



## **Radio Buddu and the Uganda Anti-Homosexuality Bill Epilogue**

Radio Buddu talk show host Moses Walugembe decided to go ahead and start working on the show's content by interviewing the local community. However, he was unable to find anyone willing to admit to homosexuality, or even to speak in support of gay rights. He realized that, in Uganda, members of the gay and lesbian community were too intimidated to speak out. They "don't want their voices to be put on the radio," says Walugembe. "They think people may recognize them and say hey, you're the one doing that. So that's why they said no."<sup>1</sup> Without any contribution from local supporters of gay rights, Walugembe found himself stymied. How could he present a balanced on-air panel discussion with one side of the equation missing?

Walugembe also knew that the community was sensitive to homosexual issues, and would judge harshly any institution that seemed to support it. "Once they [the community] discover that you're fighting for those people, they take you to be one of them," he says. "[They ask:] why do you have to fight for them? [They assume that] you are one of them." If he were to move forward with his planned show, Walugembe recognized that there could be negative consequences that would extend beyond him personally, and affect the perception of the radio station and staff in the community's eyes.

In the end, the decision was made for him. Although the Radio Buddu management committee had approved his idea and allowed Walugembe to go ahead and start researching the show, the matter then went to the station's governing board. A Radio Buddu board member instructed Walugembe not to air the show. Walugembe was comfortable with the decision. "I feel it was a right decision to do, because it could have been a problem. Since we managed to avoid or sense those problems before we put the program on the air, I think it was a right decision."

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<sup>1</sup> Author's interviews with Moses Walugembe in Kampala on June 18 and June 21, 2012 and by phone on August 8, 2012. All further quotes from Walugembe, unless otherwise attributed, are from these interviews.

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*This epilogue was written by Anzette Were for the Aga Khan University Graduate School of Media and Communications. (1012)*

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