

**Refugees Came and Left,  
What Remains?  
The Case of Ngara District,  
North-Western Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

This article is based on a study which used a qualitative approach to examine the impact of refugees on the intangible cultural heritage of the host community. In-depth interviews, non-participant observation and focus group discussions were used to gather data from Ngara District in Tanzania. Data was analysed using an inductive approach. The article reveals that the presence of refugees in an area, accelerated by socio-economic demands, can lead to both negative and positive effects on the intangible cultural heritage of the locals. The article concludes that despite the fact that refugees affect the intangible cultural heritage of the host community, there is a need of involving the local community in protecting and managing the positive effects accrued from the refugees. This will be the best way of eradicating the negative effects. The article provides better understanding of the broad theory on migration, especially on the kinds of impact that refugees have on cultural heritage resources, and how to involve locals to ensure sustainability of such resources.

*Key words: refugees, intangible cultural heritage, management, Ngara*

## Introduction

Ngara, one of the districts in north-western Tanzania, has got a long history of receiving more refugees from Rwanda than any other district in the country. The district is endowed with abundant and valuable intangible cultural heritage resources. Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) refers to collective works originating in a given community based on tradition and transmitted orally or by performance. This includes oral traditions, customs, languages, music, dance, rituals, festivals, traditional medicine, culinary arts, all kinds of special skills connected with the material aspect of culture, social systems and beliefs, social relations, philosophies, ideas, values and traditional knowledge (Mulokozi, 2005). As Gabriel (2015:6) notes, “intangible cultural heritage is interactive, dynamic and cohesive in that it is transmitted from generation to generation, and is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and the historical conditions of their existence”. ICH does not stand only for past inherited traditions but also embraces present-day practices in different cultural communities. Evidently, such assets have been found to be affected by the large numbers of refugees who sought asylum in the area of Ngara between the 1960s and 1990s. As a result of having a long history of accommodating refugees, the area has been receiving good attention from researchers interested in issues pertaining to refugees in such matters as life of refugee settlement (Gasarasi, 1976), general impact of refugees in north-western Tanzania (Rutinwa, 2003), conflicts between refugees and Tanzanian communities (Batondana, 2008), and refugees and environmental impacts (Talemwa, 2013). As noted in the list, none of the researches has focused on refugees’ impact on ICH. Consequently, mitigation measures have not been established for sustainable management of valuable ICH accrued from the interaction between refugees and locals.

While acknowledging the contribution made by the existing scholarship, this article seeks to examine the impact of human migration on ICH of the host community. In due regard, it acts as a stepping stone in providing better understanding of the broad theory on migration, especially on the kind of impact, which human migrants, refugees, in particular, are likely to make on host communities and propose suitable ways for sustainable management of ICH resources. The article is based on data collected by the author during

one year of doctoral field research, from 2016 to 2017. The data collection techniques included archival and document study, individual interviews, non-participant observation methods and focus group discussion (FGD). The archival documents included those which informed about intangible cultural heritage of the people of Ngara, Geography and cultural settings of the area together with information on refugee settlement, interaction and consequences on the host community. In obtaining informants for individual in-depth interviews, the researcher started by identifying focal persons who were selected purposively to act as key informants. Focal persons were introduced to the researchers by local government leaders who knew the capability of the former in issues associated with culture and refugees. These in turn introduced the researcher to other well-informed persons. Thus, the researcher used the snowball method through which informants already contacted would direct the researcher to other respondents who could be interviewed. Through a non-participant method, the researcher made frequent visits to the research area in order to physically observe the identified effects of ICH assets pertaining to beliefs, values and skills connected with the material aspects of culture as well. In particular, the researcher used the non-participant technique to observe traditional dances, religious practices, trading activities, festivals and dressing styles from the perspectives of the people under study. For the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), a total of six groups were involved. Each group consisted of not less than six participants, but they did not exceed twelve in number. These were selected from different parts of the study area. The choice of the participants depended on their ability to provide the required information specified in the research questions. FGDs were an opportunity to gain insight on the subject in a purely interactive session. Purposively, a sample of 211 respondents was selected as follows: 20 traditional leaders, 20 religious leaders, 3 immigration officers, 10 refugee officers, 3 district cultural officers and 155 knowledgeable local people (male and female). These knowledgeable people whose age was 40 and above were expected to be well-informed on the history of issues associated with refugees and the intangible heritage of the area.

The collected data was analysed using a constant comparative method, where lines, sentences and paragraphs of the transcribed interviews and field notes were scrutinised to find out what codes fitted the concepts suggested by the data.

The interpretation of a single instance was examined for specific meaning in relation to the study objectives. Thus, through synthesis and generalisation, a conclusion was reached.

## **The History of Refugee Settlement in Ngara District**

The history of refugee settlement in Ngara goes back to 1959 through 1961 following an ethnic revolution that took place in Rwanda, a country bordering this district. In this revolution, the Hutu elite defeated the Tutsi monarchy and mobilised the Hutu peasants into uprising against the Tutsi. The outbreak of the uprising resulted in massive inflows of Tutsi refugees into Ngara (Gasarasi, 1976). These were settled in Muyenzi and Kanyinya camps.

Thirty-three years later, a bulk of refugees, predominantly Hutu, arrived in Ngara. Their migration resulted from a massacre which started in April 1994, and within no time it escalated into genocide. Within 100 days, the genocide had claimed over one million Rwandese lives. Meanwhile, millions of Hutus fled the country as the Rwandan Patriotic Front Army invaded and took over the country (Batware, 2012; Reyntijens 2004). Since Ngara is close to Rwanda, a good number of refugees arrived in this area. The population bulged to a size never seen in the area before. As Talemwa (2013:55) notes, “within twenty-four hours, one village, namely Kasulo which had approximately 6,000 local people, received about 200,000 refugees; and by the end of 1994, Kasulo was hosting about 400,000 refugees who were in three established refugee camps of Benaco, Lumasi and Musuhura”. According to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (2000), this was probably the largest mass exodus in Africa’s history.

In the same line, Rutinwa (1996) acknowledges that between 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April of the same year (1994), 250,000 refugees entered Ngara alone. In addition, the Daily News, (24<sup>th</sup> December, 1994) reported that by the end of 1994, the established camps of Benaco, Lumasi and Musuhura had received 235,000, 117,000, and 55,000 refugees, respectively. These summed up to 407,000 whereas the local residents were only 183,037. By the time of massive repatriation of the Rwandese in 1996, there were about 371,279 refugees (Batondana, 2008).

The large number of Rwandan refugees in Ngara together with socio-economic interactions with the local residents led to, among other things, impact on the ICH in Ngara, as explained in subsequent sections.

## **Negative Impact of Refugees on Intangible Cultural Heritage**

The presence of Rwandan refugees in Ngara left negative marks on the ICH of the area. The notable consequence connected especially with the refugees who came in Ngara in 1994, is the dwindling of the hereditary local botanical medical industry. From time immemorial, when the people of Ngara fell ill, they opted for some botanical medicinal treatment. Local medicines are obtained from special trees and herbs which are available in the neighbouring local forests. The knowledge and the whole process of obtaining such medicine is hereditary in that, children can go together with their senior folks to pick, dig or chop the required herbs, roots or barks.

This knowledge enabled children to acquaint themselves with some local medicine to the extent that even in the absence of their elders, children could handle medication on their own. Sometimes, the business was under a specialised person who dealt with treatment of serious and chronic diseases in the community. Before the arrival of refugees, the medicinal species were available in large numbers; however, with the coming of refugees who were in dire need of firewood, posts for construction of huts, and areas for settlement, the very species were harvested in large quantities. Today, surviving species are in small numbers and obtained from distant areas where children and elders cannot easily reach.

The presence of refugees had a crucial impact on the environment, particularly the vegetation cover. Refugee activities led to deforestation of the relatively densely wooded savannah formerly available around refugee camps of Benaco, Lumasi and Musuhura. The most affected tree species were Egiondogori (*Cusoniakirkii*), Umukarakamba (*Rubiaccordiafolia*), Ichanda (*Bidenspilosa*), Imikoyoyo (*Combretumbinderanum*), Imibhanga (*Pericopsisangolensis*), Imirama (*combretummolle*) and Imisasa (*sapiumeliptucum*). These and many other species are among the traditional sources of medicine for the people of Ngara. That is to say, the deforestation of the relatively densely wooded savannah done by refugees, particularly at Kasulo, Nguvu Kazi, Rwakalemera, Benaco

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and Kigando areas affected, not only the environment, but also the traditional medical industry which depended on the availability of the products from the wilderness.

The destruction of vegetation did not end with medicinal herbs but also affected sacred areas that had been set apart for performance of religious rituals. It should be noted that despite the presence of Christian and Islamic religions in Ngara, some of the people today are still following their indigenous religions and practices. These people, among other things, perform rituals in prescribed areas with tangible symbols. Such areas include big trees known as Imilinsi (*Erythrina abyssinica*) and those living near River Ruvubu do the same around the tall shrubs along the river bank. Performance of rituals sometimes involves offering of libation.

The arrival of refugees left an indelible mark on the intangible heritage of the area. The most notable activity which took place along rivers banks was cutting down of the vegetation cover, especially trees, shrubs and swampy plants for domestic purposes as mentioned earlier. Brick-making also took place along the river banks. Some refugees were either hired by economically well-off indigenous persons to make bricks, or they did undertake the business themselves in order to earn money. The activity was done without considering environmental conservation. Moreover, there was no respect for important areas which were used by some indigenous folks for performance of religious rituals. The neglect of the sacred areas meant profaning such holy places. Hence, the followers of African traditional religions were indirectly denied their right to worship.

The people of Ngara believe in after-life<sup>1</sup>. The spiritual presence of a deceased person is marked by the respect given to this individual's burial place. When one dies, one's burial place is marked by planting an ever-growing tree known locally as umuvumu (*ficus natalensis*). Any area marked with this kind of tree is respected across generations, and one is not allowed to cut the tree for it stands as a symbol of the presence of the deceased person.

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<sup>1</sup> This idea concurs with most of the African philosophy and religious beliefs as portrayed by Mbiti (1970).

However, even if the name of the deceased person is not known to the people around, the ever-growing umuvumu testifies the presence of the burial place of a person, hence the place gets due respect from all people. The need to harvest trees and wood for multiple purposes by the refugees did not consider the cultural significance attached to umuvumu. The tree was cut and cleared just like other species, and the final result was the loss of the markers of very important areas which, for a long time, had the cultural significance as the demarcation of burial places.

This had a negative effect on the preservation of the cultural heritage linked with the deceased members of the community,<sup>2</sup> (see Lwamugira, 1949 in Schmidt, 2017:1 for a similar belief in Buhaya). This clearly shows that deforestation associated with the presence of refugees went beyond destruction of vegetation cover; as already indicated, it equally affected the local medical industry as well as the local religious system both of which bear strong ties with the forest.

Another area that has been affected by the coming of refugees is the question of land ownership. Possession of land for the people of Ngara is hereditary within a clan. It is strictly forbidden for a person to sell or offer a piece of land which one has inherited from one's parents to a person who is not a member of the same clan. Furthermore, the boundary of one's piece of land is demarcated using special species of trees such as Inganigani (*Dracaena usambarensis*), Iminyari (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) and Imilinzi (*Erythrinacaffra*). Their presence denotes the boundary and limit of one's possession of land, and for that reason, they are respected and preserved by the people. They also symbolise the wealth belonging to a clan. The en masse inflow of refugees was a cruel blow to this kind of intangible heritage in two ways. First, through trade activities, refugees introduced the locals to various commercial activities. This tempted the locals, especially the youth, into seeking capital in order to engage themselves in commercial activities. Since the locals were swallowed up in the demands of the time, they found themselves selling portions of their hereditary land to well-off non-clan members. Since then, this tendency has been upheld. Secondly, through deforestation, a number of trees formerly used as land markers and worshipping sites have been cleared up.

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2 Interview with Nicolaus Kanuma at Rulenge, Rulenge, 15/02/2016. Also Interview with a unanimous informant, Benaco, 27/03/2016.

After the repatriation of the refugees, the former land demarcations have now been destroyed, resulting in land conflicts and quarrels among respective community members.

Furthermore, refugee encroachment went beyond forests; it affected also the neighbouring game reserves of Kimisi and Burigi. This led to the extermination of some animals such as leopards and lions which are held with high esteem in the local community's culture. Traditionally, their skins were used in making royal drums commonly known as Muhabura, Kilumbula and Nibalembe.

The drums were used as important symbols of wealth and unity in both chiefdoms of Bushubi and Bugufi. The extinction of these animals implies loss of the people's traditional wealth.

Moreover, the extinction of other game animals such as Gazalle-grant and Topi has affected some aesthetic aspects of traditional dance *umwiyereko*. This is because dancers used to wear skins of the aforementioned animals as decoration to make the dancing look colourful. Traditional dancers have resorted into using skins of domestic animals such as goats and cattle which lack the earlier beauty and historical cultural value.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier research by Jambiya et al. (2007) also showed that wildlife related problems are accelerated by several factors including placement of refugee camps closer to boundaries of game reserves, lack of meat, commercial poaching by armed refugees, and ineffective anti-poaching patrols. It is worth noting that the extermination of wildlife due to high population density caused by human migration does not only have impact on game reserves, national parks or the environment in general as Jambiya and his colleagues observe, but also on the cultural value of the neighbouring community. Thus, it is important to establish refugee camps and settlements far away from areas which are set apart for preservation of natural resources such as game reserves and national parks because these areas have something to do with cultural identity of the human community living close to them.

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<sup>3</sup> Group interview held at Rwakalemera on 17/03/2016. One needs to note that current game reserve regulations are restrictive of use of such resources without proper permission.



The presence of Rwandan refugees in Ngara, particularly in the 1990s, is associated with the decrease of charity and hospitality to strangers. Before the arrival of the refugees, people were usually kind in terms of supporting and helping each other.

This kind of hospitality was also directed to strangers who used to receive warm welcome and share whatever was available, including food and accommodation in local families. After the arrival and repatriation of refugees, things have become very different. The warm welcome and support are now directed almost exclusively to relatives and friends, not strangers. This is because during the refugee period, most of the strangers (refugees) who were welcome and supported, especially with accommodation during the night, tended to commit cruel acts to the host families. These acts included armed robbery, murder and rape. Despite such bitter experience, the people of Ngara are trying their best to accommodate this tradition in an extraordinary way.

Instead of offering such strangers accommodation, some locals are ready to provide them even with money to pay for lodging in guest houses, or even direct them to local government officials who sometimes assist them *ex-officio*. Culturally, this is interpreted as avoiding responsibility and hospitality.

The coming of refugees introduced commercial or exchange business between the two sides. The commercial activities have stimulated the need for locals to involve themselves in a number of commercial activities to earn money. These activities involve mostly selling of crops like millet, cassava, bananas, beans and corn. Prior to the advent of the refugees, especially in the 1990s, these products had been obtained freely or at a very low price from the locals. One could offer, for example, some beans, millet or bananas to his/her neighbour free of charge. Banana-made local beer known as *ugwagwa* and millet- and corn-made local beer known as *umugorigori* were distributed freely to neighbours whenever one brewed them. However, with the coming of refugees, these products have been commercialised to the extent that priority is now selling rather than giving such brew for free. This has consequently affected the tradition of sharing in the society.

With such a situation, commercial activities between refugees and the host community have affected the communal aspect of property sharing, an important

element of intangible cultural heritage in Ngara. The situation in Ngara should call for symbiotic existence between and among neighbours; and peace among the people will rekindle the situation of keeping alive the intangible cultural heritage.

### **Positive Impact of Refugees on Intangible Cultural Heritage**

Positive impact refers to changes accrued from the presence of refugees that introduced new beneficial components or strengthened the already existing ICH of the area. One of the most important cultural heritage of the area as discussed in this article involves skills connected with material aspects of the culture, cultural values and religious practices. These are discussed in the following sections.

The most important of these skills involved the knowledge needed to build houses. Before the inflow of refugees, the dominant house type was Ingondano, which was largely built of mud, and to a lesser extent houses built using small burnt bricks. However, the Rwandan refugees introduced skills for making big fabric bricks, made of clay mixed with chopped dry grass. At the beginning, refugees skilled in brick-making were hired by the local people but with the passage time, the host community members, especially the youths, anxiously adopted the new skill in building their houses. This corroborates the ideas of UNESCO (2003), on intangible cultural heritage which asserts: "For the intangible to be kept alive, it must remain relevant to a culture and be regularly practiced and learned within communities and between generations". Although some host members had skills in making mud-bricks, and mud houses prior to the arrival of the refugees, the innovation of adding chopped grass to make the bricks more compact was adopted from the refugees. Further to making fabric bricks, refugees also introduced wall decorations.

Secondly, refugees introduced some skills on basketry, weaving of some functional wares and making of ornamental objects. Some locals learnt the skills by direct training from skilful refugees, while others learned from some craftsmen or craftswomen working in refugee camps, or simply by copying ready-made objects bought from the market.

Thirdly, the refugees introduced an outstanding new skill of making women dresses. The history of women in Rwanda is coloured with beautiful dresses known as Imikenyero. These are dresses normally worn in ceremonial events including weddings, religious ceremonies, and official traditional dances.

Today this skill is applied by local women in Ngara for designing their own ceremonial dresses. Refugees were also skilled in traditional dances, the famous of which was intore. Today local dancers have improvised a language for singing in local dances such as Umwiyereko.

Fourthly, the refugees taught local residents some new farming techniques such as inter-cropping in marshy areas, something which facilitated growing a variety of crops within a short period of time, e.g. the growing of climbing beans. Furthermore, the demand for cash obtained through selling agricultural products made the local residents change their attitude towards hard work. This attitude of hard work, which began during the presence of refugees, continued even after their repatriation. This increased crop production in the area. Data from the District Agricultural Office reveals a clear picture in the period before the arrival of refugees up to eighteen years after the refugees' repatriation. Production of bananas, for example, went up from 31,260 metric tons in 1993 (before the arrival of refugees) to 153,566 metric tons in 2014 (eighteen years after repatriation); production of cassava shot up from 80 metric tons in 1993 to 958 metric tons in 2014; and maize production rose from 539 metric tons in 1993 to 28,012 metric tons in the same period.

As illustrated in the foregoing data, together with the oral information gathered in the field, it is obvious that from the year 1994 when a large number of refugees entered the area up to 2014, the trend of production shot up. Moreover, it is the case that the presence of refugees in Ngara left a notable mark on the peoples' positive attitude towards farm work. In the words of the District Agricultural Officer (DAO), "the presence of refugees has been a catalyst for stimulating the zeal in manual work and, hence the increase of crop production in Ngara".<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with the Ngara District Agricultural Officer, 14/4/2016.

Fifthly, the influx of refugees is associated with the increased consumption of grilled meat, popularly known as brochettes, especially goat meat which is available in almost each and every local bar in the area or commercial centre. The increased consumption of meat was accelerated by the Rwandan culture of “drink and eat”. Although the people of Ngara had the culture of consuming meat prior to the coming of refugees, this was more of a domestic affair than a public activity

Sixthly, increase in the locals’ sense of cooperation and unity in matters pertaining to the security of individuals and their property is another contribution associated with the presence of refugees in Ngara.

Cooperation and unity among the local residents increased after some of the refugees had started breaking the law and engaging themselves in such acts as murder, armed robbery and rape. The increased insecurity practices during the time of refugees forced the local residents to become more vigilant in matters pertaining to peace-keeping. Despite the fact that cooperation and unity were not a new phenomenon in the area, insecurity acts accruing from the presence of refugees irritated the residents and pushed them to rise up and cooperate more in issues of security. These include quick response in any call aiming at preventing robbery, mobilising and joining village security groups, and instant reporting of any insecurity act to local government officials.

In addition, refugees are said to have influenced the local people to live closer to one another. The cooperation among the people of Ngara from time immemorial was associated with settlement of families in close proximity. However, due to temptation of acquiring more land people gradually began to move and live in scattered areas although they had to come back later because of the very frequent insecurity acts committed by some refugees. The local people had to reorganise themselves in close neighbourhoods in their settlement, as a means to protect themselves against robbery and other evils. From the period of the refugees to the present time, the locals have settled in close proximity to one another in order to enhance cooperation in social issues.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Focus group discussions at Nguvu Kazi area, 15/3/2016.

Although, on the one hand, the force behind cooperation, unity, and living in close proximity was prompted by the insecurity acts rooted from the presence of refugees, this was also the driving force of bringing back the value of cooperation, togetherness, and honour and respect for others, which had started dwindling prior to the presence of refugees.

Seventhly, the presence of refugees led to the increase in number of Christian denominations and their believers especially in the areas close to the refugee settlements.<sup>6</sup>

The first refugees who arrived in the 1960s were predominantly Catholic. Their presence attracted host community members still upholding indigenous beliefs and practices to Catholicism. This was mainly by way of intermarriage; the locals joined Catholicism as a means of getting refugee women but in due course they found themselves completely engrossed in the new faith.

According to the baptism register (*Liber Baptisarum*) of Rulenge Catholic Parish, in 1960 (a year before the arrival of refugees), for example, the number of neophytes was 754, whereas in the following two years, in 1961 and 1962 (i.e. during and after the arrival of refugees), the number was 1,014 and 1,270 respectively.

So, the presence of refugees in the 1990s is associated with the increasing number of Christians in Ngara, but this time, Pentecostal denominations.

According to the District Cultural and Sports Officer, together with the information gathered from the District Administrative Officer, the refugees in the camps of Benaco, Lumasi and Musuhura attracted a number of Christian followers of different denominations. Although the number of Catholics surpassed others, Pentecostal churches mushroomed very fast.

Members of the host community were attracted to attended spiritual services conducted in the camps.

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the Rwandan refugees did not introduce the Catholic Faith in the area of Ngara, for this was done by the White Fathers Missionaries in the early 1930s as seen in chapter two. The presence of Rwandan refugees strengthened the seed of Catholicism which was already established in the area.

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Attraction to the new denominations was associated with new ways of captivating prayers together with material support provided by religious facilitators. These came into the camps with the aim of assisting refugees spiritually, but at the same time uplifting the number of followers in their denominations. After the repatriation of the refugees in 1996, the focus turned to the host communities, that is, Pentecostal church animators directed their religious activities to villages situated close to the former refugee camps, with the aim of continuing their mission of preaching and spreading their faith. In so doing, the number of Christian denominations increased.

From 1983 to 1993, a year before the second arrival of the refugees, for example, there were only three Pentecostal Christian denominations in Ngara, whereas in 1997, a year after the repatriation, these increased to twelve. While on the one hand the increase of Pentecostal Christian denominations negatively affected <sup>7</sup> traditional religions in the area, on the other, it facilitated the rebuilding of peace of mind of some members of the local community through their teachings, and their efforts in building back the lost trust towards hospitality to strangers.

With such knowledge showing the connection between the refugees and the role of religion in the affected host community, religion can act as an important social instrument through which social set-ups are reinstated and new ones formed.

In addition, religion may play a role in many areas of people's daily life in matters pertaining to migrants and refugees in particular (Dupre, 2008:8). Religious beliefs and practices can be viewed as a contrivance for providing the host community with a feeling of home, sense of security, rebuilding the dwindled hospitality to strangers and providing mutual support. This leads to the need of involving the former host community in protecting and managing some aspects of religion.

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<sup>7</sup> Attacks have been through the doctrines of the introduced denominations which look down some tenets of the ATR and name them pagan.

## **Sustainable Management of Intangible Cultural Heritage Accrued from the Refugees**

Having considered both the negative and positive impacts of refugee settlement in Ngara, it is imperative to find ways of protecting and conserving the latter. One of the suggestions given is that there should be a proposed plan of educating the youth on how to protect the already existing notable heritage assets. It is also important that traditional leaders encourage their subordinates to meet for communal farming at least once per month in order to continue lifting up the positive attitude towards farming of various crops, especially vegetables.

This should involve people of all ages: children, youths and adults. From adults, the youth and children will learn about the aims of production, kinds of crop suitable for cultivation in a specific area, as well as the skills of cultivation and cooperation. Education to the youths will enhance cultural awareness.

The District Cultural Office has to establish an annual local traditional festival day, that is, a single day per year, allowing the local people to meet for local traditional celebrations and exhibitions of cultural heritage assets including those accrued from the refugees. This will allow the local community to be integrated in matters related to heritage management and protection. The festival celebrations will have to involve the public in presentation of traditional activities such as dances, performances and artistic work.

The festival day and its accompanying activities will inspire people to prevent the intangible cultural heritage assets from perishing.

Cinema shows, videos, and other social media in villages, should be organised in order to expose the young generation to their cultural heritage. The past can be lived by using the present, and the young generation is the best agent for keeping alive the cultural heritage assets through modern means of communication. Furthermore, cultural heritage professionals should plan for programmes which will be communicated through such media to various people, especially the youths who will be able to transmit it to the next generation.

The sustainable management and protection of the positive aspects of ICH of the host community in Ngara would be possible if cultural heritage centres were established in each and every ward in the district through the initiatives of the community members along with the support of the government. Through these centres, people of different ages and at different times could get the chance of visiting, learning about, and appreciating their cultural heritage assets. Moreover, if this is implemented it will boost cultural heritage awareness among the local people, thereby encouraging them to play a part in the sustainable management and protection of their cultural heritage assets.

Apart from the establishment of cultural heritage centres in each ward, it is important to establish a programme that would incorporate government officials working in Ngara in cultural heritage issues of the area, in order to manage and protect the positive impact of refugees on the intangible cultural heritage assets. This is because most officials have little knowledge concerning the culture of the area, leading to placing insufficient emphasis on protection of the same. The proposed programme can be accomplished through seminars, training sessions and meetings.

The sustainable management and protection of the positive influences of refugees on the intangible cultural heritage of the host community has something to do with the involvement of all members of the host community. This involvement also needs collaboration with government officials who are knowledgeable about issues related to the cultural heritage of the local area. Government officials should be acquainted with education on the contribution of heritage to the history, identity and spiritual life of the local community members of the specific area where they are assigned to work. This is because the correct knowledge of one's heritage is the foundation for both scientific development and development of future generations.

Furthermore, there should be ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue amongst different religious denominations aiming at sharing and implementing whatever good message could be associated with the coming of the refugees in Ngara. Despite the difference in some aspects of faith among the religious denomination in the area, there is a need of sitting down and sharing what these denominations have in common. Issues related to peace, love, charity,



cooperation and security are the best heritage ideals which fit in with all members of the local community, regardless of individual faith. Sharing can be done in the form of symposia, religious meetings, and performances as well as through artistic works.

Following the suggestions that have been given here, this article concurs with Mulokozi (2005) who argues that “intangible heritage is a necessary part of the daily life and practices of people”. That being the case, the whole process of managing and protecting intangible cultural heritage should essentially involve the whole community. Management of intangible cultural heritage needs ways of making it viable, especially through encouraging its production in the traditional form. In addition, the government has a crucial leadership role to play too; it has to translate policy statements concerning intangible cultural heritage into practical reality. These include the need for public awareness and education amongst the local people who are the owners and custodians of the very precious cultural heritage resources.

## **Conclusion**

In this article, an attempt has been made to examine the impact brought by refugees in Ngara on the intangible cultural heritage of the area. It has revealed the fact that the presence of refugees in the host area accelerated by socio-economic demands led to both negative and positive effects on the ICH of the local people. The article concludes that despite the fact that refugees caused changes on the intangible cultural heritage of the locals, both negatively and positively, there is a need to involve the local community in protecting and managing the positive effects because this will be the best way of minimising the negative effects. In due regard, this article acts as a stepping stone for providing a better understanding of the broad theory on migration, especially on the kind of impact refugees are likely to make on host communities; and on the suitability of involving ideas of locals in managing as well as protecting cultural heritage resources.

This article also spells out the kind of danger which might result from accommodating a large number of refugees in a small area and locating refugee camps closer to local residents. The article reveals that the large number of

refugees from Rwanda which exceeded the local population was settled in a small area of Ngara which enhanced interaction between the host community and the refugees. Consequently, the same led to negative impacts on the ICH of the host community. The involvement of the local people in decision-making would have helped the planners to avoid this error. This article therefore, calls for refugee host governments, especially in Africa, to rethink their plans and policy in accommodating refugees. Regardless of the fact that refugees affect the intangible cultural heritage of the host community, there is a need of incorporating the local community in protecting and managing the positive effects accrued from the refugees.

Despite the interesting findings, the study was limited to the impact of refugees on intangible heritage, specifically on values, skills connected to material aspects of culture, together with religious practices and beliefs. This article recommends that further research should be conducted to tackle other aspects of the ICH such as language, literature (oral and written) beliefs (apart from religion) and education.

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