile phones and ask the question on behalf of the individual. ⁷

What government can do

Governments in Africa, too, can utilize new media to be more transparent. All the investigations by a well functioning media will not yield good results in fighting corruption if the government departments do not share information on the policies, expenditure plans and implementation of programme activities. In the first place, the media needs to know or have an idea of what is going on before they can follow up on any issue.

Other than tapping feedback or concerns from members of the public, mobile and web applications can be developed to provide access to government records or data to people online or through sms. There are several local examples to show how new media is being or can be utilized to enable people easily access information they need.

During the 2011 Uganda general elections, there was commendable use of new media in ways that helped people check the voters register online or by sms. The Electoral Commission also provided a short code⁸ which helped many people check which polling station they were registered at. The National Drug Authority has put up an sms platform where citizens can send sms and check whether a particular clinic or health center is registered or a particular doctor is registered by the medical regulator. The National Social Security Fund (NSSF) has also launched mobile and online application to help workers check the status of their savings with the Fund. Another good example is the Twaweza collaboration with SNV Uganda on a project to facilitate monitoring of teacher and pupil attendance and absenteeism in primary schools by using an SMS based information system.

The government can disseminate information to citizens through consistently updated websites, social media websites, sms or even voice calls. Like the media do it, the government can also seek feedback on whether citizens are receiving the promised services and goods through online and mobile platforms.

7 (see <http://www.grameenfoundation.applab.org/ckw/section/index>)

8 A short code is a messaging phone number allocated to an organisation which is queried by mobile phone users for answers



Publishing government documents and financial statements online not only promotes transparency but generates feedback that can inform better government programs, policies and expenditure priorities, without wasting much money to get people's views through workshops and seminars.

Examples of governments utilizing new media

There are good examples of governments already using new media to curtail corruption. In Philippine, President Philippine President Benigno Aquino set up a website www.president.gov.ph to allow the public to directly air complaints against authorities as part of his vow to promote transparency and crush corruption (AFP news, 2010). The website is well linked to social networks including Twitter, Friendster, YouTube, Multiply and facebook. The President has more than 1.8 million⁹ followers on Facebook. He keeps appealing to the people of Philippine to go to the social media pages and report corruption related activities and issues.

The finance ministry of the Philippines operates a website (www.perangbayan.com) where anyone can anonymously complain about corrupt government officials or provide details about tax cheats and smugglers. Internal Revenue Commissioner Kim Henares told AFP her office was receiving up to 20 tips a day against tax evaders through her Facebook page as well as through dedicated telephone hotlines she set up.

In an effort to make transactions by local governments transparent, the Department of Interior and Local Government in Philippines is exhorting local government officials to post their budgets, contracts and expenses on the Internet (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 8/14/2010).

utilize such broadcasts and any government information archived online for their daily reporting and for tracking issues of public concern. Citizens can also easily follow government budget allocations, expenditures and programs which by increasing public knowledge will reduce on likelihood of corruption.

Many other countries are also embracing the use of the internet and social networks to fight corruption. In Neighbouring Kenya, the country's pharmacy and poisons board has set up a Facebook account for people to report pharmacists who give them fake drugs. Kenyans can use the social networking site to report adverse reactions to drugs as well as suspected counterfeit drugs and unregistered pharmacies.

The Budget Tracking Tool has also been developed in Kenya as a collaborative platform for grassroots communities to proactively engage in public resource management. It enables citizens to monitor and track both disbursements and utilization of developments funds, projects funded by Constituencies Development Fund (CDF, www.cdf.go.ke), Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATE, www.localgovernment.go.ke). The tool can be accessed online and by SMS by sending a text message to 7002¹⁰.

There is also an sms service that allows Kenyans to send information, suggestions, complaints via sms to number 2888 to the Office of Public Communications. The aim is to increase the citizen-to-government communication and sensitize the government spokesperson to the priorities of Kenyans.

Facilitating better bottom up approach in fighting corruption

Uganda can also adopt these new media technologies and give more people a chance to participate in eliminating corruption. This will push the fight against corruption from the current view by many people that it is the setting up and facilitating the Inspectorate of government, Anti Corruption Court, Directorate of Public Prosecutions, the Criminal Investigations Department among other statutory bodies supposed to fight corruption in the country.

Some scholars have noted that the top-down approach based on developing and naturalizing new rules, institutions, and norms that target the "public administrative graft" have not yielded much in the fight against corruption as the vice is reported to be on the increase. The primary weakness of this approach, is that the very institutions accused of corruption are responsible for enacting change (Melin, 2009).

Yet it is obvious that those benefiting from corruption are much less likely to end it than those suffering from corruption. New media tools are better at facilitating the bottom-up, or grassroots approach, which requires the mobilization of ordinary citizens at all levels against the vice of corruption. While newspapers, radio and television do a great job in covering and exposing

10 The tool has been developed by the Social Development Network and designed by Infonet



Cameroun developed an App to fight corruption

The Philippine Senate began broadcasting live on the Internet, in keeping with President Benigno Aquino's pledge of government transparency. The online broadcasts, posted on www.senate.gov.ph are aimed at providing accurate information, transparency and accountability, according to Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile.

Journalists in both new and traditional media can easily

9 Facebook page checked for people who like it in November 2010



corrupt activities, the greater the number of people who speak up, the more likely that change will occur in both those governing and the governed.

Also, by allowing more public participation in the information gathering and dissemination process, new media can be more effective in communicating about corruption.

In a famous study of political opinion after the 1948 US presidential election, the sociologists Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld discovered that mass media alone do not change people's minds; instead, there is a two-step process. According to the two step flow of communication theory, opinions are first transmitted by the (traditional) media, and then they get echoed by friends, family members, and colleagues. It is in this second, social step that political opinions are formed (Melin, 2009). Since new media tools allow for more interactivity between media houses and members of the public, and among members of the public, it is thus likely that new media will produce dividends if utilized in the fight against corruption.

However, qualitative independent reporting and analysis on corruption remains a key responsibility of journalists who can utilize both traditional and new media to hold governments and other bodies that handle public funds accountable.

Conclusion

Since the extent of corruption depends on the amount of monopoly power and discretionary power that an official exercises (Stapenhurst, 2000:9) engaging easy to access new media tools and platforms can greatly improve sharing of public information and the ability of the media and citizen to question or comment based on informed positions.

New media presents new opportunities for the government and the media to share and access accurate information, and cheaper platforms to publish articles on corruption on a continuous or ongoing basis. The new media tools are also enabling many more people to contribute their views, reports and insights on or about corruption. However, concern remains on how to ensure responsible utilization of new media tools to really aid the fight against corruption (as opposed to using new media to perpetuate lies and half truths), as well observing privacy when anyone can publish anything. Ensuring traditional journalism ethics and standards are upheld while utilizing new media tools, as well utilizing available technologies to authenticate members of the public and their comments can help in this regard. The key to any distortions though remains in the ability of the government and the media to readily provide relevant and accurate information or data, and availability equal opportunity to all to have their say-functions best executed with new media.

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Young Audiences drive change in media content

Denis Juuko

On Friday August 5, this year, The New Vision published a photo on its cover page of a half-naked musician popularly known as Bobi Wine showing off his tattoos. Next to it was another picture of the musician's fiancée wearing an open-back dress also displaying a tattoo in the image of her soon to be husband. This front page photo was the cause of debate on social media platforms; particularly Facebook and Twitter. The debate was further shifted to the actual newspaper with the New Vision printing five letters to the editor in the Monday August 8 edition. And none of those five letters was in support of the publication's decision to publish the photos especially on its cover page.

A few weeks before these photos were splashed on the pages of the New Vision, the company had made two significant announcements but closely related. One was the appointment of relatively young people in some managerial positions in the editorial department and the re-launch of its English language service radio. Vision Voice FM had failed to break the ground and was to be rebranded XFM with a target audience of people in the 18-28 age segment. The Vision Group's statements on these announcements were that they were responding to the country's demographics. So the publishing of the Bobi Wine's tattoos could be signifying a change in the editorial policy of New Vision to cater for these demographics.

Joel Isabirye, a media expert and general manager of Dembe FM, posted on his Facebook wall during the tattoo debate recalling that "when New Vision redesigned last year, they aspired to attract younger readers... this economics means the icons of younger readers will assume more prominence in image or text."

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Blitz

INTERVIEW - Leslie Kasumba

UGANDANS, HERE WE COME



Keko



Navio

Leslie Kasumba

The annual Channel O Music Awards, have been such a phenomenal event over the years. This year, they promise to be even bigger as Uganda is one of the most represented countries in the different music categories. DUNCAN KUSHARA talked to Ugandan Channel O boss, Leslie 'Lee' Kasumba about the awards, which will take place on November 11, in Johannesburg, South Africa

Lee, how are you doing, it's been long?
I am very well, thank you. I miss matooke and the dangerous boda-boda bikes in Kampala. Those are usually my highlights when I am back home in Uganda.

Congratulations on finishing the nominations, your very first since you got appointed boss of Channel O two months ago.

Thank you very much. The world expects us to deliver for African music, and this is exactly what we are doing. And every time you appreciate, it means we are on the right track to make a difference.

How did you come up with the nominees?
It is all about the quality of the videos submitted by artists from across Africa. We do not use favouritism at all. A professional panel of judges sat and analysed video-by-video, as they gave marks. Those who scored more got a well-deserved nomination. So right now it is beyond us and all in the hands of the fans across Africa to vote their winners.

Who are the Ugandan musicians that made the list?

Navio, Keko and the Radio and Weasel duo. This proves that Ugandan music is not a joke; there are so many countries that have no single nomination. Uganda should be proud of these artists because they have proven indomitable. Navio was one of the most nominated artists with three nominations: Most Gifted Male Video Artist, Most Gifted Hip Hop Artist and Most Gifted Video of the Year Artist for the song *Keep Moving* featuring Benon. Keko has two: Most Gifted Newcomer Video Artist and Most Gifted East African Video Artist, for her single *How We Do* featuring Radio and Weasel.

How much money comes with the award?
There is no prize money on the award. It is just

honour and prestige. That is more important than money.

Why are so many Nigerian acts nominated?
Like I said, it is all about the quality of the song and its video. Videos from Nigeria are amazing. True, they have 19 nominations unlike any other country, but they deserve it because they are working hard everyday.

Are you considering having the awards take place in Uganda or any other country apart from South Africa?
Yes, we are doing that. As a matter of fact, next year we are moving to another country if all is well.

Any last words?
God bless my fellow Ugandans. Tell them their girl is representing.

SOUNDING OFF-

Sulyman Masanga SINGS AT 46

BY JOSEPH SSEMUTOOKE

Age is just a number. That is the phrase often used to justify relationships between people of different age groups. But this time, there is need to borrow the cliché in relation to music, especially when it turns out 46-year-old Sulyman Twaha Masanga has just made an entry into the local recording industry.

At 46, Masanga is breaking the barriers—never mind that his gig is not exactly artist-of-the-year material. This dude has fulfilled his childhood dream of becoming a professional singer by releasing a song titled, *Jukira Katonda*. The song was dropped a month ago, recorded, arranged and released by Even Studios in Nakawa.

Jukira Katonda is a soft-reggae track whose sound would not reveal the singer's age—because its sound is at par with the sounds being released by the more youthful mainstream singers of the day.

Its message is calling on people to remember God in whatever they do. It is in rhythm with songs like, Iryn Namubiru/Harriet Kisakyi's *Omusajja Yesu* and Dr. Hilemmani's *Akiribikurite* all religious-themed.

Masanga says he believes one can start a career at any age, and that his ultimate goal is to churn out music that gives the younger artists a run for their money.

"Jukira Katonda is only the first release of the seven songs I have been working on at Even Studios over the last six months. I intend to release the other six one at a time over the coming three months". Masanga, who always participated in choirs during primary school, says.

He adds that in the early to mid 90s, he sold music tapes on the streets of Kampala, from where he got exposure to all sorts of music styles.

Then at the turn of the century, he began writing his

music with intent to have professional singers buy and record it, only to get let down as they were not willing to buy. Failure to sell the music to the established musicians is what spurred him to record it himself this year.

Outside of music, Masanga, whose favourite local musicians are Ronald Mayinja and Grace Nakimera, is an in-house writer at MK publishers Ltd.

He writes Luganda language thematic books that are read from P1 to P3 in primary schools around Buganda region.



Sulyman Masanga

DANCE - Open House

Break DANCING AT RESTAURANT

BY EMMANUEL SSEJENGO

Just what exactly is happening to arts in Uganda? After a group decided to take scripted drama away from the auditorium to the street in the name of Street Theatre, another group of dancers is taking break dance away from the streets to Open House on Buganda Road, a restaurant-auditorium that prides in hosting dinner theatre.

The Raw Expression show is on today at 7:00pm. On the proscenium arc stage will be the Breakdance Project Uganda. It is a show for the various groups that developed out of it. There are also others to which BPU contributes dancers. The most celebrated is Tabu Ho Dance Crew.

Others include: Hit the Beat Dance Crew, Steady Beat Crew, Mighty Dancers and Kagyilawo Dance Crew.

Surely, the naming of these groups says it all. You should expect dance battles as one group tries to out-dance the others. It is one of the shows with the bare minimum of choreography. In true breakdance format, you will have various guys standing aside to watch the challenger of the moment who will be more interested in the audience reaction. With such pomp, break dance can surely break a humble soul.

Breakdance easily rubs onto the audience and dancers often encourage their fans to try out a stunt or two. But hopefully, those who try out will not be the clumsy kind. There is more to the show than breakdance.

It will also feature rap acts and poets while artist Donald Wasswa will be showcasing graffiti work in progress throughout the show.



A break dancer does the head spin



The Demographics

Demographics are the statistical characteristics of a population. Commonly examined demographics include gender, race, age, disabilities, mobility, home ownership, employment status, and even location. Demographic trends describe the changes in demographics in a population over time (for example, the average age of a population may increase or decrease over time).

Media practitioners typically combine several variables to define a demographic profile. A demographic profile (often shortened to “a demographic”) provides enough information about the typical member of this group to create a mental picture of this hypothetical aggregate. For example, a media professional might speak of the single, female, middle-class, age 18 to 24, college educated demographic.

Media executives mainly have two objectives in this regard: first to determine what segments or subgroups exist in the overall population; and secondly to create a clear and complete picture of the characteristics of a typical member of each of these segments. Once these profiles are constructed, they can be used to develop media content.

According to data from the Uganda Population Secretariat, the country’s population is currently projected at 33 million with 56% under the age of 18. Urbanization growth of this population is estimated to be 14.8% in 2011.

It is therefore expected that Uganda’s population structure will remain youthful for the next fifteen years (State of Uganda’s Population Report, 2010). In order to tap into this market, media owners have acted swiftly by aligning content to the needs of this sector over the last couple of years.

The trend to align content with a youthful focus is not new as a couple of products have been previously introduced and some dumped in due course but there is renewed interest to go youth. This new focus may have been re-invented by the publication of youthful products such as Buzz Magazine that targets high school students and even its more famous Buzz Teens Awards that are a darling of the mainstream media. The success of magazines like Buzz could be the reason media powerhouses like New Vision are changing focus. Buzz Magazine prints 6000 copies twice every school term (there are three terms in a year) with 90% of the print run sold according to documents from the publisher.

“The future of Uganda is youth, but it will definitely be in more technologically advanced platforms as opposed to traditional media. Most advertisers have

changed their approach to the youth market because of the fact that more youth are now more exposed and are also financially empowered, somehow kids have money... and advertisers believe that the youth will stick to their products through their adult years,” says Tina Byaruhanga, Marketing Director at Buzz Magazine.

Byaruhanga believes that there is a youth explosion going on and “with internet and all the social media, youth are able to make decisions today of what products and services they prefer, and when they get the money, they are pretty much hooked. They can identify brands and they have influence buying power,” she says, being dreams for advertisers. “If a kid sees a watch on Disney channel, they will want that watch (Ben10 is a good example). As they grow older, the same approach will continue to apply, if they see 50 Cent wearing Adidas, they will always buy Adidas....fake or otherwise.”

Over the last few years, the New Vision has introduced magazine pullouts like Blitz, Kawa, and Swagg while Daily Monitor has Sqoop. All these pullouts are written in a youthful language with a lot of slang; something that is considered “cool” for their target audience.

On Friday August 19, Daily Monitor re-launched itself with a new design that targets young people with the paper’s managing editor, Daniel Kalinaki, arguing that his newspaper will “move away from just reporting the news to help explain it”. He further argued that “conventional wisdom seems to suggest that young people are not interested in important stuff, and that we should entertain them more and educate them less. We disagree. We think young people are more concerned about terrorism that they are with tattoos.” His view is that those under 28 years of age deserve far better stuff than the trite, inane stuff they are often fed by the country’s mainstream media. This means that legacy media can still flirt with the youth and remain responsible by offering critical journalism.

On the same day, Daily Monitor unveiled its new print press. A few months earlier, Red Pepper another daily newspaper had redesigned and installed a new printing press. The New Vision had done so a year or so before. Arinaitwe Ruyendo, Advertising Director at Red Pepper and one of its founders argues that the idea of owning printing presses is rooted in the psychological competition the three dailies have had for a longtime. These dailies, he says “are always working to outmaneuver each other! To outsmart each other! That’s the sole reason! It’s purely about competition.” He further argues that the government’s decision to cut adspend has nothing to do with these hefty installations because they were done way before the government cut its adspend during its 2011 budget! Ruyendo says that the idea is to achieve good colour and outsmart each other in delivering quality colour ads and products that appeal to young audiences.



If you listened to the urban radio stations and watched TV shows, you will realize that to make it as a presenter especially, the English service ones, you must be able to speak with “an accent” and know the ABC about the lives of the western celebrities. That is the stuff that is considered appealing to the youth. Indeed, XFM has youthful rapper Keko lined up as a presenter as well as American Idol host Ryn Seacrest doing the countdown of American’s Top 40; an internationally syndicated radio programme.

Facebook, micro blogging site Twitter, video sharing YouTube and photo distributing Flickr. These social networking sites mainly appeal to the youth who are spending considerable amount of time on each of them. Social networking websites have wide appeal among the youth segments because of the variety of features they offer and the ability to link webpages on their profiles. Ruyendo observes that “the New Vision and Monitor have SMS platforms. The Red Pepper is soon acquiring one! This is on top of internet editions with Red Pepper

running the most dynamic news site that updates its news every 30 minutes.” Indeed, newspapers are breaking news online and this is all in line with adapting to the dynamic needs of a youthful population. Availability of digital content enables the youth to like and share information as it breaks, a feature that digital platforms play so well. This ability to share with others is a feature that traditional media houses love to tap into.

As Lewis (2011) observes, “social media gives any business an interactive channel to communicate with its current and future customers. For newspapers, that channel can increase the chances of survival in a market where commoditized information has diminished the value of individual brands.” This means that newspapers and generally legacy media have had to find a way through which they can tap into this resource. Bill Adee, writing in Nieman Reports about the Chicago Tribune said that “roughly 40 percent of the traffic arrives at chicagotribune.com when a user types our URL into a browser or goes to a bookmarked page.” And where does the rest come from? “The other 60 percent? That traffic comes via search engines, Web sites, and blogs,” (Adee, 2008).

Blitz

NEW VISION, Friday, September 30, 2011 39



I think it is a great chance to put our music out there so it can be recognised across Africa. Navio and Keko are the latest beneficiaries of Channel O and there is nothing that makes me happy like having a guaranteed future for Ugandan music.

Juliana Kanyomuzi, an RnB artiste



As a Ugandan, it makes me happy and as an artiste, it gives me hope. We are definitely headed somewhere. Do not give up guys.

Coco Finger, a dancehall artiste

The Channel O Boss is Ugandan. What does that mean to you?

HAVE YOUR SAY...

LET US KNOW YOUR THOUGHTS: Send your ideas to blitz@newvision.co.ug or text 'BLITZ' leave space, your name and send to 8338 (UTL, AIRTEL, WARIID AND MTN)

★ It is time for Ugandan Hip Hop to make a mark on the world scene. I am happy for the Hip Hop family because it has been well represented at this year's Channel O Awards. Next year is mine.

Lyrical Proof, a Hip Hop Artiste



It means that we will be able to see lots of our home brewed music play on the continental channel. It gives me reason to work even harder.

Sheeba Karungi, a Afro-pop artiste



Channel O is a good start if Lee can give all Ugandan musicians an equal chance to show case their talents. It will make a big difference because I believe the best talents in Uganda are the ones who have no voice because they cannot afford paying the radios and television.

Shamir Sengendo, a world music artiste

FILM: latest releases in town

Laugh at My pain

HOT MOVIE



LAUGH AT MY PAIN: Kevin Hart, Na'im Lynn
DIRECTOR: Leslie Small, Tim Story
GENRE: Comedy
RUNNING TIME: 89 mins
RATING: R for sexual content and pervasive language
SHOWING AT: Cineplex Garden City
PREVIEW BY: Kalungi Kabuye

Introducing Mr. Kevin Hart, comedian extraordinaire. According to reviews, Hart's 2011 Laugh At My Pain 90-city comedy tour of the US (on which this film is based) was a runaway success that earned more than \$15,000,000 in ticket sales. And it broke all kinds of records, including Eddie Murphy's long standing record of being the first African-American comedian to surpass over \$1.1 million two-day live comedy show ticket sales.

The man is also a record-breaker, having starred in films that have grossed over \$510,000,000 at the US box office, including such films as Death At A Funeral, Superhero Movie, Meet Dave, The 40-Year Old Virgin, Scary Movie 4, Little Fockers, BarberShop, Soul Plane, Along Came Polly and Not Easily Broken.

Stand-up comedy is come-lately in Uganda, and our comedians are finding their feet as they go along. Some of them have broken away from the pack, including Pablo and Patrick 'Salvador' Idring. But even they are struggling for new material, once all the dirty jokes have been done away with.

Americans, and especially African-Americans, have been at it for a long time, and we have watched DVDs of such acclaimed comedians as Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy, Chris Rock and many others.

Hart is one of the recent ones, and it is curious how Ugandans will take to this. Will they understand the largely American jokes? Will they be offended by the 'gutter' language (the reason for his R-rating)? Or will they just love the whole thing? And maybe Pablo, Patrick and all the others will learn something.

As one Internet critic wrote, "like a lot of comics, Hart has taken the petty grievances and big pains of his childhood and turned them into stand-up fodder that is funny, familiar and biting.

Ten years after breaking into show business, he is a little old and a little familiar to be "discovered" now. But if "Laugh at My Pain" makes people take a second look at this perpetual third banana on the big screen, so much the better". Roger Moore (not the James Bond star).

THREE WIN MIRINDARIFIC CARS

BY SOLOMON OLENY

These three guys on Wednesday left home by foot, their usual means of getting around. Then they went to Ndere Centre, spun the wheel, won cars and drove them home – thanks to the ongoing Crown Beverages promo, Mirindarific SMS, Spin and Win. It is a syndicated TV game show here to dish out 36 Toyota Nadias altogether, 12 motor bikes, plasma TV screens, radio systems and fridges among other prizes.

Television audiences all over the country were watching as the lives of the three (Emmanuel Koshaba, Herbert Kutesa and Ronald Mukibi) changed.

All they did was drink a Mirinda Fruity, Mirinda Pineapple, Mirinda Orange, Pepsi, Mountain Dew or 7Up. They SMSed the code they found under the crown to 5777, and were selected to spin the wheel of fortune to win any of the goodies up for grabs. That was on the side of small scale users – Herbert Kutesa and Ronald Mukibi.

For Koshaba, a retail shop owner from Mukono, his win was from the bulk section, where one buys three crates of the participating Pepsi brands and gets a voucher with a code they SMS to 7111.

Born in Kanungu district, Koshaba said he started praying immediately they called him to participate earlier in the week. "My name literally means whatever I pray for I shall get.

I prayed and I got. I can't wait for Christmas so I fill up the tank and drive my mother to Kanungu and we show our car off in the village," Koshaba said.

"I have been using a boda-boda to transport goods from town to my shop and it has been costly. Now this car will do everything," said the trader, who also intends to join university soon.

Kutesa, a pastorist from Gomba district, sent 27 SMS, meaning he drank 27 sodas. "I can't believe this. A humble pastorist like me winning a new car? Unbelievable."

Mukibi, a builder from Wampewo Gayaza, says his car will salvage him from footing, and help take his child to school. The game airs live every Wednesday on Bukedde TV and other television stations across the country.



Herbert Kutesa (centre) being handed a dummy key for the Nadia he won from the Crown Beverages Promo

Azion PROMISES EARLY SHOW

BY ISAAC BALUGEMA

Rhythm and blues maestro and one of the finest guitarists in the country Aziz Azion is this evening launching his third album titled Oxygen at Kati Kati Restaurant. His Wampiza album launch mid-last year was a success despite rumours that the singer was felled by the gatemans. They allegedly handed to him sh30m in fake currency claiming they never realised it at the entrance.

This time around, he seems to have toned out things by putting Silk Events in charge. The mellow-voiced singer says he has chosen people from different bands to play for him to ensure that revellers get the best. "I chose people whom I think understand what they do. With different kinds of talent brought together, I can assure you I am going to be different from what revellers have experienced before," Aziz Azion says.

Oxygen is a seven-track album with such songs as *Balwa*, *Pain Killer*, *Chocolate Girl*, *Warrior*, *Beera Nange* and *Wind Up*. The singer has promised to come on stage early so he can give ample time to his fans, unlike last year when the Police stopped his show because it had surpassed the agreed time. "What happened last year will not happen again, I will be on stage as early as 9:00 pm and I will perform all my songs," he said.

The gates open at 6:00 pm.

But before even XFM came onto the scene, there was Hot100, Radio City and even Capital FM, the second privately owned FM radio station to be launched in Uganda and previously targeting 18 – 30 year olds is now targeting audiences in the 18 – 24 age bracket.

Almost all media houses today have social media accounts on social networking platforms such as

Reports indicate that more and more people spend time on social networking websites than any other site globally with Facebook taking the lion's share. In 2009, it had 206.9 million unique visitors a month translating into 67% of global users visiting the site (Nielsen Reports, 2009). And internet users, according to the same study, spent a whopping five and half hours a day on social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Currently, Facebook has more than 750 million users. Had it been a country, it



would be the third most populated nation after China and India. Legacy media houses marvel at such statistics and look for ways to tap in.

Internet numbers mindboggling

It is very easy to dismiss the power of the internet in a country with electricity challenges, biting poverty and high illiteracy levels but it is mindboggling that Uganda is ranked number nine on the continent when it comes to internet usage. Internet usage statistics as well as the Uganda Communications Commission indicate that they are 3.2 million Ugandans who access the internet at least once a month by the end of year, 2010 (UCC, 2011). With a population of 33 million, that represents almost 10% of the total population.

As the East African newspaper recently reported, the number of East Africans accessing the internet via mobile devices is surpassing those who use fixed internet to do so (Ouma, 2011). It is further said that in countries like Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, mobile penetration currently stands at between 50% and 80% while personal computer penetration is less than 10%. In Kenya, for example, the country's last population census showed that 63% of households have at least one mobile phone but only 3.6% have a computer. In Uganda, those numbers must be similar and digital platforms may also provide some answers.

Opportunities

One of the the telecom companies has a cheeky ad where one girl connects her friend to somebody who has just returned from further studies in "outside countries." The caller advises her friend that if she is to hook her up for a love relationship with the caller's cousin, she has got to speak with an accent identifiable with those who return from abroad. The product being advertised is a mobile social network of sorts where users can chat with others including strangers while protecting their mobile number identity.

However, this telecom ad is not the only one that targets young people. If you listen to radio, watch TV and read newspapers and magazines, you will find that advertisers are shifting their focus as well but they are clever not to alienate the moneyed segment of the population.

This indicates that mobile digital platforms offer opportunities for media houses looking for opportunities to tap into this segment. In fact the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA), after conducting a pilot project at The Observer newspaper in Uganda, decided to launch its Mobile News Grants and Training Scheme. The project aims to help start and

expand mobile news platforms across sub-Saharan Africa with the purpose of supporting newspapers looking to move into mobile or expand their existing mobile news services. Needless to say that such mobile platforms are very attractive to young people.

This does not mean that digital technologies will lead to the extinction of legacy media. I think traditional media will remain but their influence will diminish as we have seen in developed countries. It is, therefore, not surprising that legacy media in Uganda have been busy redesigning and introducing products that appeal to the youth segment as we saw earlier. By the time of writing this article, New Vision was running a series of articles on young entrepreneurs in a pullout named Pakasa (translated as hard work). To feature in Pakasa, one must be below the age of 35. Previously, a newspapers like New Vision would never write articles highlighting entrepreneurial successes of young people, which means that opportunities are there to align content to the country's demographics.

More youthful products will continue to be churned out by media houses. But what challenges do traditional media face by attracting such audiences?

Challenges

Ethics in journalism have remained a thorny issue over the years. But it is even more challenging for journalists to remain ethical at this moment given the pressure editorial executives face from owners who have continued looking at their balance sheets with teary eyes. Not a long ago, some global media titans replaced some journalists with MBA graduates. This was designed to increase revenue.

Media baron, Rupert Murdoch, of the renowned vertically integrated media empire, News Corporation, had to shut down Britain's most selling newspaper, News of the World amid a phone tapping scandal. The scandal left the journalism profession in shock wondering how far journalists and media houses can go in order to create content that appeals to the particular segments that they target.

In fact, ethics is one area Byaruhanga cites as the main challenge her high school targeting magazine faces. "It is a challenge because we must remain responsible yet content that attracts the youth maybe considered unethical a lot of times," she explains. "Media houses that target young audiences have a challenge of drawing the line between what the youth want and what is ethical because to succeed, there is need for endorsements of parents and the institutions that pay the advertising bill."



There is also need for journalists and media professionals at large to acquire multimedia skills if they are to work with the youths. The generation that media houses are bracing themselves to woo, engage, and marry consume content from a lot of digital mobile devices. Knowing only how to type a story in word format will never cut it anymore for any print journalist. The youth will prefer content that they can share with others. So journalists will need to have new skills to be able to compete for the attention of the young generation.

Newspapers and magazines may have to invest in digital versions of their products so that they can easily be accessed on tablet computers and other popular mobile devices. In the west, newspapers have started creating iPad versions among others with every big media house with mobile apps for popular mobile brands running on operating systems such as Android. .

This also calls for journalism schools to adjust to the changing times by updating their syllabuses so that they match the demands of the changing times. Journalism schools in Uganda are still lagging behind without substantial investments in multimedia equipment yet graduates coming out of these institutions should be able to deliver content to people in their age brackets.

Journalism in Uganda is to move from a bulletin-led model to one led by correspondents because of the increasing use of social media platforms particularly Facebook and Twitter. Journalists with huge followers on these platforms will end up demanding more pay because of what they can bring on the table than those who have no click-juice.

Newsrooms will also have to change their editorial policies so that they incorporate guidelines that can help journalists practice their professions in these times. This is because it is not easy for audiences to differentiate what is personal opinion and what is not.

Conclusion

Providing content for the youth is a challenge for most of the legacy media and with advancement in technology shaking the status quo, traditional media houses will face more challenges to remain profitable. In the last one and half years, all the daily newspapers in Uganda have bought and installed new printing presses that can deliver full colour products and everything that the youth treasure. The pressure is bound to increase from shareholders expecting returns on their investments and youths with insatiable appetite for appealing products.

This paper has attempted to highlight the current trends taking place as media houses align themselves to the changing demographics in Uganda. It has also looked at the challenges such media houses will face as well as the opportunities that can be exploited by the industry.

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Digital Migration in Uganda

Issues and Challenges Gilbert Kadilo

Introduction

Uganda will by December 31st 2012 expect to make the shift from analogue to digital broadcasting. This is according to the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MoICT) Digital Migration Strategy (2009). The decision to go digital is against the background of the Regional Radio Communication Conference (RRC-06) that was held in Geneva, Switzerland. The conference established a digital terrestrial broadcasting plan in four regions of the world, including Europe, the Middle East, the former Soviet Union republics, Iran and Africa. The RRC-06 established the GE-06 agreement that is due to replace

the existing analogue GE89 plan. The shift is scheduled for June 2015 when the international obligation of switch-over should be implemented.

Recognizing this trend, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of ICT developed a Digital Migration Policy to ensure the country moves from use of Analogue to Digital technology. Digital Broadcasting entails the use of modulation and compression to transmit video, audio and data signals to the receiver sets (digital sound broadcasting). The digital technology can for instance be adapted to transmit audio programmes (music, news, sports etc). The



Bukedde TV studio already DM compliant

main purpose of the migration process is to ensure that all services operating on the analogue network will be fully replicated on the digital network. The end objective is to switch off the analogue services at a specific point in line with the international switchover protocol

Definitions and issues

Until the 1990s, broadcasting was mainly a matter of transferring sound or video streams through the airwaves by means of analogue signals. This was a linear process, with each element in the content stream taking its turn to transmit behind the one that went before; (Berger; 2010). This at the time worked well, except that it required a lot of band width. Consequently, a lot of capacity was taken up on wireless electronic frequencies in order to carry signals in this manner.

The knock-on effect of this was that in the realm of the airwaves, this meant that only a limited number of stations could be accommodated on the radio spectrum. In TV which uses UHF and VHF frequencies, it was the same story; one station, one frequency. With limited frequencies, the effect was a limit to the number of stations.

With the arrival of digital electronics however, the broadcasting industry changed radically. These technologies meant that sound and video, as well as text and still images, could be stored and transmitted in the form of binary digits. These "one's" and "zero's" correspond to on-off electrical pulses. (Berger 2010).



Consequently, the advantages of these advances for the broadcasting industry are threefold:

First, there is a common currency. Audio, pictures, text are all reduced to binary data, making it possible to access all these data types across media platforms.

Secondly, digital data can be compressed, meaning that large packets of data can be mapped and brought into play through much smaller packets. This implies that more content can be stored electronically on less space than was previously possible. This then allows for more content to be transmitted on the same bandwidth than would have been possible with analogue technology.

The third advantage is that as a result of digital compression, data can be broken up into several simultaneous packets that can later be re-assembled in the right order at the destination according to the code instructions. Consequently, there is a large number of small signals of data bits that are released into the system at a go instead of maintaining the form of stitched-together and sequenced messages that have to wait for their turn in a linear queue.

The import of the above is that the old analogue flow wasted bandwidth with pauses and blank spaces in between electronic data signals. Simply put, digital distribution allows for more efficient utilization of bandwidth.

Broader implications for the broadcasting industry

According to Professor Guy Berger, the overarching significance of these developments for broadcasting is that many more radio and television channels can be accommodated into the same frequency space than would be possible with analogue transmission.

The space freed up by switching to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) is known as the 'Digital Dividend' which means that some of the vacated bandwidth can be used for other purposes. What going digital also makes possible is the flexibility of airwave utilization in terms of the range of alternate broadcast services that can be provided within the same bandwidth at different times of the day. For instance, a single broadcaster could run radio services at certain times of the day on the multiplex and switch to TV or data streams at others. (Berger, 2010)

He further notes that against the above background digital migration is the totality of movement in broadcasting from inefficient analogue signals to more efficient digital ones, to the extent that without digital transmission, one cannot even begin to talk about digital migration even if production and reception are digitized. Thus, the phrase digital migration should designate the digitalization of the complete broadcasting value chain.

It is also worth noting however for purposes of clarity, that migration to digital does not mean that analogue transmission shall come to a sudden stop one day and digital broadcasting begins the next. Such processes are typically phased over a period in which key actors like broadcasters, signal distributors, regulators, manufacturers, governments and the public align themselves for the process to be successful.

This need for a gradual process is especially poignant from the consumers' point of view given there are millions of them in possession of analogue equipment that are not equipped to receive digitally transmitted signals. A sudden switch-over from

analogue to digital would therefore leave millions of people without access to broadcast services.

It was with these considerations in mind that the 2006 Regional Radio Communication Conference (RRC-06) set June 2015 as the switchover date when all services operating on the analogue network will be fully replicated on the digital network with the aim to switch off the analogue services in line with the international switchover protocol.

Placing Uganda in the digital migration process

The developments described in the previous sections of this article beg the question; what is our level of preparedness or indeed progress towards the switchover, come June 2015.

For its part, the government of Uganda which ratified the 2006 Regional Radio Communication Conference (RRC-06) protocol has set itself December 31st 2015 as the switchover date for Uganda to have moved from analogue to digital broadcasting. In order to achieve this target, the government has initiated a number of steps. These government's actions are broadly at three levels; development of policy and regulation and; rationalization of institutional frameworks and mandates and; Action Planning and Roll out.

The policy framework

In an effort to provide direction to the broadcasting sector and lay a foundation for the migration process a new broadcasting policy was developed. Section 4.8 of the National Broadcasting Policy provides the guidelines intended to prepare Uganda for the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting

It provides that the Government will ensure the establishment of an appropriate legal framework to govern the sector, while the Regulator shall ensure a gradual transformation from analogue to digital broadcasting.

The Policy also provides that the broadcaster shall convert the studio production and communication technologies from analogue to digital and to develop all necessary capacity to operate as a digital broadcaster

Section 4.6 of the Policy on the other hand provides for the re-alignment of the broadcasting industry by separating the roles of content provision and signal distribution

The objectives here are: to ensure that signal distribution services are harmonized and conform to required standards; encourage pooling of resources for optimal use; reduce the costs of broadcasting by using common infrastructure; provision of an equitable and competitive environment for broadcast signal distribution; and regulation of ownership and control of signal distribution in the national interest

This section of the Policy also outlines a number of strategies for the different actors in the sector. The most crucial of government's roles are; to promote fair competition and efficiency in the business of signal distribution; and regulate ownership and control of signal distribution in the overall national interest.

The signal distributor on the other hand is expected to ensure proper coverage planning for the content provider; and ensure high quality and reliable service

The broadcasters will ensure conformity with technical specifications by the regulator



Institutional frameworks and mandates

Seeing that there were multiple institutions whose role(s) in the broadcast sector appeared duplicated, the government undertook to harmonization the operations of these institutions. It constituted a multi-institutional task team whose overall objective was to harmonise the Communications Act with the Electronic Media Act, particularly in relation to the functions of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and those of the Broadcasting Council (BC). The move to harmonise these regulatory frameworks and mandates followed the establishment in 2006 of the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology (MOICT) under whose jurisdiction the UCC and BC were placed.

In direct relation to the digital migration process, the Task Team addresses itself to four key areas: current rules and regulation on broadcasting; the licensing regime; expansion of the mandate of the new body; and the efficient use of radio frequency.

The Task Team further emphasised that broadcast spectrum is an essential resource underpinning one of Uganda's most dynamic sectors. It importantly noted that the spectrum is a finite resource so its allocation requires effective and efficient coordination at national and global level.

Action planning and roll out

In 2009, the government also developed a Digital Migration Strategy for Television Broadcasting in Uganda that will be the basis for action planning and roll out of the migration process.

Section 2.0 of the document sets out the policy statement, objectives and implementation strategies. It underlines the need to move towards meeting the needs of technological convergence consistent with the legislative and institutional provisions adopted by the government. It emphasizes the need to seek a balance between the need to foster commercial development of the broadcasting industry and to make sure broadcasting serves the national interest.

The strategy outlines four objectives: to create and separate the current market structure into infrastructure service provision meaning expressly broadcast infrastructure and content service provision expressly content; to ensure access to quality broadcasting services; to ensure efficient use of spectrum and; ensure environmental protection through reduction of multiple antennae sites

Outstanding issues and concerns for Uganda on digital migration

A lot has been said about the benefits-both current and potential-of the change to digital broadcasting and the processes and actions that have been taken to ensure Uganda has a smooth switchover come December 1st 2012. However, the reality on the ground seems to indicate that all is not well with the migration process in Uganda. Some of these are so serious as to suggest we may not be ready for June 2015, let alone our self-imposed deadline of December 2012.

The UBC monopoly as signal distributor

The proposal by Cabinet to grant the national broadcaster, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC) exclusive rights over the distribution of broadcast signal when the country moves from analogue to digital is one of many challenges that need to be navigated-and quickly-if the June 2012 timetable is to be met.

The proposal came to light when Information Minister Marry Karoro Okurut told the committee on Presidential Affairs recently that the decision to award the rights to UBC for the first five years was because of its competence and experience, insisting that UBC is the only broadcaster with the technical capacity to handle digital migration.

Already, on the face of it, the very idea appears to go against the principles of fair play as provided in the National Broadcasting Policy which aims to ensure an equitable and competitive environment for broadcast signal distribution.

Indeed, the idea has drawn sharp responses from Members of Parliament, who will have none of it and have advised the government to revisit its position. Mr. Igeme Nabeta, Chairperson of the parliamentary Information and Communication Technology committee, is leading critic of having UBC as regulator.¹

He noted in a report to the committee that countries like Norway that had opted to use a single distributor had experienced challenges because the single distributor had failed to provide the necessary services.

Other East African Community (EAC) member states on the other hand seem to have taken a different route from what Uganda is proposing. Information available indicates that Kenya and Rwanda have both approved two signal distributors each, while Tanzania has approved three distributors.

For the time being therefore this particular issue remains unresolved and there is no knowing yet how it will be resolved. What is clear however is that the longer it remains unresolved the greater the probability that Uganda shall at the very least miss her self-imposed switchover deadline of 30th June 2012.

Digital migration-whose agenda?

Questions have also been asked about the imperative for African countries to go digital. Prof. Guy Berger of Rhodes University suggests that the decision taken at the RRC-06 to go digital and the resultant pressure on African countries to undergo and conclude digital migration had more to do with the interests of the European sector, considering there is no major pressure to free up airwave spectrum in Africa, nor are there strong consumer electronics industries or consumer markets.

What seems to feed Berger's argument is that within the current digital trends, there is a tilt towards enabling audiences to receive digital content because they can easily save it, make identical copies, amend it, or bounce it on to others across different platforms. At this point, he notes, broadcasting can begin to interface with internet-delivered and mobile-delivered audio and audio-video content.

His observation is that the pressure for digital migration in developed countries is not demand-led, i.e. a response to the consumer market place, but mainly supply-side driven. This, he

¹ Nabeta is also proprietor of a private radio and TV station (NBS Khodeyo and NBS TV)



says, accounts for the imperative to build marketing and consumer awareness into digital migration policies and strategies.

An opinion article that appeared in The New Vision newspaper of August 25th 2011 seems to echo Berger's sentiments regarding the forces behind the digital migration process. The writer asserts that the digital migration is part of the USA's covert star wars programme. He argues that indeed since 1963 when the Communication Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) was formed, 11 countries signed agreement to form a single global satellite network, the International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (INTELSAT) based in Washington DC. A more powerful satellite was later added to carry government and diplomatic traffic but more specifically intelligence gathering.

The article goes on to say, that with the immense range of applications possible with digitalization of broadcasting, the Anglo-American empire could not only make billions by forcing ordinary people to buy decoders and new TV sets, but also make more money from governments hoodwinked into digital migration.

In conclusion, the writer questions the veracity of spending \$72m to migrate to digital television as opposed to saving the lives of patients in hospitals.

It is not in the interest of this article to debate the merits or demerits of the above assertions but it is an issue the government will have to ably deal with if the migration process should succeed.

Public awareness and support for the migration process

Public awareness and support is perhaps the most significant of the challenges the government will have to overcome if Uganda is to achieve a successful migration process. Commenting on the South African digital migration process in 2009, the Deputy Minister of Communications Dina Paul observed that the digital migration process needed to be people-driven and people-centred and had to be the determinants and beneficiaries of the venture both socially and economically.

This observation could not have been more poignant, given that millions of consumers today use analogue equipment and would have to either get rid of them or acquire technology that would enable them receive digital signals.

Indeed, Section 5.4 of the National Digital Migration Strategy for Television Broadcasting in Uganda developed by the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology in 2009, specifically provides for the consumer aspects of the migration process.

It provides as a key strategy that consumers are helped to understand that the switch-over is definite and have information on how they can make informed purchases and be given adequate notice to enable those intending to invest in new equipment to make choices informed by the government's switchover commitment.

In the context of the above provision, there are two key issues: availability of digital receiving apparatus at affordable

prices to the consumer; and, the need for a gradual migration process that would allow consumers time to adjust to the new environment. However, neither of the two issues seems to have been moved much if at all, while public awareness about the whole digital migration process remains an area of contention.

Conclusion

The government of Uganda has already made a commitment along with other member states of the ITU and initial steps have been taken to establish the necessary policy and regulatory frameworks to smooth the process. The realities of implementation however, are still a sticky issue and will make it difficult to beat the switchover deadline.

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Media in an Era of Advertiser Recession: Rethinking The Business Models.

John Baptist Wasswa

Background

When the new Minister of Finance Maria Kiwanuka announced that the government was to cut its advertising budget by half, and newspapers and other media subscriptions by a third, she sent shockwaves in the media industry. The immediate reactions by major media houses were largely dismissive and to a lesser extent combative. Indeed the government is the biggest advertiser, contributing nearly about 65% of all advertising revenue in media. Advertising managers agree to this. With over 43 established competitors, industry experts say that in the first half of 2011, Ugx.151 billion has already been sunk into advertising compared to Ugx.140 billion spent on advertising in 2010. By the year-end, over Ugx.200 billion will have been spent.¹



New Finance Minister Maria Kiwanuka announced the government media budget cuts

The justification government gave for the budget cut was to exercise frugality in hard economic times. These hard times were characterised by riots and protests in many parts of Uganda against government handling of the economy. The anger was also prompted by what many saw as extravagant spending of public funds to win over voters during the February general elections. Also annoying to the public was the purchase, in times of economic hardships, of a fleet of fighter jets from Russia at the cost of US\$700 million. All events had provided good fodder to media for stories, pictures, analyses and commentaries. The central message in most

¹ The Summit Business Review. Accessed on October 9, 2011



media was: Government must exercise prudence, frugality, responsibility and public accountability. The budget cuts were presented in that frame. But to the media, it was a punch below the belt.

Several analyses have featured in the media on the extent of these government measures. Advertising is the backbone of most media business. In Uganda's case, the rapid expansion of media (280 radio stations, 30 TV stations and five daily newspapers) means a shrinking slice of the advertising cake. This has direct implications on the viability of many media houses, and on the quality of journalism they offer.

Therefore the first reactions from media houses themselves was fear of slump in revenue. Managers at both *The New Vision* and *The Daily Monitor* referred, albeit remotely, to a possible hike in advertising rates, and probably the cover prices. The other options available to corporate organizations in times of distress include downsizing of staff, cost cutting across departments and looking for new markets. For media, this means that possible layoffs are in the pipeline. But immediately, there would be a refocusing of content and products to more leisurely, light stuff to attract young readers. [See separate article on this.]

The discourse on media budget cuts by the government also comprised analyses of the possible reasons beyond government-stated claims of cost-cutting across sectors. The media industry, still in shock following increased government suppression of critical media, considered the cuts another strategy to further weaken media and whip it into submission. Indeed, government had in past elected not to advertise in private media, a measure that was primarily targeted at *The Monitor* newspaper in the early 1990s. The *Monitor* struggled on and survived the ban. Commenting on the three year ban then, Prime Minister Kintu Musoke said that government like any legal entity can choose with whom to do business.² If then there was a precedent, the question is whether it was a case of *déjà-vu*, or an entirely new situation that informed the unprecedented budget cuts, or both?

Soon after Kiwanuka's budget announcement, the Uganda Advertising Association comprising leading advertising agencies and managers of mainstream media sought a meeting with the Finance Minister to express their concerns. This meeting gave important clues at perhaps the main reason government was making the radical cuts in advertising budget. Government had realized it was not getting due return on investment in advertising in media, which is a major indictment on the advertising industry and media in general. Government had also noted with concern, how advertising agencies had colluded with media houses, and officials in government, to create advertising projects worth billions of shillings which did not have real impact. This was a major indictment on the advertising and media industries, UAA's promise to Finance Minister to come up with a code of conduct, exposed the general customer dissatisfaction by leading advertisers, including government in advertising in Uganda's legacy media.

2

Personal Communication, August 1992

Indeed not all government advertising went to waste. Many health campaign adverts, for instance, delivered effective messages. But there is serious debate on impact, if any, on voting patterns of the volumes of newspaper inserts, radio and TVs placements outlining how each government sector was fulfilling the President's 2006 manifesto. Many media outlets reaped millions from government in these manifesto adverts which were mere placements not designed to appeal to a runaway electorate. This, according to informed sources, increased government anger towards media.

The business model of most small and even large media houses factor government advertising as the main revenue stream. Even the *New Vision* which has a lucrative commercial printing section, depends to a large extent on government business.

Taken in this context, the fears of media business are understandable. The precarious position many media now find themselves has exposed the fault lines in the traditional business model characterized by overdependence on government and corporate advertising, and a journalism of detachment that does not consciously add value to the business of media's advertising clients. But how do we explain the failure by most media to develop other viable revenue streams and continue to depend on government benevolence?

Yet government was only realizing what many private business had identified much earlier. Leading companies and many non-government organizations (NGOs) have also scaled back on advertising in traditional media citing similar reasons. The media in Uganda, has apparently not adjusted their work ethic to the changing client expectations, shaped in part by the harsh realities of the global economy. Many advertisements previously placed in newspapers can now be found on company websites. The general complaint is that media businesses reap huge revenues out of advertisers without seeking to actively create value for them. Paul Mare, former chief executive officer of the electricity distributor Umeme Ltd, bemoaned the failure by leading media to match his huge advertising spend with reciprocal publicity. "The more we advertise, the more we get bashed in media," Mare said. He considered telling media houses to bid for Umeme's advertising worth billions of shillings with strict proposals on how they would offer value for money.³ NGOs and government departments are increasingly looking at more effective ways of reaching audiences away from traditional media.⁴

3 Private Discussion with Paul Mare, while author was consulting at S & J Strategies

4 A full page colour advertisement costs Ug. Shillings 8 million (about US\$3,000)



A new media policy?

The government decision could also point at a new media policy that seeks to tame media houses through subtle pressure without appearing to be oppressive at a time when the new international democratic imperative is igniting popular resistance against oppressive regimes.

In the recent past, Uganda media has experience growing suppression leading to a climate of fear. Some of the most pronounced incidents: the 2009 clampdown on critical media, caused by the pro-Buganda Kingdom⁵ and anti-government riots that led to the shutting down of five radio stations and the suspension of several leading journalists; the removal of top editors out of *The Monitor*, and later *The New Vision*; state agents charging journalists with cases ranging from treason, publication of false news, sedition, sectarianism and others all combined to make Uganda media among the most endangered in Africa by the time of the 2011 elections.

The brutal police suppression of the post 2011 election protests, called the 'Walk to Work demonstrations', received widespread publicity in both local and foreign media. Indeed Prime Minister Amama Mbabazi complained that media portrayal of the riots had scared away investors and tourists. President Yoweri Museveni singled out major news outlets as supporting the opposition and the rioters: these included the BBC, Al Jazeera, NTV and the Daily Monitor.⁶ Broadcast stations were barred from live coverage of the demonstrations, and the Broadcasting Council threatened to switch off those stations that did not heed the government instructions.

The timing of the protests, coming at the height of the Arab uprisings, put the government under the most unwanted spotlight. Any more overt suppressive acts would further complicate its international standing. This, as some have posited, must have pushed the government to change tactics from a media clampdown to a more subtle but effective method of financial suffocation. Maria Kiwanuka, a new face in government was the perfect choice to execute this scheme.

The new finance minister, is herself a local media baroness. She owns Radio One and Radio Two that trades as Akaboozi ku Bbiri. The second station, broadcasting in Luganda language was among the five closed in 2009 for drumming up support for the Buganda Kingdom. Indeed Kiwanuka is very close to the Buganda Royal couple. She was the one to announce the major cuts in government advertising and newspaper subscription. Such an announcement from Kiwanuka, carefully wrapped in budget-speak

5 The spontaneous riots in Central Uganda (Buganda Kingdom) followed government refusal to allow the King of Buganda to visit part of his kingdom.

6 <http://cima.ned.org/ugandas-yoweri-museveni-lashes-out-media-enemies> Accessed August 25th, 2011

could hardly be interpreted as deliberately designed to cripple media.

So as it stands now, faced with financial threats from government and leading private sector advertisers, many Uganda media business find themselves between a rock and a hard place. Business survival is now the key concern, especially for the many small private media enterprises.

From this situation, several scenarios emerge to shape the media landscape with worrying implications for especially small private media.

Media owners flex muscles

First, media proprietors or their agents become major players in the enforcing editorial controls and in order to protect their businesses against government and to a lesser extent corporate backlash. Outspoken journalists were forced out of the *The Daily Monitor* and from several radio stations. In 2010 a group of owners of leading radio stations formed The Uganda Radio Owners Association to protect their businesses. This association groups most major leading private radio stations in Kampala, including some of those that were closed. Maria Kiwanuka is member of this association.

It is worth noting that the first major decision of this association was to design a code of ethics for their staff. The code has elaborate clauses on how to handle material that is critical of government, including talk shows and public demonstrations. It should be noted that there are already other codes in force including one in the Press and Journalist Act and another by the Independent Media Council of Uganda.

Ownership, it is generally accepted, entitles the owner to special rights and influence. A former CEO of the now defunct media conglomerate, Hollinger International put it:

"If editors disagree with us, they should disagree with us when they're no longer in our employ(ment). The buck stops with ownership. I am responsible for meeting payroll. Therefore, I will determine what the papers say, and how they're going to be run."⁷

Criticism curtailed

The second scenario is that freedom of expression, journalistic independence and objectivity get subordinated to cohabitation with the state and with the powerful private sector. In addition, the space for critical debate on public issues of government shrinks. This was the case when some of the most vibrant radio commentators were moved from talk shows and others abandoned the programs. In newspapers, more outside writers fill commentary pages with advocacy pieces from the Third Sector (NGO World) on issues such as domestic violence,

7 Taken from Press Council South Africa. <http://www.presscouncil.org.za/pages/welcome.php> Accessed August 25, 2011



biogas, climate change and renewable energy. Criticism of the private sector, especially big business is either eliminated or toned down. For these media to survive as businesses, they have to make the above compromises. (Curran 2000 sounded this fear in his critique of the media as a public sphere. Indeed Curran said media must move away from watching over government alone as the seat of power, and also monitor private business.

“This traditional view takes no account of the exercise of economic power and authority by shareholders in private business. The issue is no longer simply that the media are compromised by their links to big business: the media are big business themselves” (Curran 200: 122-123)

Increased government influence

The third scenario is the increase of government supportive information in both newspapers and on radio in Kampala. In The New Vision Group, where government has majority shares, positive news of government promises is more regular on cover pages. Nearly every private radio station in the capital has found value and safety in hosting one of the government spin-masters for talk shows. In fact Tamale Mirundi, the President’s Press Secretary features on one of the Luganda radio stations each day of the week. At the time when there is reduction of critical voices, the government spin masters ensure the manufacture of consent and presenting a world view favourable to government. Positive coverage of government and toning down on criticism can win these media a slice of the now reduced government advertising budget. This is what media scholars Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (2002) posit when they question the basic premises of democracy and free press--that media serve, and propagandise on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them.”⁸

Expansion of pro-government media

The fourth scenario is the expansion of space for pro-government media in the public sphere. The Uganda Broadcasting Corporation, which is fully government owned, and The New Vision Group, where government has majority shares have both expanded their platforms, and reach. In terms of content both have gone beyond providing public service information to commercial programming and entertainment, in direct competition with the private media.

UBC TV added a new channel Star TV, its several radio stations including Star Radio and Mega FM. The New Vision Group launched Bukedde TV, TV West, Urban TV, and it also owns five radio channels: Radio West, Bukedde, Etop Radio, Rupiny FM and, Xfm. The group is planning TV stations for northern, Bunyoro and West Nile regions too. The New Vision also has a stable of lifestyle magazines

and a strong online presence. Apart from UBC TV, the rest of stations are largely entertainment driven airing hours of Nigerian movies, local music and religious programs and football with limited or no advertising. This presents another puzzle. If government and other major private sector advertisers are slashing media budgets, then why are more pro-government outlets being launched? The answer is partly to increase government influence in the public sphere, populating it with friendly voices. Even the entertainment zone becomes contested space as pro-government media also beam 24 hour entertainment.

This gives triple advantage to government: it can hook audiences away from other private and sometimes critical media; it can also send out its messages to large parts of the country at minimal cost through these outlets; and by occupying audiences with constant entertainment programming, the space for critical discussion of politics and democratic practice is reduced to a bare minimum.



Paul Mare: Former Umeme MD complained about media’s lack of appropriate positive coverage of the power vendor

Small private radio and TV stations with similar programming may not be able to outcompete these pro-government media that are more better resourced and supported by organized marketing, sales and human resource structures. With time many private stations in direct competition with these pro-government media will lose audience, and subsequently the advertising revenue. They will then not be able to fund editorial operations.

Former Information Minister the late Basoga Nsadhu, was a keen advocate of a media system dominated

⁸ Herman and Chomsky (2002) in reference to the US media system.



by government-friendly voices. He opposed the then proposed partial privatization of The New Vision, arguing that it would cost government two thirds of media influence. He said in a confidential letter to the President:

The privatization of The New Vision Corporation is not a prudent move politically. We have in the past during difficult times given guidance on content without compromising editorial independence. This will cease with mere majority shareholding. Commercial considerations will become the driving force at the expense of informing the people correctly. The media is a powerful tool of influence, which should not be left to market forces alone...The state must maintain control over the country's information system to ensure the public interest." 9

One thing that Basoga did not foresee was that partial privatization of The New Vision would energise it into a big multi-media business with resources to increase government influence in the public sphere, and not necessarily the public interest, through expansion into many platforms.

Rural Radio

The situation of pressure from both government and big advertisers is more critical in upcountry media organizations which have fewer resources, a largely unskilled manpower, excessive owner influence and poor management, editorial and marketing skills. Media in rural Uganda largely refers to radio, for it is the most prevalent medium. Radio owners are either politicians in government, private business people but also with close connections to the government of the day, or church organizations.

Trainers from media organizations, like UMDF, are often struck by the shaky and arbitrary management at many of the upcountry radio stations characterized by high staff turnover, a largely freelance pool of untrained reporters, little and erratic pay, and programming that often does not reflect local concerns but is simply copied from stations in Kampala. Stations Managers complain about poor advertising response from the local community, which in turn accuse radio stations of not being locally relevant. Every upcountry radio station has a department in Kampala where they compete for the small advertising cake from regular corporate clients. They sell blocks of airtime for very little money, a mere fraction of what Kampala stations charge. So they cannot invest in training journalists, attracting good staff or retaining the few they have. With marketing officers hooked in Kampala and ill-

9 Basoga, Nsandhu, Former Minister of Information: Letter to the President Against the Privitisation of the New Vision Printing and Publishing Corporation, October 2002. Ministry of Information Records.

trained journalists doubling as local marketeers, rural radio has little prospects of growth.

For rural radio, as for all private media, the dynamics of post-election Uganda demand a change in business models. Private media houses are primarily business concerns which are expected to make a profit for the shareholder, and also invest in good journalism. The question is how do media firms make good journalism that speaks to the revenue charts? How do we train journalists so that they practice the journalism that bring along with it good audiences and subsequent advertisers? Which interventions do development partners need to support to make private media run profitably, with competent and competitive staffs in the future? Many media owners are left wondering if training initiatives make impact to the profitability of the stations.

Shift of emphasis

This paper recommends a shift in emphasis at the following levels:

(i) The shrinking of the advertising revenue from government and major corporate companies should be a wake up call for many private media houses to rethink how they do their businesses. First media need to outgrow the dependence on government business because it ultimately compromises their independence. Secondly private media need to move away from the culture of cloning, where they simply copy what others are doing. They should instead reinvent themselves within their local conditions and develop content that is relevant to local audiences and businesses. They will need appropriate technology, engage the public and continuously adapt to changing circumstances. Media will need that journalism that supports its own business and the business of its audiences.

A survey by CIMA found that "while numerous countries have expanded press freedoms, "many media managers and editors in developing countries find that they are unable to take full advantage of their new freedoms because they lack basic skills in business management."10 Whereas pro-government media have structures and more skilled manpower, private media owners and managers largely lack these essentials. Training in media management will be essential for many private media firms. What is true is that today's media need more than good journalists. They must engage professional business managers.

(ii) At institutional level, training institutions and organizations involved in media development need to design courses that address the gaps in business management of media especially the lack of knowledge of

10 www.cima.ned.org/.../matching-market-and-model-business-independent



media's business customers. Very often during interaction with upcountry radio stations and even some private print outlets, one does not fail to notice that the media outlet is looking not in the direction of what it supposed to be its key clientele. Training organizations need to shift emphasis in this direction, at least in the short to mid term. Hours spent in training on good journalism courses end in ruin because media owners do not see a correlation between interventions and revenue to the business.

(iii) At the national level, government needs to change attitude towards media from one of constant suspicion and manipulation. If the country is to develop a strong media system that will support the growth of democracy and good governance, then systems, and not mere government advertising budgets, need to be put in place to support media development. These include progressive policies, and training programs for supporting small media. The South African Government in 2002 created the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA)¹¹ to encourage access to media by traditionally disadvantaged groups; to develop community and small commercial media; to develop skilled manpower and to encourage research into media development and diversity. Uganda can design its own model of support to its rapidly expanding but less skilled media industry.

Conclusion

This paper has explored the current media trends in post election Uganda. It has discussed the impact of shrinking government and traditional private sector advertising on media in general but rural media in particular. The paper also discussed factors and the weaknesses within the media system that contributed to the advertiser withdrawal. It concludes that the shrinking advertising trends are enough cause for media to reexamine their business models that have been undermined by complacency, and failure to give the business clientele the necessary value for their advertising spend. Finally, this paper makes a case for a shift of focus towards developing sound media business by media owners and managers, training institutions and government.

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Community Radio in the Age of a Commercialized Media System: The Demise Of Community Radio As Rules Of The Game Change?

Ivan Lukanda

Introduction

At a recent meeting organised by the African Democracy Institute, yours truly was privileged to listen to a conversation between two representatives of community radios, one was from an urban community station and the other from a rural station. The conversation centered around survival of their respective stations. The representative from the rural station indicated that they had come up with a business strategy in which each of his seven staff (volunteers) would highlight five companies in their local town that they think have the potential to advertise. The manager will then write to those companies and ask station staff to convince them to advertise. Staff would then get a commission depending on how many companies would have brought business. This strategy is embedded with the aim of fetching the station 14 million in the next financial year. The station will then find other sources of money such as payment for announcements and donations to finance its 60 million budget.



Kagadi Kibale studios

On the other hand, the representative from the urban community radio said that she was not very sure of their allowances for that month because the station was cash strapped. She said that although top management had resisted advertisements for a long time, they later found themselves going to potential advertisers for business. She indicated that their biggest advertiser is a telecom company. She explained that the cause of the shift in paradigm was the need to pay taxes amounting to five million a year and also pay salaries (read allowances) in the wake of decreasing donor support as development partners cut their budgets to remain afloat as world economies face the avalanche of the global economic crisis.

So from this conversation, I gathered that community radio business plans are getting closer and are in some cases similar to those of most commercial radios where presenters are asked to look for sponsors for their programmes before they can be allowed to air them. No manager wants to be sacked because they failed to sustain the station on air. Business plans are necessary because radio stations need money to source for good content and to retain good staff. In practical terms, this suggests that community radios have to evolve to survive the floods of commercialization as donor support dwindles.

Background

Community radios are a form of public service broadcasting whose focus is to make its audience the main protagonist, by their involvement in all aspects of management, production and programming that will help them in development and social advancement of their community (Fraser and Estrada, 2001:15).



Community radios can focus on geographical communities like Kagadi-Kibale FM or on interest groups like Mama FM. On the other hand commercial or private radios are those which provide programmes designed for profit from advertising revenues and are owned and controlled by private individuals or by commercial enterprises.

In terms of characteristics, community radios are non-profit, open to or are accountable to the community they serve and are mainly staffed by volunteers. They are open to participation in programme making and management by guaranteeing access to all members of the community. They can serve communities of interest, geographical communities or cultural communities. Their key role is fostering tolerance and pluralism in society. As such, they form a separate sub-group within the media sector (Macedo, 2007: iii). Precisely, they are an intersection of public service and private radios.

Access implies the availability of broadcasting services to all members of the community; participation implies that the public is involved in planning, management and also provides producers and performers. They are also formerly or informally owned by the community. The station's policies, management and programming must be a responsibility of the community for a station to be considered a true community radio. It is non-profit-making but may rely on a variety of sources of funding including donations, grants, membership fees and sponsorships. Other characteristics include editorial independence and credibility; representation of different groups and interests in the community and inclusion of minority and marginalised groups (Article 19, 2006).

Basing on these principles, any community with the willingness to cooperate can reach a consensus and pool resources to start their own radio station to advance their interests. As part of the consensus, the community has to analyse its needs and determine how the station can help resolve them. In the same way, any individual or commercial enterprise can start a commercial radio and broadcast with the aim of making profits.

Community radios started in Bolivia in the 1940s as a trade union response to the appalling conditions of workers in the mines seeing that the tin barons were living extravagant lifestyles (Fraser and Estrada, 2001). The workers were living in cold camps of very high altitudes, were poorly paid, suffered from *silicosis* and looked very old by 40. So these stations came to be known as 'Miners' Radios'. The stations were funded mainly by trade union dues and operated at local and regional levels. The trade unions bought the equipment, trained young people from their villages, and the workers themselves funded the experience by giving a percentage of their salary to sustain their radio stations. By the 1970s, community radios had become phenomena in Bolivia, Latin America and have now spread world over.

In the 1980s, UNESCO picked interest in local radio broadcasting. UNESCO reasoned that very few African countries had a common language that enabled national broadcasters effectively reach

rural people who were at least three quarters of the population. This meant that the different language groups could only listen to radio for a very short time each day. Physical and mental distances were also serious problems: the broadcasters were too far away to be received understandably; and the urban producers were too far away mentally to understand rural audiences properly. To address these issues Radio Uganda, then, came up with Red, Green and Red Channels in attempting to cater for the different language groups. This, however, left them under state control –the norm of the time –like in many multiethnic African countries.

In Africa, the government of Kenya welcomed the idea first in an attempt to unite its multiethnic society. In effect, the first community radio was set up at Homa Bay on the shores of Lake Victoria in 1982. In East Africa, other community radio initiatives include Kenya's Mang'elele, *Studio Ijambo* of Burundi and *Radio Kwizera* of Tanzania's Kagera Camps.

Uganda's first community radio station, *Kagadi-Kibale Community Radio*, went on air in 1999 with the aim of promoting the interests of people living around Kibale district in the western part of the country. *Mama FM* was established later in 2001 to cater for the interests of Ugandan women. Other community radios include *Radio Apac* that caters for people in and around the Lango Sub-region among others and *Radio Maria* owned by the Catholic Church. Commercial radios include *Sanyu FM*, *Capital FM*, *Radio Simba*, *Radio One*, *CBS FM*, and *Hoima FM*.

On the African continent, community radio is currently most popular in Mali, Niger, Benin, Senegal, Ghana, Zambia and South Africa (Wanyeki, 2000; Ilboudo, 2001; AMARC, 2004). Community radio in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa was a product of liberalisation resulting from the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) that were ushered in by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the late 1980s and early 1990s after the fall of Communism as western Capitalism, packaged as liberal democracy, gained ascendancy (Berger, 1998; Tettey, 2001). Therefore the liberalisation of the airwaves was a result of clamouring for decentralisation of national radio services as a means toward entrenching political pluralism and public access to the means of sharing ideas for national development, a key tenet in a democracy.

Coupled with liberalisation were two important breakthroughs: firstly the invention of cheap transistor receivers; and secondly low powered transmitters (Fraser and Estrada 2001:8). The new technologies were easily acquired by private individuals unlike earlier models of transistors and transmitters which needed government assistance. Private and community radio stations emerged in a kind of democracy where the media was seen as "a means to further ends –economic and social goals –as well as to democratic participation in the realm of society even if a meaningful vote and media access are only necessary and by no means sufficient conditions for such ends" (Berger, 1998:282). Therefore, democratic institutions and practices like community radios are an end in themselves as they represent cherished values and noble principles for which many people



have striven. Because they facilitate participation, they are, therefore, an integral part of being human and exercising human rights, responsibilities and freedoms. However, other factors such as a favourable legal regime and the respect for human rights are necessary for the success of community and commercial radios in a democracy.

Community radio is a product of many factors: Uganda is largely rural, non or semi-illiterate with low print media readership; there is in effect no competition from television in most areas and to underprivileged interest groups; and that there was increase in donor support for community development and the need to protect human rights and democracy. These factors were complemented by the exerting of pressure by local and international NGOs on the government to review the constitution to provide for freedom of expression and democracy. It then appears community radio arose as a way of expanding the public sphere by reaching the marginalised people. Currently, there are over 30 community radio stations operating in Uganda (UCC, 2011). There is a likelihood that more community radio stations will be opened up in Uganda to allow access to more underprivileged people in this persistently commercialising economy.

Currently, there are over 30 community radios whose niche is either geographical location e.g Kagadi-Kibaale FM, gender identity (e.g Mama FM) or faith-based (e.g Radio Maria, Namirembe FM, Top Radio). It should be noted that many radios in this tier are hybrids as they identify themselves as belonging here but many of their practices qualify them for the commercial tier.

Community radio initiatives in a commercial broadcast sector may focus on a range of community development issues from health, education to land ownership and management systems. Community radio stations enable sharing of information on how to find solutions to community problems. These solutions can be arrived at through community dialogue to initiate novel solutions or basing on how other communities have solved similar problems (Wanyeki, 2000). Commercial radios rarely spend sufficient resources on these issues unless they provide a path to the much needed resources –money and power. Hence, the attempt by community radios to ply the commercial route is worthy exploring in such a commercialising economy.

This is largely attributed to the ever-present power of the elite, especially those with either political or economic power or both in what can best be described by the political economy theory of the media. The theory argues that the structure of the industry influences content. The forces behind the multiplication of radio stations in Uganda have presented the country with a vocal minority since there are some voices that would not be previously heard. The commonest voices are those who are politically empowered, have a regular source of income, are interested in politics, and have the political efficacy. Therefore, in terms of participation, both commercial and community radio fall short on many fronts. Radio in Uganda is an entertainment industry with occasional news and public affairs. This is the reason why radio is not monitoring power the way newspapers are.

Legal and structural deficiencies

According to the Uganda National Broadcasting Police draft (2004) the community broadcasting tier seeks to promote broadcasting which is for, by and about specific geographical communities of interest, whose ownership and management is representative of those communities, which pursue a social development agenda and which is not-for-profit. Its objectives are: to provide citizens with a platform to articulate their issues; to provide more opportunities for programming in indigenous Ugandan languages; to provide indigenous languages relevant to development at the grassroots; to reduce the gap between the urban and rural communities in accessing communication for development; to encourage members of the community to participate in planning, production and presentation of programmes; and to promote ownership of media by low income groups of society i.e. the vulnerable (NBP, 2006: 19-20).

It should be noted that this policy was shelved and has never been debated and passed by government.

The implications of shelving the NBP 2006 is that it allows government and its appointed regulator to broadly apply sections that it deems convenient at the time without being held accountable to an approved document. With this kind of fluidity the instances of preferential treatment or victimisation of stations or media practitioners are increased. From the contents of this policy, it can be adduced that it is silent on explaining issues of funding and finance, ownership and governance, and management and operational issues.

The policy, however, has a number of provisions that are very progressive, for instance those on promotion of local content and regulation of ownership, which one cannot call upon to hold the media accountable, again because the policy was “shelved.” In its current state, the policy serves as a life-jacket which can be called upon as and when the regulator senses the possibility of “instability” in the industry.

Despite the good intentions of the Broadcasting Policy, it is clear that the policy is not in tandem with other laws and circumstances under which the media survives. Several political leaders have come out to make statements that imply press freedom is not a priority in Uganda.

The discussion above demonstrates that the legal regime governing the media in Uganda since 1995 is more liberal, though still on the stretchers, if compared to previous regimes.

Moreover, one of the criterion for deciding how much a station should pay is distance from the capital city:

- (0 to 100km - 3,000,000/ p.a;
- 10 to 200Km- 2,000,000/p.a;
- 201 to 300km- 1,500,000/- p.a;
- 300Km- 1,000,000/-p.a) (UCC, 2011).



These taxes apply to both commercial and community radios in within the same distance range from the capital city, Kampala. It is also important to note that radios stations also pay other taxes such as trade licences to their respective local authorities.

Because of the licence fees and other costs, many of the would be community radios find themselves operating like pure commercial stations considering that many stations are created, operated and controlled by commercial operators by proxy. Many faith-based stations are registered as community of interest radio stations. Many of them operationally end up operating as hybrids between community and commercial stations, mostly for survival reasons. A number of them (particularly those affiliated with the less traditional churches) tend to be under the direct influence of one or two people that also happen to be the leaders of the related denomination. The ones belonging to the Catholic Church, SDA and Islamic community appear to have better established systems. The management of Radio Maria in particular is highly centralised and until recently, Radio Maria still got programming guidance from Rome. But there are also radio stations established by politicians and given community sense through their community sounding names but are in reality public and money mobilization tools for their creators. For instance, former health minister Mike Mukula, who has made his presidential ambitions (2016) public knowledge owns Voice of Teso and Voice of Busoga.

So the current policy (for all it is worth) is silent or extremely vague on two key issues: 1) Procedure for licensing 2) Procedure for appointment and composition of regulatory bodies. These are major lacunae and they leave the field open for a great deal of undue influence from both the industry and government. One unclear issue about the broadcasting policy is the issue of broadcasting quotas. The policy uses the words like "significant percentage of local content" without mentioning the exact percentage. Such an unclear policy is difficult to implement. Moreover, the policy hardly talks about journalists yet they are key in implementing and generating local content.

One observation that may draw attention to readers is that Government is more interested in control rather than in facilitating the development of radio. As long you do not abuse government or oppose it, anything goes for radio. Most reporters who have been summoned, arrested or detained by authorities have suffered not because of the quality of what they said but the potential effect the statements made in the media were likely to have on the political career of those in authority or to the profits of companies negatively reported about since a bad press can mean the end of a political career or the collapse of the business.

Are we seeing the demise of community radio as rules of the game change?

There are arguments that community radio is more of a fallacy than a reality. This is because community and commercial radios are tending toward similarity although the latter continues to be more participatory than the former. For instance, Kagadi-Kibale FM occasionally opts for outside broadcasting especially during the anniversary week when the "station is taken to the people". The similarity can also be attributed to the fact that commercialism has the ability to neutralise community radio to sound and operate like it is commercial, under the engineering of the elite. The elite through their financial and political power control the operations of radio stations. The elite control the agenda at radio stations by deciding the content, when and how the public is represented in debates on most issues. The power of the elite can therefore significantly affect freedom of expression. Consequently, this reduces the independence radios are supposed to exhibit. Participation at radio stations is at times aimed at justifying the gains of the elite. In other words, there is either a commercial or a political motive to which the listenership is delivered. With this motive in mind presenters at radio stations are mindful of the impact their guests and participants (callers) may have on the political career or business interests of their funders. Under this motive, some would be providers (guests) of relevant information to society are locked out and "dangerous calls in" are terminated.

Denying access is done with the aim of offsetting the biggest challenge to community radio -financial sustainability. This is in relation to "how to enable such virtually penniless, but determinedly public service, new broadcasters to get equal access into people's lives and living rooms" and to sustain those "boring but critical important mechanisms to support [community radio]" (Redding, 2006:151). It appears the establishment of community radio induces these problems to surface. "Financial problems seem to emerge as soon as foreign money is exhausted" (Kivikuru, 2001:138).

Upcountry community radios such as Kagaadi-Kibaale and Radio Apac find it even harder to sustain operations because



Inside Umwa Mama Fm studios that serves a women audience



supplementary resources are either hard to come-by or totally absent to run them. The availability of purchasing power in the urban areas makes urban community radios cope better as they can attract some advertisements. Advertisements in themselves would not be evil but the problem is that they normally force content producers and controllers to massage the sources of revenue. It then comes into sight that advertisements are transient in the content churned out by most radio stations whether community or commercial, at least in developing democracies like Uganda.

Medrado (2007:126) contends that because of the need to survive, "it would be unrealistic to expect them not to search for sources of funding from the state or by engaging in (strategic) commercial practices". He further posits that the inadequacy of financial resources makes community media "build connections with commercial and public service media, with the market and with the state in order to survive." This position is shared by Carpentier et al who conclude that "the reality of community media can be quite messy" (Carpentier et al in Medrado, 2007:126). Under financial pressure, community radio management, is more inclined to allow public media to be transformed into market-funded entities to avoid decline and possible extinction. The money problem escalates when the NGOs running these stations expand their services and at times reduce on their concentration at the station. This may give latitude to youngsters interested in music to dominate the station with what they desire more since they cannot afford facilitating the newsgathering exercise and moderate topical issues at the stations regularly

With such financial problems, community radios may find it hard to subscribe to necessary service such as Internet. This may deny communities the chance to benefit from the wealth of information provided by the search engines. As Nyamnjoh argues, "the fact that the media are available does not necessarily imply they are affordable as discussions on the Internet indicate" (Nyamujoh, 2003:127). Nyamnjoh seems to suggest that affordability is key to getting informed and participation in robust media debates with an informed mind, of both the presenters and the listeners. Community radios also need to pay allowances to volunteers in addition to other costs such as rent, electricity, water, transport and others.

Another difficulty that barricades community radio is the social question of illiteracy. Community radio normally serves the down-trodden in society who in most cases have either got little, poor quality education or were not blessed to get the education at all. While this does not necessarily affect reception as the radios normally operate in the local languages, it may affect the human resource base for producing media messages and adding to creative productions. This means that while the idea is to have members of the community teaching themselves, in some cases it may be untenable as the people may only be at different ignorance levels, where there is none to teach the other. Such ignorance cannot easily be transformed into media literacy. With an illiterate population, it may be next to impossible to get able volunteers to manage the station, handle finances, handle equipment and present programmes.

Related to the financial trouble is the problem of political interference. Community radios are prone to pressure from political and advertising groups. Hence, they must pay close attention to the receivers, since they have to sell their products to the audiences –and at the same time sell their audiences to advertisers so as remain financially viable – without antagonising the political regime. This is heightened by the fact some radios carrying the community tag are directly or indirectly owned by politicians with clear political inclinations. These are more likely to lockout their opponents. For instance, in January 2011, the management of Musana FM, a community radio station based in Nakaseke reportedly locked out opposition presidential candidate Kiiza Besigye on the orders of their indirect proprietor. Many stations committed this offense. Hence, it is possible for individuals to set up stations under the guise of community but only to exploit the masses, increase their political and/or economic influence.

Moreover, community radios still struggle with justifying their status, even after involving the community, as power relations still disfavour the 'common man'. White laments:

When public communication has built publics and groups of loyal fans, this already has encouraged processes of interaction among these segments of the audience, but rarely does it produce a reflective sense of community. The public commentator still holds the centre stage and the people depend on the communicator to sustain a sense of community (White, 2001:131).

So the notion and label community radio may not come with significant innovations in the way the media is run. Although, peoples' interests may be considered, the gate keeping role is stringed by the same management who exercise control over the language and the content of the broadcaster. Therefore, these broadcasters are consistently shielded by the issue of tier identity, a nasty reality.

Moreover, contrary to their characteristics, community radios are interested in ratings that make them bracket unprofitable programmes (Kivikuru, 2001). Such contradiction may sometimes be responsible for community apathy.

Occasionally, community radios suffer from community apathy. The issue of the community shunning the station is usually a result of failure to convince the community that the radio actually belongs to them. Baudrillard was aware of this when he noted that "it is the evil genius of the masses" to refuse participation in the official system of meaning (Baudrillard, 1988:213). It, therefore, goes without saying that the success of a community radio is dependent on the goodwill of the community. Goodwill seems to be a product of how people/ community-centric in terms of programming the radio is made. For instance, in Ethiopia, people view community radios as government stations because the state influences the way they are run (Nigatu, 2006)



Community radios also suffer from acute over programming. The author notes that the existence of very many tribes in Kibaale created many programming problems. Although, Kibaale can be looked at as a community, there are varying interests within this community. Such variety suggests that the station has to cater for the different language groups equitably. Consequently, this is a major cause of over programming and duplication e.g Pacis. Acute programming results from different interest groups (based on occupation, location etc) wanting to be heard.

The above challenges make the community broadcasting tier hard to run according to established standards spelt out in the Broadcasting Policy. As a result, community radios find themselves compromising the principles on which they were established to remain viable.

Way forward

Community media is important but imperfect. The concept of community radio has been corrupted from the original ideals. On the surface, it looks like the overarching power of market forces, but on scrutiny it is also the lack of farsightedness and absence of appropriate models and internal systems to maintain a successful community radio project. The author believes, commercializing community media is detrimental to the youngest of the three tiers in Uganda. Corrupting community radio will deprive civil society of a major resource for freedom of expression and cultural development, especially for minority groups.

Reforming community radio

community radios cannot survive without an appropriate business model. Ultimately they have to make some money at least to sustain themselves. The laws governing the different media should be streamlined to make clear demarcations between community, commercial and public service broadcasters. The regulations should be relaxed to allow different communities devise novel ways of sustaining community radio rather than those in regulatory books. The rules should be streamlined from those that concentrate on frequency control to include socio-cultural and economic provisions. Indeed the rules should provide for rewarding of those who contribute to social and cultural content under political and economic influences on a genuine public sphere where people can participate. The regulators should be guided by the Community Radio Handbook (2001).

In addition, there is need for a media outlook where both pluralism and diversity (structure and content) are guaranteed by law to provide for individual interests and interests of assorted groups as they may be constituted. Such an approach

would go a long way in ensuring that the talk on pluralism and diversity is actually walked.

Further, the law should have a quantitative outlook. The law should demand stations to provide a certain percentage of local content. It should demand radio stations to provide at least 70% local content, depending on whether the station broadcasts nationally or to a particular region. For stations broadcasting nationally, the local content should be content about Uganda and for stations broadcasting regionally the local content should be that about that particular region.

The laws should allow community radios to get subsidy. This subsidy should allow people willing to sustain community radios on air in the event of the community failing to do so to (naturally) have a bigger say in the running of the stations. The law should thus categorise community stations into those that are not allowed to make profits and those allowed to make a profit. In Zambia, for instance, some community radio stations are allowed to carry advertisements and others are not allowed at all (Banda, 2003). Though the idea of allowing some stations to make profits risks choking the stations into becoming commercial stations, it can help sustain them on air as other solutions are devised to enable stations facilitate research, programming and attract and retain good staff. The risk can be reduced by allowing community radio to get subsidies from independent sources that have to be provided for under the law.

The Uganda Communications Commission and the Media Council should monitor radio stations on a regular basis to ensure that they are operating in accordance with their mandate. This should not result in merely punishing deviators but in aligning them and rewarding the loyal stations in line with the first recommendation of this research.

Broadcast regulators need to work hand-in-hand with the Uganda Revenue Authority to offer tax incentives on equipment and material designated for use by community media. Such materials should attract reimbursement, reduction and/or waivers. These materials should be treated like the other educational materials imported into Uganda.

It is also important for community radios to come up with clear editorial policies. The editorial policies should spell out the areas the station focuses on and make them clear to the state, advertisers, international donor communities that often sponsor programmes. Stations should stick to their respective position and accept only advertisements that will not compromise their independence since following the tide will only make them lose their identity.



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Framing the Libyan war in Uganda's vernacular tabloid

Joel Isabirye

Introduction

Tabloid journalism concerns with the life of public personalities presented in a sensationalist and colorful style. Drawing from this characteristic, the paper holds three positions: i) that the Libyan civil war 2011 was covered with tabloid values in the vernacular press in Uganda; ii) that commercial imperatives drove this style of coverage; iii) that the first two positions elicit questions on ethical media practice in Uganda, particularly the distortion of fact, undermining credibility, manipulation of ideas and images for commercial or other advantage.

The paper culminates from my observations of the coverage of the war in *Bukedde*, *Kamunye* and *Orumuri*. The first two papers are published daily in Luganda while *Orumuri* is weekly in Runyankore and Rukiga. All three target LSM 1-7 (C1, C2 and D) - middle to down market low income readers. But media consumption is not that straightforward. Additionally language and entertainment content make the papers accessible to readers outside these consumer categories. The configuration of the readers' identity by editors nevertheless differentiates their style from that of mainstream English titles. Their modes of address-and the identity politics within-are explored later in the paper.

The hypotheses mentioned in paragraph one were formed after closely following the vernacular tabloid coverage of the war from February 15th 2011. To test their validity, I systematically analysed issues released from 7th August to 14th August 2011.

To internalise the vernacular press's obsession with the Libyan civil war, will require articulating the features of tabloid journalism and contextualising Muammar Gaddafi's public profile in the Ugandan society. For a glimpse of how these papers covered the war, below are

headline excerpts from *Bukedde* (Friday 12th August 2011), *Kamunye* (Thursday 11th August 2011) and *Orumuri* (August 15th to 20th 2011) respectively:

Extract1

America ereetedde Gaddafi ennyonyi ey'ebyuunyoo

("America has brought for Gaddafi an amazing plane")

Edduka mayiro 4 buli sekendi

("it runs at a speed of 4 miles per second")

Eva mu Amerika n'ekuba mu Libya mu ddakiika 18

("it comes from America and hits Libya in 18 minutes")

Terina mugoba yeevuga yokka

("it has no pilot")

YIINO

("it is here")

Extract2

Gaddafi awunzizza ennyonyi za NATO ne zikuba abantu

(Gaddafi disorganizes NATO jets and instead of hitting him they hit Libyans)

Extract 3

Gaddafi abashekyerera ngu tibakabaire

(Gaddafi laughed at them and said that this is the beginning, the war has just began, they are dead

5 baitsirwe, reeba ebishushani by'obwinazi

(5 are dead see barbaric/terrible photos)

To sell more copies, vernacular tabloids have manipulated headlines, photos; used sensationalism, and appropriated the person of Gaddafi to conjure the Libyan war as an 'action film'. Unlike the revolts in Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, and Bahrain, which were covered on international news sections of the local press; and occasionally for the duration of their existence; the conflict between Gaddafi

and the National Transition Council rebels-backed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has been daily front page material in the vernacular tabloids for over six months.

Whereas other Arab revolts were covered without emphasis on the leaders of those countries, the vernacular tabloid press for reasons explained in the next section-allotted more pages and issues to the person of Gaddafi.

Gaddafi and Uganda

The significance of the Libyan leader, to Uganda cannot be understated. Gaddafi has been associated with the leadership of Uganda since Idi Amin (Mutiibwa, 1992). On 24th March 2011, President Yoweri Museveni -who has been a key ally of the Libyan leader-wrote a spirited defense of Gaddafi in the wake of the bombardment of Libya by Western allied forces.

Gaddafi has also visited Uganda many times, and Libyan investment is visible in the petroleum, communications, hospitality and banking sectors. The Libyan leader has also been close to some cultural leaders in Uganda-notably Oyo the King of Toro. To express his solidarity with Ugandan Muslims, Gaddafi funded the construction of Gaddafi Mosque the third biggest in Africa, a gesture which made him a lofty figure within the Islamic Community.

On each visit to Uganda, Gaddafi displayed unusual military power. Often overflowing with body guards and travelling with sophisticated military gadgets. He also acted in bizarre ways, sometimes sleeping in tents and his forces clashing with the security forces of his host. It was only natural that when the Libyan civil war broke out, the Ugandan press found Gaddafi newsworthy.

Through his relationship with Uganda and the actions underlined, Gaddafi became



a celebrated figure in Uganda's socio-cultural, economic and political life. When the war began, editors of vernacular tabloid newspapers conceived, their papers would sell more copies if the Gaddafi 'story' was sustained, modified and mediated. This required new and updated variations of the Gaddafi 'story' using fresh and powerful images and new episodes as the conflict raged on. Eventually the war became the 'Gaddafi War.' To figure out why the tabloid approach was different from the 'serious' press, a discussion on the tabloid concept is necessary.

Tabloids and tabloidisation

Biagi (2011:56) defines a tabloid as 'a small-format newspaper that features large photographs and illustrations along with sensational stories. Most tabloids feature stories about sex, violence and celebrities. The size of a tabloid is usually 11 inches by 14 inches.' Sterling (2009:219 and 220) expands this definition with

two overlapping meanings. Historically one meaning described a form of condensed, easy-to-read journalism, aimed at the popular market, and distinct from the so-called quality newspapers aimed at the middle and upper classes. The second meaning describes a particular newspaper format: which is a small newspaper (typically about 16 inches x 12 inches) handy to read.

Both definitions illuminate the content, form and readership of the tabloid newspaper and were useful to analysing how the Libyan crisis was tabloidised by the vernacular tabloid press. The typical readership of the ideal tabloid given here is shared with the perceived readership of the vernacular tabloids in Uganda-the lower classes.

Tabloidisation then refers to the process of adopting news stories into a tabloid format to suit the objectives, style, format and specific readership of tabloids. Schonbach (2000: 63) elaborates on the concept as a process that renders

more emphasis on entertaining and emotive content and its simple, easy-to-consume presentation. This includes

dynamic and colorful layouts with many visual elements (such as pictures, graphs, and logos). It also includes shorter articles, bigger headlines, a greater share of entertaining stories at the expense of "serious" politics and a stress on sensationalist topics and an emotional language

We can identify this process in the way the vernacular press covered the Libyan civil war.

Why study tabloids

Schwartz (1999:167) has pointed out that 'tabloid newspapers have been neglected

by most scholars, many of whom consider them to be a debased form of journalism and therefore unworthy of attention.' Although criticised by social critics and normative theorists of media for being trivial and shunning "important news", tabloid newspapers capture social trends that are critical to media analyses of society. Wasserman (2010: xii) said of the social significance of tabloid journalism. 'A study of tabloids reiterates the importance of viewing media and journalism within its social context, against the background of specific histories, and from the perspectives of all the various parties in the communication process.' As per Sterling (2009:222) the

ANGELA KALULE AFUUKUDDE ABASAJJA -P3

Bukedde www.bukedde.co.ug
LWAMUKAAGA

VISION GROUP VOL 17 NO. 217 LWAMUKAAGA SEPTEMBER 10, 2011 SHS 1,000

Gaddafi akubye abayeeekera n'abazza emabega

BASATTIRA

Embaga
Amooti akoze obwassenga mu kwanjula -p13, 14, 15

Poliisi eremesezza ab'ebibiina -P2

Abayeeekera bakaaye ekiruyi bakimalidde ku Baddugavu

Bannayuganda abali mu Libya bali ku bunkenke EBIRALA P2



value of studying tabloids is because 'tabloid journalism has a long and honorable tradition of making difficult concepts or stories 'come alive' for people who lack either the ability or the inclination to read long-winded articles on complex subjects.' In other words, tabloids are a more accessible form of journalism.

Tabloid journalism in Uganda

For their accessibility and focus on entertainment, tabloids have turned out to be the most popular newspapers in Uganda. Together they exceed the circulation and readership of all the 'serious' newspapers combined (comparative figures were derived from Synovate, 2009). Labeled as the 'gossip press' tabloid journalism has a fairly long albeit controversial history in Uganda. Some of the earliest Vision Group newspapers were either designed as semi-tabloids or full tabloids, although they maintained the official mandate of public service newspapers. But it was the first fully fledged tabloid paper, the *Red Pepper*, launched on 19th June 2001, which implemented the tabloid format to its basics. Its sister publication, *Kamunye* alongside *Bukedde* and *Orumuri* spearhead the coverage of Gaddafi in the tabloid press.

The tabloid press which mainly covers celebrity culture has come under a barrage of criticism for being unserious and going against the moral grain of the Ugandan society. They have also been faulted for inaccuracy in preference of sensation. Namiti (2011), in a recent article noted that, nine times out of ten, tabloids [in Uganda] present news to provoke excitement at the expense of accuracy. An early account by Opolot (2005) of the advent of *the Red Pepper* also indicated negative public views of the tabloids based on morality. On 6th December 2006, the Media Council, tasked with regulating the print media attempted to ban tabloids for promoting pornography. The ban did not take effect.

Despite the moral criticism, tabloid journalists have argued their positive role in the fight against HIV/AIDS as a

sign of their contribution to national development (see Vasagar's article in the Guardian of UK). This self-redeeming stand has faced a counter-argument from their critics who say their crusades against HIV/AIDS were meant to give them protective covering against accusations that they were promoting immorality.

Although the tabloid field was dominated by newspapers published in English such as *the Red Pepper* and its offspring *Onion*, vernacular tabloids like *Kamunye*, *Bukedde*, *Orumuri*, and *Entatsi* were equally assertive and command a sizeable readership.

Tabloidisation of Gaddafi in Uganda's vernacular press

While the Libyan civil war 2011 was covered by the 'serious' press as a chapter of the Arab spring revolts, a rise against dictatorship and oppression; vernacular tabloids in Uganda told the story of the war differently. They ignored the geopolitics or the political economics of the Libyan crisis as would be explained in *the East African* or other 'serious' newspapers; and concentrated on sensation, a cult of Gaddafi's personality and manipulated images to build readership crucial for newspaper sales.

From the definition of tabloids presented earlier we identify a set of features that were consistent in the coverage of the 'Gaddafi War' in the vernacular tabloids. The tabloidisation of the crisis included selective content structured to sell more copies; Gaddafi was covered as a celebrity and hero; the editors used sensationalism; they also serialised the 'Gaddafi War'; and manipulated photos as much as possible.

Gaddafi is published because Gaddafi sells

Before the Gaddafi stories began, I used to receive 500 copies of Bukedde and I would sell a daily average of 350 copies. After the Gaddafi stories began, I receive 700 copies of Bukedde and sell 630 copies...buyers keep asking if Gaddafi has come out before they buy

The testimony from Kato Conrad, a newspaper agent in Kamwokya Kampala, shows why the 'Gaddafi war' was given prominence. The connection between Gaddafi and increase in tabloid circulation is acknowledged and explained by Geoffrey Kulubya, Vision Group's Managing Editor, Regional Titles:

the Gaddafi story has sold many copies for Bukedde. Even Orumuri [another vernacular tabloid targeting Western Uganda, and produced by the Vision Group] has sold many copies because of the Gaddafi story, to the extent of matching the sales of Bukedde. The increase in sales is because: Gaddafi the person is popular and is a celebrity in Uganda. He has been around for a very long time as a leader and he is the president who has visited Uganda most times in its history because he has been around for a very long time. As a result he has been associated with Uganda through various businesses, through the Muslim Community and because of his relationship with the kingdom of Toro. This makes him a celebrity popular with the readers of Bukedde

Kulubya's explanation does not only indicate, *Bukedde's* commercial motive, it also shows that their choice of Gaddafi as subject was adhering to one of the features of tabloid journalism, obsession with celebrities and heroes.

Gaddafi as a celebrity and hero

To appeal to tabloid readers by covering celebrities and heroes idolised by the people (see Bird, 1992: 83), tabloids look out for people who are seen to stand up on behalf of the masses and champion their cause. They also uncover people who through their experiences are seen to confront the mighty oppressor or overcome human challenges appeal to the tabloid reader. The readers share the hero's confrontation of daily challenges; and in their [hero's] survival or victory the readers see the possibility of their own survival or victory. Kulubya explains Bukedde's interest in Gaddafi as a celebrity and hero:



Gaddafi-like stories about Saddam Hussein, Osama Bin Laden, Al Shabaab and the Taliban-also sold because he represents a David and Goliath relationship with the West, where he plays the role of David. Bukeedde's positioning is a paper which serves "omuntu wa bulijjo" "the ordinary person." This audience group [because of their location in the social structure] prefer [and rally behind] someone who can take on the mighty. They saw this with Saddam versus America; Bin Laden versus America; Taliban versus America and even Besigye versus Museveni. They want to know that someone can stand up to the mighty and also want to know and understand how that person survives in his confrontation with the mighty

Categorising readers is common in liberal media markets where profiling target readers helps to define modes of address and shape content. It is also a marketing strategy to sell that bulk of 'imagined' readers to advertisers. Beyond commerce, the categorisation of readers and the structure and content of the vernacular tabloid around language and social class should also be taken as a form of identity politics. Identity politics refers to how society is framed into power centers derived from identity and the interrelationship between various identities in their negotiation for power. A more elaborate discussion on the concept of identity politics can be found in Lehring's Encyclopedia of government and politics (2004).

'Omuntu wa bulijjo' 'the ordinary person' is a loaded concept evoking notions of class. It translates into 'simplistic, of the average or not sophisticated.' If interpreted within discourses of class, it constructs a readership category that has limited capacity to think or understand, or that is marginalised. This may be evident in the pricing of the vernacular tabloid titles, way below the unit price of the 'serious' mainstream English titles, 'because the reader in that category will not afford it.' The conception of 'omuntu

wa bulijjo' also reflects why vernacular tabloids excluded intellectual comment and debate, lacked parallelism of the Ugandan political context, the type of directions the mainstream English press undertook. Some examples of the mainstream approach are given below:

the East African (28th of February 2011):

how Gaddafi's fall will shake Africa (this article discusses the implication of the Libyan crisis on African politics and economies)

Sunday Vision (10th April 2011)

Gaddafi accepts peace plan (this article discusses the African Union mediation efforts in the Libyan crisis)

Daily Monitor (17th August 2011)

How Gaddafi's poison could turn out to be Museveni's meat (this article shows lessons Gaddafi's experience has for long-serving leaders)

Vernacular tabloids were not concerned about these parallels and the symbolism of the Libyan civil war. Instead aware that tabloid readers, were familiar with Gaddafi's demonstration of military power whenever he visited Uganda, the vernacular tabloids would manipulate this perception in content and style. When the mainstream press covered the Libyan crisis as a confrontation between Libya and NATO, the vernacular tabloid press insisted on using Gaddafi as a person, against NATO. The constitution of NATO as America, Britain and France suited the taste of the vernacular tabloid reader, who saw Gaddafi as a third world hero, confronting a first world conglomeration of power.

Sensation and trivia

As Conboy (2006) and Branstorn and Stafford (2003) admit, an essential component of tabloid news values is the exaggerated foregrounding of sensation and 'human interest'. The reporting of the 'Gaddafi War' in a sensationalist manner is

a characteristic of the tabloid press where exaggeration influences sales. The diction used to describe Gaddafi's confrontation with the West is intended to exaggerate the magnitude of the confrontation and therefore appeal to the emotion of the readers of the vernacular tabloid press.

This headline in *Kamunye* of Sunday 14th August reads:

*NATO ekoze akalabba ka Gaddafi
NATO has made a guillotine for Gaddafi
Bagenda kumwokya nga bbulooka
They are going to burn him like bricks*

Like other headlines about Gaddafi in the vernacular tabloids, where Gaddafi is written in bigger fonts followed by subtexts in smaller fonts giving further details of the 'Gaddafi War,' this one also concentrates on the person of Gaddafi than a war confronting the Libyan government. The writing of the Gaddafi headlines in bigger fonts is not only a sensationalist scheme but also a commercial strategy to stand out in crowded newsstands. These eye-catching headlines attract readers who have to make a choice from many newspapers on the newsstands (see also Branstorn and Stafford (2003).

While the elements in the 'Gaddafi War' appear trivial they are selected to stir the emotions of the readers. The papers for example do not talk about some important elements of the Libyan conflict such as diplomatic overtures to resolve the conflict. Rather the focus is for example on "how Gaddafi evaded the latest NATO missile attack." And in this process of exaggeration, the tabloids also used photographs and photo-manipulation.



Photo-manipulation in the 'Gaddafi war'



Falcon H-TV2

Although photographs are critical to any news publication, it should be acknowledged that pictures are the life of the tabloid. Photographs in the tabloid format help TELL and SELL the story, often on their own without any need for further explanation. They also suit a readership that is either intellectually disinterested or has little time to read substantial text. It is for this reason that the 'Gaddafi War' in the vernacular press has been primarily presented by photos and secondarily as text, and to a great effect.

Tabloids being about people, the tabloid format uses the photos of celebrities as flags. Flags which are photos or headlines on front page sell the internal content of the paper and often drive readers to buy, having seen an interesting or attractive photo or text as a flag. In the vernacular tabloids Gaddafi is reported on front page often using his photo or photos of military hardware as flags with further details given on the inside pages. Kulubya explains *Bukedde's* use of photography in this coverage:

Bukedde's strength is to present stories in graphic form...to say Gaddafi is powerful we do not need to explain with words. We bring in photos of his armory and show them and also show the other side. We then show he gets his arms from Russia while NATO gets theirs from America

Nonetheless, as is common with tabloid newspapers, the photos mainly got from the internet and used in the 'Gaddafi War' are not always accurate. Adato (2008) says, so eager are tabloids to publish arresting pictures that they are not above fabricating or manipulating them (see MacDonald, 2007; and Coleman, 2007).

In the *Bukedde* issue of 12th August, the photo of the Falcon H-TV2 drone which is still undergoing laboratory tests and has not been used in the Libyan war is employed in the newspaper-as if it is the latest deployment-to display the gadgetry power of NATO:

Serializing Gaddafi

Besides the other tabloid elements used in the coverage, the 'Gaddafi War' was also structured like television serials which are equally popular in Uganda. Each issue provided a continuation of 'what happened yesterday.' The serialisation of the 'Gaddafi War' is used by tabloid editors to push copy, often building on the intensity of yesterday's coverage, even if it meant creating non-existent scenarios. This strategy works for sales as Herbert Zahura, a newspaper agent says:

Readers keep asking if a story in the previous edition was continued in the latest edition of the paper. If it is then they buy the paper. Most stories which are continued the next day, sell newspapers.

Ethical dilemmas in the 'Gaddafi war'

The style of coverage of the 'Gaddafi War' rekindles debates between normative and liberal economic approaches to media. The former are mainly concerned with ethical media practice and social responsibility of media. The latter recommend a laissez faire approach to media. Liberal economists may underplay the public interest in favor of what interests the public as long as it makes commercial logic. But media is a public service platform even when set up for commercial purposes. The public role of the media dictates that ethics and social responsibility should to a degree guide media houses and publications.

Generally ethics is a rational process applying established principles [emphasis mine] when two moral obligations collide (Day, 2008:3). Media ethics lean on three principles of ethics: credibility-to be believable and worthy of trust; integrity-acting for what is right against what is wrong even if it means at a personal cost; civility-self-sacrifice and respect for others.

Rule 1 of the Journalists Professional Code of Conduct in Uganda states that "no journalist shall disseminate information

or an allegation without establishing its correctness or truth." This provision is instituted to promote media ethics in Uganda, including the principles of accuracy, and credibility. This then means that emphases on 'selling' vernacular tabloids through exaggeration, distortion of fact and photo-manipulation in the 'Gaddafi War' contradict media ethics in Uganda.

'Selling' or commercial objectives on their own may not pose ethical problems. It is when content is compromised by bribery, or tweaking in order to sell more copy, that ethical dilemmas arise. As Day observes, 'there is nothing inherently immoral in the profit motive or the accumulation of wealth. Ethical questions do arise, however, when commercial interests are allowed to dominate other social obligations of the press (2008:247).' If the coverage of Gaddafi identified in the vernacular tabloids involves distortion of fact, photo manipulation and text engineering for commercial advantage, does this amount to deception and a corruption of the journalistic principles of accuracy, credibility and truth telling? Does the preference of commerce (entertainment) over public service (accurate information) signal a collapse of ethical media practice in Uganda?

Throughout its history, tabloid journalism in Uganda has faced these kinds of criticism and interrogation. Paul Mukasa, secretary of the Media Council says of some of the criticisms leveled against tabloids: 'i can't agree 100%, they have some elements of truth. But like all of human beings, they have imperfections. Even New Vision and Monitor have those imperfections.' To address these 'imperfections' he contends,

'we have media laws such as the Press and Journalism Act, the Professional Code of Ethics and we have fines and penalties that address any wrong doing by the tabloids. And as far as we are concerned editors of those papers have been willing to go by those laws.'

This can be correlated by publicised actions taken by the Media Council on tabloid publications. On 7th December 2007 the Council banned Kamunye and Black Mamba tabloids for publishing pornography [although Kamunye resumed business two years later].



Since its inception, the *Red Pepper* has faced numerous fines from the council for inaccuracy the most glaring was the 50,000 US Dollar fine against the paper for speculating about a relationship between Gaddafi and Best Kemigisha, the Queen Mother of Toro. In 2005, Bukedde newspaper was also asked by the Media Council to pay compensation to Shiffa Nabanja for publishing a photograph without her consent, on the *Sanyu* Page. The paper was also cautioned for using different names in the captions instead of those of Nabanja. However most of these cases were complaints brought to the Media Council. It is not clear whether the Council monitors publications for some of these inaccuracies like those in the coverage of the 'Gaddafi War'. Considering the structure and content of the 'Gaddafi War', there are no signs that these tendencies are about to stop.

Another issue of ethical concern is the lack of reader participation in creating or shaping the content of the 'Gaddafi War'. The readers did not have direct input in the selection of the content or at the level of feedback for the 'Gaddafi War'. The only feedback seen is through the purchase of more copies, which were incentives for the editors to continue running the story.

Conclusion

The vernacular tabloid press like many other newspapers in Uganda paid keen interest to the Libyan civil war of 2011. This was because of the relationship Gaddafi and Libya enjoyed with Uganda prior to the war. Gaddafi being a celebrity in Uganda presented excellent material to suit the style, content and readership of the tabloids. To achieve improved sales and circulation, the vernacular tabloid press emphasized coverage of the Libyan civil war, through the person of Gaddafi.

The style of presentation discarded the straight forward style embedded in 'serious' newspapers. Instead vernacular tabloids captured, extended and manipulated the most sensational aspects of the 'Gaddafi War', using the person of Gaddafi, with images and a clever weaving of texts and facts to sell more copies.

While the approach worked it raises key questions around media ethics in Uganda. If the media distort

fact and manipulate images to sell more copies, does that portend to corruption in the media?

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Project Briefs

Journalists as bearers and promoters of human rights

A recent pilot project implemented by the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and with support from the German International Cooperation (GIZ) aimed at strengthening Ugandan journalists in their role as human rights promoters.

Professional media play a crucial role in any modern democratic society with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. On the one hand, freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of information and freedom of the press are central elements in any modern catalogue of political and civil freedoms. In the case of Uganda, they are stipulated in Article 29 of the Ugandan Constitution of 1995. A free press is one of the prerequisites for a democratic society. On the other hand, free and professional media contribute to promoting respect for human rights, particularly through objective and critical reporting and public exposure of human rights violations, thereby fulfilling the role as watchdog in a society.

Uganda has ratified several international human rights conventions and embodied some of these in its constitution. But while the human rights situation in Uganda has generally improved over the last 20 years, particularly with regards to economic, social and cultural rights, significant challenges and shortcomings still remain, as for example observed under the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Recently, the escalation of the “walk-to-work” protests has raised serious concerns and criticism on the side of human rights observers.

While the Ugandan media are generally considered to be quite diverse and vibrant, many challenges can be identified. Shortcomings in

the professional performance and critical reporting of the media can be explained by a lack of capacity and weak professional skills on the one hand, and restrictions to the freedom and independence of the media on the other hand. The combination of a restrictive environment and a lack of professionalism seriously undermines the ability of media practitioners to effectively play a role as promoters of human rights in Uganda.

Media organisations have expressed concerns about the declining safety and secure environment for journalists in Uganda, and a growing general threat to freedom of expression in the country, for example in the light of the discussions about the Press and Journalists Amendment Act and the Public Order Management Bill and incidents around the 2011 elections. At the same time, a significant lack of quality and objectivity in the reporting of Ugandan media can be observed. This can be explained by a whole set of factors including economic pressure, shortcomings in professional journalistic training, corruption and manipulated reporting, and a worrying general trend of self-censorship. Due to a lack of independence and professionalism the Ugandan media landscape provides very little investigative high-quality journalism. Having said this, it comes as no surprise that human rights issues do not get the deserved attention in the Ugandan media. Many journalists are lacking the awareness and sensitivity as well as the professional training to effectively report on human rights related topics. At the same time it is also obvious that the media themselves can contribute to human rights violations, for instance if sensitive sources are exposed or privacy rights of individuals not respected. A review of recent media reports in Uganda would expose several such cases.

The above analysis of the situation in Uganda provided the starting point for

a pilot project which was implemented by the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) in cooperation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) under the title “Journalists as Bearers and Promoters of Human Rights” between October 2010 and May 2011. The project formed a component of the GIZ-project “Promotion and protection of human rights in the context of the elections in 2011” funded by the German Ministry for Development Cooperation.

The project component aimed at deepening the awareness on and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the media and the basic conditions for media freedom in Uganda among media practitioners as well as other stakeholders. At the same time, journalists were guided on their role in promoting human rights as well as their obligations to fair and balanced reporting.

In December 2010, a national workshop in Kampala brought together a group of practitioners from different media institutions. On the one hand, participants were trained in the basics of human rights reporting and the related practical skills. On the other hand, the group work at the end of the workshop resulted in the adoption of a joint declaration on “Journalists as Bearers and Promoters of Human Rights”. The “Kampala Declaration” (see page 48) provides a comprehensive document that presents demands towards decision-makers on politics concerning the protection of press freedom and the creation of a more conducive environment for objective reporting as well as recommendations towards the media fraternity with regard to the improvement of professional media work. The declaration outlines four strategies for the media: (1) raising awareness among journalists on the basics of human rights and the importance of human rights reporting; (2) building capacity in human rights reporting; (3) mainstreaming of human



Bracing journalists to fight corruption in Uganda

rights reporting in media houses; (4) networking with other stakeholders in politics and civil society. The document was presented to the public at a dialogue that followed the workshop which brought together media practitioners, civil society activists, government representatives and other major stakeholders and received a generally positive feedback. The purpose of the declaration is to serve as a tool for lobbying and publicity as well as a useful guide for media practitioners.

In the second phase of the project, a comprehensive training curriculum on human rights reporting was developed. It provided the basis for training workshops in three selected districts (Gulu, Mbale, Kasese). During the workshops journalists from the districts and the surrounding regions were informed about the topic of human rights and general aspects of professional journalistic standards and ethics were discussed. Furthermore, the participants underwent a practical training in human rights reporting which included the production of a radio feature on a human rights topic. The workshops were combined with local dialogues on the topic to which local politicians, civil society representatives and other stakeholders were invited. The dialogues, at which the “Kampala Declaration” was presented as well, provided a platform for an open discussion on the state of human rights and freedom of the press in the respective districts.

The project activities were considered by all parties involved to have been a great success. At the same time, due to the pilot character the scope of the project in terms of duration and geographical coverage was limited. In the course of the project, the need for a continuous intervention in the area of media and human rights became increasingly obvious, which confirms the timeliness and relevance of the project. Plans for a similar project intervention at a larger scale are currently under way. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) as long-term partners will continue to raise awareness on the role of the media in a democratic society and will further contribute to the professionalisation of the Ugandan media through frequent training programmes, particularly at the local level.

Since its inception in 1994, Uganda Media Development Foundation (UMDF) has nurtured a partnership with the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) to address various forms of interventions in strengthening the media's role in the democratic processes. Such interventions have included skills training, media policy discourses and membership networking. Through different activities, the media's critical role in engendering democracy through offering a platform for citizens to participate in policy issues, as well as providing strategic information to citizens to inform their choices has been emphasized.

Elections for the president of Uganda, members of parliament in regular constituencies and women members of parliament took place on 18 February 2011. Holding these leaders accountable to the electorate is dependable on the media's role in ensuring good governance. Media plays an important role if it is informed on the causes, effects, and magnitude of corruption as well as anti-corruption norms and standards. Therefore building the capacity of the media is vital since a free and independent media can expose the corrupt and mobilize the population in the fight against corruption. In light of this, the project “*Bracing journalists to fight corruption*” was implemented.

The core activities of this project were centered on skills improvement and promotion of professionalism. The training approach adopted was therefore focused on framing the skills into democratic themes. In this case, the skills were approached from a contextual perspective rather than an abstract perspective. UMDF partnership with KAS for 2011 was centred on Reporting on Corruption.

Stimulating journalists to develop their capacities and skills to investigate and report on corruption within an environment of poor governance, widespread poverty and limited media freedom was the overall objective of the project. Specifically, training workshops aimed at ensuring that journalists frameworks for analyzing corruption and anti-corruption were organized and over 200 journalists trained. Workshops for journalists from both print and electronic media were held all over the country in the following regional centres: Soroti, Kabale, Hoima, Mbarara, Mukono, Mityana, Fortportal, Jinja, Arua and Kampala.

Strategic planning and evaluation meetings for UMDF members were also supported by KAS. The forty one founder members of UMDF held their annual general meeting with the main agenda of creating and strengthening professional networks leading to tangible results of the media's contribution to development.

Crowning up this project is this second issue of the Uganda Media Review, an annual journal, whose focus is on *Media and Corruption*. With KAS support, the first issue of the journal whose focus was on Media and Elections was published in 2010. The second issue is aimed at raising awareness, building a platform for understanding corruption and providing information on the media in Uganda.



Ms. Munira Ali, Head of Public and International Relations in the Inspectorate of Government addressing journalists at a workshop in Mukono



Kampala Declaration on Journalists as Bearers and Promoters of Human Rights

PREAMBLE

Conscious of the fact that human rights are inborn and inherent to all human beings regardless of their status;

Cognisant that Human Rights are not favours or privileges granted by the state or any other authority;

Aware of a deteriorating media situation in Uganda and its impact on: press freedom, freedom of expression, conscience and opinion and the safety of journalists in Uganda;

Aware of the role of the media in keeping under the review, the promotion and protection of Human Rights;

Aware of the codes of conduct of the media, RDCs and political parties;

We, Journalists as duty bearers and promoters of human rights meeting in Kampala on 9th December 2010 declare our commitment in advancing the human rights agenda.

Recognising our responsibility as citizens to observe and respect other peoples' rights in the course of our work and knowing that monitoring of human rights is part of our watch dog role as journalists;

We acknowledge the importance of the media in the democratization process and the mandate we derive from the constitution of the Republic of Uganda (Article 29 and 41) as well regional and international treaties ratified by Uganda;

We confirm that the professional ethics of journalism impose on us obligations towards observance of additional rights like right to privacy, right to reply, right to fairness, right to respect in grief, right to balance in reporting, right to the voiceless to be heard, right to decency and human dignity, right to accurate information;

We note that whereas the media has expanded the scope of news coverage, events and developments, they do not consciously bring out the human rights perspective. Journalists and media organisations should understand their social responsibility to:

- Expose breaches of human rights
- Educate the public on their rights and the rights of others
- Observe human rights in execution of their work

We applaud the contribution from journalists, media and human rights organisations and the support from development partners.

We are concerned about extra judicial killings of journalist, illegal arrests of journalists, detention, mob justice, intimidation, assault, unfriendly media laws, high level of impunity, delayed court judgments, poor remuneration of journalists, government interference, mushrooming militia groups and unregulated institutions and police harassments.

We demand that the environment under which the media operates in Uganda is safe, policy friendly and based on legally binding laws that conform to the constitution and international treaties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that:

The new government

- Respects the independence of regulatory bodies, the media and judiciary;
- Creates an enabling environment and supports the self regulating mechanisms;
- Puts in place a media policy to clearly spell out the duties and responsibilities of all statutory bodies in respect to the media in Uganda;

The Parliament

- Repeals all unfriendly media laws;
- Amends the labour laws;

The Judiciary

- Expediently disposes pending media cases and new cases that may arise;
- Dismisses all case of sedition against journalists;
- Exercises and demands for its independence;

The Media

- Popularise the ethical code of conduct as a way of applying human rights based approach;
- Use the existing networks to popularize the importance of the media in a democratization process;
- Ensure that proprietors desist from interfering with media contents;
- Strengthen the existing network with the media institutions;
- Build strong partnerships with other stakeholders in the struggle to respect and promote human rights.

STRATEGIES

We, the representatives of the media hereby resolve to adopt the following strategies:

Strategy 1:

Encourage professional colleagues and media in general to make a more conscious coverage of human rights issues as a social responsibility.

Encourage journalists to learn about and internalise the basics of human rights including international treaties, national laws and constitutional provisions.

Strategy 2:

Capacity building: The media should build capacity in human rights based reporting through:

- Training of student and in-service journalists in human rights based approach (HRBA) skills
- Develop a core pilot team
- Select model media houses willing to start a comprehensive HRBA



Strategy 3:

Media houses should mainstream human rights reporting through:

- Making HR a separate beat like police, sport, courts or parliament
- Developing skills to enrich stories with HR values
- Creating human rights desks as soon as practicable

Strategy 4:

Networking: Journalists should network with those organisations already involved in aspects of human rights work, such as the UHRC, HR NGOs, Police, Anti-corruption Coalition, FHRI, UDN etc.

Journalists should strengthen networking and synergising with existing media organisations to co-own this process, have a common purpose and maximise on advantages.

This draft declaration was adopted on **9th December 2010 in Kampala** at a workshop for journalists and human rights activists.

The following representatives participated in the workshop and the drafting of this declaration:

Anecho Victor	KFM
Isaac Senabulya	TOP TV/RADIO
Stephen Bwire	MOVEMENT TIMES
Namiro Pheona	DEMBE FM
Nakkungu Harriet	SUUBI FM
Ronald Sebutiko	VISION VOICE
Nzito Arafat	RADIO SIMBA
Samuel Ssebuliba	SUUBI FM
Cissy Nankanja	CBS FM
Lucy Ekadu	VISION MEDIA GROUP
Ssempala Robert	SUUBI FM/ HRNJ - U
Haruna Kanaabi	INDEPENDENT MEDIA COUNCIL OF UGANDA
John Kusolo	POWER FM
Henry Okech	SIMBA FM
Mike Gesa Munabi UGANDA	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY
Sendagire Edward UGANDA	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY
Otim Ivan UGANDA	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY
Kanjunjuzi Lillian UGANDA	STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL DEMOCRACY
Nkongge Thomas	TOP RADIO
Wasswa Richard	CBS FM
Andrew Bagala	MONITOR PUBLICATIONS
Mulindwa Mukasa	WBS / APTN
John Baptist Wasswa	MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
Geoffrey Wokulira Ssebagala JOURNALISTS	HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK FOR



Participants at the KAS/UMDF/GIZ workshop in Kasese



Gulu RDC at the KAS/UMDF/GIZ Public Dialogue



KAS/UMDF/GIZ Public Dialogue in Mbale



KAS/UMDF/GIZ National dialogue - participants



The Uganda Media Development Foundation has several partnerships with international organizations. In one of such partnerships, UMDF worked with Prof. Steven Youngblood of Park University, USA on the Peace Journalism and Development Project.

The one year project was funded by the US government through its Kampala mission, USAID, and the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative (NUTI) under a US\$270,000 grant.

Over 500 journalists were trained in peaceful electoral reporting between March 2010 and December 2010 ahead of the Uganda general elections that took place in February 2011. The training aimed at preventing media induced violence like what followed the 2008 Kenyan elections and the Rwanda genocide earlier in 1994. In both instances, sections of the media were accused of fuelling ethnic hatred resulting to thousands being killed and many displaced.

Prof. Youngblood, led 30 seminars countrywide for radio journalists. Five of the seminars were specifically designed for station managers. The course content included guides on producing station policy and guidelines on managing election stories. In four regional seminars journalists learned skills on post- election coverage. The project took special interest in Rukungiri, Lira, Kampala, Sembabule and Masaka areas which have a history of election violence in Uganda. Project work in these districts involved strengthening media competence to promote the culture of reconciliation and mutual understanding during and after election. The overall objective was to stem a possible recurrence of such electoral violence.

Public Service Announcements

The other components of the peace journalism project also included the use of social media messages to cause attitude change among local population. Another key component was the use of a public service announcement campaign featuring a “No violence” message. The announcement were aired over 42 radio stations across Uganda to herald the general no-violence campaign in December 2010 ahead of the general elections that took place in February 2011.

The electoral Monitoring Peace Clubs

Peace Clubs were formed in 15 districts to engage communities to support non-violence in media and to mobilise citizens for a peaceful election., “This is an effort to leverage private citizen groups in Uganda to support the “No violence” public information campaign,” said Prof. Youngblood

Assessing the Project

An evaluation survey was carried out shortly after the election and based on both anecdotal and statistical evidence, the project was effective in meeting its primary goal of preventing media induced violence. The only one case of alleged media induced violence was reported at a Masaka radio station. However, both the reporter and the Human Rights Network for Journalists denied these reports.

The project ended in April 2011 but surplus funds were disbursed through UMDF to make follow-up work and mentoring at various radio stations across Uganda. Club representatives met in Kampala to form a summit organization at a meeting where they also reflected on the successes and challenges of the project. Benson Ekwee leader of Soroti peace club said that no politician used radio to cause violence in the Teso region. The Kabale region peace club representative commented that the club was instrumental in preventing election violence.

The contest

The Project ended with award of certificates and recorders to winners of the peace and electoral reporting contest which saw Bless Cathy Comfort Anyango of Nena FM in Moroto emerging the overall best journalist followed by Grace Lekuru of Radio Rupiny of Gulu and Lynnette Racheal Otebwa of Voice of Kigezi Kabale respectively.



Promoting peace Journalism through radio in Uganda

Mathias Mulumba

Peace Journalism or Conflict Sensitive Journalism has developed against the thinking that conventional media tend to play a negative role in terms of increasing tensions between and among the many sides of a conflict, and that the media can also play a positive role by promoting peace and reconciliation. According to John Galtung the father of this approach, Peace Journalism serves as the emerging strain of practice against the dominant style of journalism today tagged 'war/violence Journalism'. He argues that peace journalism advances a coherent strategy which strikes at the very notion of conflict as a method of settling disputes. It is characterized by balanced reporting at an emotional distance, presenting a broad multifaceted view of a conflict and rejecting entertainment and partisan interests. It has three main pillars:

- Truth-oriented, exposing lies and deception on all sides
- People-oriented, focusing on suffering on all sides and on people as peace makers
- Solution-oriented, identifying creative initiatives that lead to solution, reconstruction and reconciliation

Peace journalism encourages journalists and the media institutions to review themselves and their practices to produce information that addresses the full array of political, ethnic, social and cultural injustices.

Majid Tehranian views it as a kind of journalism ethics that attempt to transform conflicts from their violent channels into constructive forms by conceptualizing news, empowering the voiceless and seeking common ground that unify rather than divide communities.

UMDF appreciates this alternative approach in view of Uganda's violent past and a media primarily inclined to present stories with political angles as prime in broadcasting and print. Through the Peace journalism project, UMDF is building skills among journalists to use conflict sensitive approaches in reporting and programming, to give voice to victims of conflict instead of reporting official sources only.

Many upcountry journalists lacked these skills and chances to train given the rigours of the newsroom routine. These among others reasons largely influenced UMDF strategy to offer media training in conflict sensitive journalism at their places of work.

Now in its second phase running through 2011-2013, the project is consolidating skills re-orientation in Peace Journalism or Conflict Sensitive Journalism (CSJ). The first phase was a pilot that lasted two years from 2009-2010. The project is funded by the Church Development Service (EED) based in Germany and is the first such training for journalists in Uganda.

The project areas include Rwenzori in Western Uganda, West Nile, Northern Uganda, and Eastern Uganda.

The project design includes regional trainings of media practitioners and Church media people in Peace Journalism approaches. It sensitises radio managers and engages with opinion leaders to appreciate peace journalism. In each region is a model radio station and gets periodical on-location mentoring visits. During the visits UMDF conducts progress meetings with practitioners at other participating stations. Further interaction and mentoring with Journalists is on two on-line platforms one for journalists called *Peace-journalism* Google groups and one for Radio Managers called the *Conflict-sensitive-radio* Google group.

In the first phase project titled '*Promoting Peace Journalism through radio in Uganda*', a hundred journalists were trained. UMDF also liaised with the Uganda joint Christian Council (UJCC) to involve Church media people in trainings with aim to tap into their long established experience of handling conflict and also to strengthen linkages with media. 10 participated in the trainings and provided important input to the course.

The second phase is titled "**Consolidating Peace Journalism in Uganda**", and the focus more on micro-conflicts largely rooted in the different communities. So far about 100 journalists have trained in conflict sensitive approaches.

The learning from the trainings highlights the fact that the principles of peace journalism appear to practitioners as contradictory to the principles of conventional journalism. Conventional media rate conflict in terms of magnitude. The common people issues or conflicts are relegated as "small" and average and are often ignored. This therefore means that for peace journalism to take root, sustained efforts in changing attitudes and perceptions of journalists is still needed.

For peace journalism practice to thrive it must be supported by continuous negotiation of an enabling environment that includes the legislative and policy frameworks, as well as the management practices. The project is succeeding through the five day trainings conducted in the four regions. Further, through the model radio programmes, the applicability of the concept is tested in the four regions. This continues under the new project, where three-day trainings have occurred and model stations have doubled from four in the first phase to eight stations in the new phase. These include: Rwenzori-Life FM in Fortportal and Guide FM in Kasese; West Nile region stations are Pacis FM in Arua and Paidha Fm in Nebbi. Northern Region stations include Luo FM in Pader and Radio Wa in Lira. Eastern region stations are Step FM in Mbale and Voice of Teso (VOTE) in Soroti.

The project has created networking linkages among the radio journalists and Church media people. Media managers and editors who were not direct beneficiaries of the project have been sensitized about the concept and the general management principles that would make media institutions successful. This continues in the new phase. The project was also able to establish an online discussion about conflict sensitive approaches to programming. On this forum, journalists post the subjects of their programmes and stories, plus the angles they will adopt. They seek and get advice not only from the mentors (who are also part of the network) but also from their peers. This has become a very vibrant peace journalism platform that engages not only the model radio stations, but all beneficiaries of the trainings.

The common problems journalists point out are lack of training opportunities at their stations and limited equipment. Fortunately, many managers have appreciated constant engagement with UMDF not only on the concept of peace journalism, but also on best media management practices. In order to improve the policy environment, UMDF is now engaged in media policy advocacy. It is actively engaged in lobbying for amendments to the Press and Journalists Amendment Bill (2010) to remove draconian provisions that on annual licensing of media, and control of content. It is only under a favourable media landscape that initiative like the Peace Journalism project can succeed.





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