

Authentic African content is the secret to streaming success

By [Leslie Adams](#)

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Squid Games, Netflix's 2021 series about a fatal contest centred around popular children's games such as Red Light, Green Light reached global cult status and went to become one of the most watched Netflix shows.



Source: www.unsplash.com

The tale resonated with both local and international audiences facing a turbulent post-pandemic global economy, which served to ratify Netflix's strategy of investing in local content.

While the massive global success of local content, as in the case of *Squid Games*, is admittedly rare, for advertisers, local content creates a powerful pathway to the heart of that market. It provides an opportunity to establish an emotional connection with consumers, within a relevant and resonant context.

Local content

Local content sells and the world is waking up to Africa's potential. Netflix recently announced that it will invest R900 million in South African-produced content, while MultiChoice, when reporting its FY2022 results, made clear its intention to increase its local focus, stating that it would ramp up local content production by 32% YoY, with the goal of achieving 50% local content by 2024.

Showmax will be funding four East African-produced original films, while Disney+ has announced plans to roll out short films by directors from South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda and Egypt. Moreover, Amazon recently concluded its first agreements with African production companies in two major licensing deals.



South Africa primed for the Great Streaming Boom

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With a strong presence in emerging markets such as India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and now Africa, Viu serves as another great case study of an international video-on-demand (VOD) entertainment provider that understands the power of local content.

Viu features some of South Africa's most popular daily soap operas such as *Uzalo*, *Skeem Saam* and *Generations*. Furthermore, once it reaches critical mass in a specific market, Viu invests heavily in the production of local content. Locally-produced Viu Original *uBettina Wethu* is one of SA's most popular shows. On this production, Viu has partnered with SABC which has scheduled *uBettina Wethu* in its primetime TV broadcasting slot, in addition to being available on Viu.

Viu also uploads new content every day, keeping viewers engaged.

Investment leads to quality

With more investment, the quality of content improves and audiences grow. The rapid growth in the streaming space – aided by various initiatives to increase internet access and affordability – video on demand provides exciting new opportunities for advertisers to connect with the local market.

Global business intelligence and media company Dataxis revealed that the African streaming market doubled in size between 2018 and 2021, while highlighting that local content will remain a key differentiator, given the different cultural requirements and nuances. Take into account that YouTube – being an advertising video on demand (AVOD) platform – already has 25 million active monthly users in South Africa alone, the streaming space in Africa will certainly be an exciting one to watch over the next few years.

I believe that our passion for all-that-is-local is not anything new – audiences love to see themselves represented in the content they consume – but the pandemic heightened our awareness around the importance of supporting local, and investing in the success of our country.

I am excited to see the growth in local content, specifically in the streaming space, and believe we've barely seen the tip of the iceberg in terms of the opportunities it will unlock for SA's advertisers.

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