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Oral History as a Social Tool for National Transformation

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Abstract

Oral history, as documentary heritage, is a general trio umbrella term to refer to a collection of cultural heritage (content), genres (form), and practices of people (oral traditions). Such heritage includes collections in memory institutions (museums, libraries, archives) in such formats as books and manuscripts and oral history selected based on time, place, people, subject and theme, form, and style. As a collective property, oral history tells people's history and helps the present generation to understand their place in history as a way of promoting societal integration and a driver of socioeconomic growth and transformation. One strategy to aid society transformation is using oral history as a social tool for understanding individual experiences, within a specific historical, cultural and social and individual testimony experience to transform the society. Using a systematic review, the article's literature on oral history addresses the classical, colonial, and contemporary reminiscences. Echoing on the global opportunities on documentary heritage, the article illuminates the African agenda on oral history with specific examples from Uganda. Using the foundational principle of the seven spheres of influences of transformation of society, the article exposes the place of oral history as a social tool for national transformation.



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1.0 Introduction

The nature of oral history as a form of documentary heritage is manifested in three forms: the source -- oral traditions and/or objects), the records/archives on the object) and the knowledge in form of publications. Oral history is one of the documentary heritages described as a general trio umbrella term to refer to a collection of cultural heritage (content), genres (form of documentation and/or practices [process] of inquiry into the memories of people who have experienced the recent past) and practices of people (traditions/recollections). Oral recollections include orally transmitted and recounted facts about an object, event or activity that arise within the performance of a given society. Oral history has national, regional and worldwide significance, with the twin objective of making heritage accessible to as many people as possible and using the most appropriate technology.

Oral history has been evident in informing the civilization characterized by the early civilizations in the river valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates (Mesopotamia) in about 4000 BC, in the Nile valley, and a thousand years later in the Indus valley. The post-second world war period and the customary archival role of the custodians or keepers of local, state, and central government records in the colonial times and after independence changed the nature and the demand of the documentary records needed for supporting colonial administration (Meredith, 2005). In terms of the form, oral history guided the planning and implementation of the time of scramble for, the time of colonial rule, and the time of struggle and during independence of most of the African countries, where there was barely noticeable imprint (Alegbeleye, 1993).

The post-second world war period and the customary archival role of the custodians or keepers of local, state, and central government records in the colonial times and after independence changed the nature and the demand of the documentary records needed for supporting colonial administration. This gave rise to the need for the preservation of documentary heritage by African countries adopting the concept “Africana” (Bekker, Walt and Theron, 1995). Africana signified virtually anything that deals with Africa and includes all activities, objects and records of human activities in Africa. The documentary heritage kept in Africana include written, printed, objects, books, maps, rare books, local history collections, oral history, archives, manuscripts in form of text, digital, microform and other forms of historical importance in connection to Africa that are in most cases kept in museums, libraries and archives. Therefore, preserving heritage regarding peoples, languages and cultures, politics and government, wildlife, and crafts becomes a socio-economic obligation. Indeed, Steppat (2024) reviews the African Imprint by excluding African myths in any accounts of influences on Shakespeare, qualifies the literature as a “legacies of knowledge culture originating in Africa” that has had a profound impact modern literature. It is indeed not a surprise to find a politician, a religious person or academic quoting Shakespeare in any communication, a literature that has become an oral heritage of Africa.

Generally, oral history has been captured, recorded and preserved in different forms of formulas (names, titles, slangs); diadactic): poems, riddles, legends, rhymes, proverbs, language, recitations, word games, life histories or historia narratives, curative chants, epic poems, histories, panegyrics, liturgical, epics, lists (place names, genealogy (Vansina, 1971),

history, biography, and memories. In fact, oral literature has now become a medium of storytelling. As a practice, it refers to an activity or a process of inquiry into the recollections, use of storytelling/folklore/legends, proverbs, riddles, or life stories, and comics, Humour, among others, and is unavoidable in any communication in a contemporary society. For example, the recollection of religious and spiritual records is a source of witnesses of oral history. Humour is as important in everyday activities a human being engages in, whether culture, race or religious beliefs (Wood, 2018). Wood refers to Buja (2013) and contends that “humour has its origins in antiquity, with both Aristotle and Plato”, which explains what makes us laugh, an oral history attribute we need to implore.

As a form, oral history can be distinguished from other cultural heritage records into tangible and intangible forms. The tangible form includes material heritage (it can be physically touched) such as monuments, buildings, statues, paintings, objects, architectural works, monuments, archaeological sites, historical centres, groups of buildings, cultural landscapes, historical parks and gardens, botanical gardens, industrial archaeology, etc. In this case, oral history records can be recorded about those forms of tangible heritage. The second deals with immaterial heritage such as music, dance, literature, theatre, languages, know-how, religious ceremonies, traditional performances, etc. Information about these forms of heritage resides in movable sources: museum collections, libraries, archives or in communities and peoples' heads.

This, thus, qualifies oral history as a documentary heritage - the characteristics of which include: movables made up of signs/codes, sounds and/or images; preservables (carriers are non-living); reproducibles and migratables; and results from a deliberate documenting process; and content and carrier. This is the only way we can be sure that recordings will be preserved and made accessible for current and future generations.

As a practice of people (oral traditions), oral history plays a role in the preservation of that heritage. This involves heritage inherited and transmitted from the past to the future generations. It is a legacy we receive from our ancestors, our parents, cultural and natural environment and transmitted to future generations. The value of such heritage is based on *time, place, people, subject and theme, form and style, historical and spiritual significance* (UNESCO, 2002). Many African countries have attempted to safeguard their natural and cultural heritage in the form of social traditions, crafts, music, dances, folklore, food and dressing and with limited emphasis on preservation and conservation of this heritage. The capacity to integrate oral history as a social tool for economic and national transformation requires attention.

1.1 The Problem

In most of the African countries, the available oral history records and information on social, national and persons significance is scattered in different places, documents and in memory of people, most of which are more likely to get lost forever. Accessing some of the records kept on them is not easy and in many cases this heritage is not known and accessing such heritage is inhibited language barriers, obsolete and incompatible formats and forms in which

the heritage is captured, stored and preserved. There are current threats evidenced by a number of disasters, ranging from accidental or deliberate displacement of holdings and collections, to the effects of wars, weather and climate, historical circumstances, political barriers, which all have a negative effect on the national heritage. Such memory becomes fragile and in most cases some irreplaceable parts of the memory disappear forever. Absence of oral history platforms for information sharing and transfer of documentary heritage to institutions and communities inhibits social and national integration. This, combined with inadequate capacity and preservation programme, limits the integration of oral history heritage as a social tool for national transformation. The article aims at assessing the place of oral history as bridging gap in documentary heritage for socioeconomic transformation in Africa. Echoing the global opportunities for documentary heritage, the article illuminates the African agenda on oral history, highlighting challenges and opportunities in Uganda. Using the foundational principle of the seven spheres of influence of transformation of society, the article exhibits the place of oral history as a social tool for national transformation.

2.0 Methodology

This article is based on a recognizance study on “preservation of oral history in marketplaces” that aims to provide strategies for social transformation. The article is based on a literature search on global, African, and African developments exhibited in the promotion of oral history as a tool of transformation. The selection of the documentary reviews was based on various programmes exhibited in various international programmes at the African Union, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) programmes at African and national levels and a review of various policies, legislation, and activity reports done with Africa and beyond that attempts to exhibit the efforts done on oral history initiatives as a transforming tool for social transformation. For a clear articulation of the challenges for Africa, Cases from Uganda were used. The discussion of the study was based on the foundational principle of the seven spheres of influences of transformation of society developed by Dr. Bill Bright, Loren Cunningham, and Francis Schaefer in 1975: Family, Religion/ Church, Education, Government, Media, Celebration (Arts, Entertainment, and Sports) and Economics (Business, Science, and Technology) (Benedict, 2013).

3.0 Results

3.1 Oral History as Abridging Gap on Documentary Heritage in Africa

Over time, there have been several attempts to advocate Oral History as bridging the gap on Documentary Heritage worldwide and in Africa.

3.1.1 Global Perspective on Oral History Heritage

Globally, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 11 supports a strong cultural identity, an affirmation needed for building cultural heritage and Memory of the World programme and Documentary Heritage. In addition, there are a number of bodies that have guided the preservation and safeguarding of documentary heritage, including the

IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), the International Council on Archives (ICA), and the International Council of Museums (ICOM). For instance, the World Heritage Convention is a masterpiece of intangible heritage and safeguarding and preservation of moving images (1980). This is in addition to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights and the UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage (2003). Specifically, there are a number of declarations, international treaties and other documents that support documentary heritage oral history including The “Universal Declaration on Archives” (2010) accepted by the International Council on Archives (ICA), and endorsed by the 36th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (2011), “International Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations” (1961) and the 2007 “United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples”.

In particular, UNESCO has for a number of years supported, studied and provided guidelines on preservation and safeguarding of documentary heritage. Most especially, UNESCO has addressed many aspects of documentation of national heritage, including guidelines for legal deposit (Lariviere, 1981) and the establishment of National Archives (Thomas, 1986); oral history and oral tradition (1986); UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001); and the Convention on the Protection of Diversity of Cultural Expression (2005). There are a number of UNESCO conventions and recommendations that inform documentary heritage: “Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage” (1972), “Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage” (2003), “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions” (2005), “Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images” (1980) and “Memory of the World Programme”, 1992.

The Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) is premised on the fact that some places on earth are of Outstanding Universal Value and need protection. Uganda, for example, became a State Party on 20 November 1987. Uganda has had three sites: Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (has of recent been removed), Bwindi Impenetrable N.P, and Rwenzori Mountains N.P. For the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), it is an international agreement adopted in 2003 that deals with safeguarding and promoting living heritage. Uganda became a State Party on 13 May 2009. The intangible cultural heritage is in form of living expressions or traditions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants. It includes: oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practice concerning nature and the universe, and knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.

The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) is a binding international legal instrument with a goal to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions as embodied and conveyed in cultural activities, goods and services. It provides a legal framework and its guiding cultural policies aid the production, distribution, access and enjoyment of a range of cultural expressions. It defines the rights and obligations of State Parties with regard to the protection and promotion of cultural expressions, both at the national and international levels. It encourages dialogue among cultures to ensure

wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world for intercultural respect and a culture of peace. It also promotes respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raises awareness of its value at all levels.

Since 1992, UNESCO has attempted to promote the *Memory of the World (MOW)*, a UNESCO programme, and has provided General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage (UNESCO, 2002) for purposes of ensuring the national and regional and world documentary registers. Accordingly, Memory of the World (UNESCO, 2002):

“is the documented, collective memory of the peoples of the world – their documentary heritage – which in turn represents a large proportion of the world’s cultural heritage. It charts the evolution of thought, discovery and achievement of human society. It is the legacy of the past to the world community of the present and the future”.

The key functions of MOW are the identification of documentary heritage, raising awareness, preservation and access, structures, status, and relationships. In particular, preservation and access help to define preservation, principles of preservation, methods, and principles for access – digitized and otherwise, and publicity and awareness-raising. The MOW criteria of selection for inclusion in national, regional and national registers include, among others, considerations of time (creature of its time), place, subject and theme, form and style, significance (historical, geographical), spiritual and sacred values. In particular, spiritual or sacred values consider how the community demonstrates its emotional attachment to the documentary or documents for the way in which these contribute to that community’s identity and social cohesion.

To mitigate this global need, UNESCO, on 17 November 2015, at its 38th session, adopted the 2015 UNESCO recommendation on documentary heritage concerning the preservation of and access to documentary heritage, including in digital form. These recommendations represent a significant milestone in UNESCO’s efforts at preserving documentary heritage, providing universal access to it, and raising public awareness of its shared cultural values. Considerations here were, among others: documentary heritage that unfolds human thought and events; the evolution of languages, cultures, peoples and their understanding of the world; a need for promoting the sharing of knowledge to promote peace and respect for freedom, democracy, human rights and dignity; and enabling intercultural education and personal enrichment, scientific and technological progress as a crucial resource for development, fundamental freedoms of opinion, expression and information as human rights.

The first step to knowledge is to know that we are ignorant (Prochnow, 1955). Thus, to enable universal access to documentary heritage, requires the legitimate interests of rights-holders and the public and recognizing aspects of the history and culture that can conveniently be accessed through oral history. This is every important considering that, over time, considerable parts of documentary heritage have disappeared due to natural or human disasters and rapid technological change, a challenge that requires to be addressed to accommodate the needs of preserving digital heritage and international standards but bearing in mind the need for States, communities and individuals to take appropriate measures for enhancement and preservation of the value of documentary heritage.

3.1.2 African Agenda with Oral History

The Africa plan for structural transformation guided by the African Union – United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals aim at the Africa that has a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics. The key actions are the values and ideals of Pan-Africanism. For example, at the continental level, the Encyclopedia Africana has to be completed; the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance has to be implemented; and the Algiers Declaration on the Harmonization and Coordination of cultural policies and programmes has to be implemented. For example, the AU Encyclopedia Africana Project is meant to develop and implement frameworks for the setting up of regional centres of excellence aims at promoting African cultural and creative industries. This is in Addition to the Cultural Values and African Renaissance targets to be achieved, at least 70% of Member States have to fully implement the Charter for African Culture and Renaissance. The strategy here is to build the capacity of Pan-African cultural institutions. At the continental or regional level, one of the targets is to research, record and disseminate African traditional stories that offer lessons for young people to take pride in their Africanness. The African Union already has an agenda of African great Museum Africa, which is an African project that started with Algiers in 2009, and member states have already accepted. Therefore, a documentary heritage programme has to reflect on the African integration and be guided under the framework of A2063 according to its priorities. Some of the strategies include: develop/implement regulations and policies to promote increased local content in all media (print and electronic); create inventory of national icons and recover cultural footages abroad and develop strategies to negotiate and retrieve national treasures from individual and institutional collections; and expand access to cultural information through community public libraries. Indeed, as contended by Kareem (2021), the consequences of new media “in film distribution is demanding an effective system to strengthen the overall distribution system by reducing the distribution costs and increasing revenue.

In an effort to implement the UNESCO 2015 Recommendation, a consultation meeting for the implementation of the above UNESCO recommendation was held from 25 to 27 June 2018 on the theme: “Documentary Heritage for Sustainable Development in Africa”, at Rockview Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria. Accordingly, member states are encouraged to support their memory institutions in preservation of documentary heritage in their territories and identify specific documentary heritage, the survival of which is at risk, a preservation challenge. This demands, member states to develop strategies to support the preservation of documentary heritage. To address this challenge, the East African Caucus on documentary heritage proposed a periodic forum to discuss issues on documentary heritage with preference on discussing common and shared values summarized into four thematic issues: liberation heritage, slave trade/labour routes/heritage, genocide and atrocities, and religious manuscripts. The emphasis for East Africa would be placed on capacity to create heritage, exchange of knowledge, ideas and participation and increase the number of African heritage; and increased need for cooperation for UNESCO to support the preservation, and ensure support of the Memory of the World (MOW) in the respective nations. Nations like Uganda would exploit such opportunity to utilise oral history programmes for a transformed society.

In Africa, cultural societies have been sustained by respect among the citizens, language and oral traditions education. Indeed, Christianity in Uganda was favoured by native culture to raise indigenous leaders to take up responsibilities in the affairs of the church. The practice and attitude today are changing as a result of generation gap influenced by exposure to foreign cultures, social media, changes in the globalized social world, difference in worldviews held by different generational cohorts and age gaps. This creates two different cultures - societal gaps antagonistic to each other. Traditional skills are disappearing thus depriving society of rights combined with lawlessness, total disregard of family and custom rules, and disrespect of wisdom from the elders by the young generation, which has resulted in the degeneration of cultural values that previously ensured high moral standards, which puts the oral history at risk. The available accumulated documents on oral history are scattered in different places. Such memory becomes fragile, and in most cases, some irreplaceable parts of the memory disappear forever.

In many of African countries, oral history heritage is primarily at risk of conflict or climate change characterized by a number of threats ranging from disasters, accidental or deliberate displacement of holdings and collections, floods, catastrophic fire, effects of wars, temperatures, insects, intruders, weather and climate as a consequence of global warming, a challenge that requires mitigation through a disaster preparedness plan. There are also threats dependent upon technology obsolescence and dependence, risk of reliability and authenticity, and loss of security, privacy and safety. For instance, when Covid-19 hit the globe, the World Health Organization (WHO) collection safety guidelines on prevention of the SARS-CoV-2 as a result of using books, plastic circulating materials such as CDs and DVD's most of which were guided by use of oral history. To recover from the limbo of unpreparedness of utilisation of oral history, it is therefore essential for a country like Uganda to develop a capacity integration of oral history as a social tool for national transformation.

For instance, in Uganda, the Patents Statute (Amendment) Act, 2002, the Uganda Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006, and the National Library of Uganda Act (NLU) legal deposit provisions give a guarantee of protection of literary, scientific, and artistic intellectual works and sets the legal framework legislations. When COVID-19 hit the globe, it affected the education and social sector. In response, the government has embraced some initiatives like home-based schooling, promoting teaching in the local languages, promoting of locally authored books, open learning and technology as mitigating resilience interventions, most of which are effective with use of oral history. Indeed, Vision 2040 aspires for maximizing skilling and retooling the potential workers to address affected documentary challenges, a gap that requires capacity building interventions in providing cultural content.

A study supported by UNESCO in 2011 (Magara, 2011) indicated that oral history is an area which many of the memory institutions (libraries, archives and museums) have not handled. This was attributed to lack capacity of oral historians, and inadequate support and conflicting mandates of the respective institutions. There is little effort to preserve museums of important personalities. There is a need for personal museums, for instance, of the former presidents and other big personalities. Furthermore, museums are not known and few people know about their importance

The Preservation and Revitalization of Uganda's Oral and Intangible Heritage Programme, including like the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Rwenzori National Park, provide an outstanding universal value of cultural identity, human rights, and collective memory. To that end, some educational institutions in Uganda attempt to transfer indigenous knowledge on intangible heritages to the students in a number of areas through music, dance and drama, sports, indigenous knowledge systems, promoting traditional games and sports in schools and universities, *learning through oral history* (Magara, 2005), a strategy whose placement in national social-economic transformation is required.

The challenge is that oral history products are stored in obsolete technologies that were used in recording the proceedings, a challenge that limited oral history recollection of culturally significant events or trends. As a consequence, oral history has experienced a surge of interest in subjectivity and in non-traditional sources. Thus, the Republic of Uganda (2006) through the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development has come out with the Uganda National Culture Policy, whose vision is: "*A Culturally vibrant, cohesive and progressive nation*". The policy derives its objectives from Uganda's rich and diverse endowment and cultural heritage, which includes sixty-five indigenous communities with unique characteristics. It provides strategies to enhance the integration of culture into development that are an integral part of the Social Development Sector Strategic Investment Plan (SDIP) whose mission is to "create an enabling environment for social protection and social transformation of communities".

The Department of Antiquities and Museums is responsible for historical, archaeological, and palaeontological sites within Uganda. These include traditional sites, buildings, signposts, and tombs. A challenge of utilising the indigenous communities and their diversity requires effort to document the historic and continuing process of their transformational transfer. This requires a knowledge base and coordinated documentary heritage. Now that Uganda is promoting the consumption and use of locally manufactured goods and services through the Buy Uganda Build Uganda (BUBU) Policy (2014), utilization of oral history experiences is required. This is why the cultural and institutional register of available oral history in the areas of African traditions, customs and culture and indigenous technologies is of importance for socio-economic transformation.

Oral history provides a source of emotional, spiritual and sacred values that hold a society together. First of all, documenting oral history is a cultural collective property which tells people's history and helps the present generation to understand their place in history and to better cope with constant changes in society. Identification of culture heritage sets distinctive linguistic, material, and intellectual features to the society as a way of promoting societal integration as a driver to socio-economic growth. In Africa, oral history practices and genres are ancient forms of informal education, inculcate spiritual, ethical, moral and values, develop self-discipline, tolerance and human fellowship. Oral history is thus an invaluable source of evidence and illuminates both the individual's experience and the historical period. It provides a holistic view of a phenomenon ranging from cultural, historical, and religious to scientific/technological means for socio-economic and national development. For instance, Uganda aspires to positive cultural values for socio-economic development, which embrace respect and recognition of all citizens, protect children, and is a God-fearing society. This is one

way of fostering respect for Ugandan cultural diversity in dispensing religious differences, especially among the citizens. Thus, tapping oral history promotes unity, respect, patriotism, and national pride. The respect of citizens in a multicultural and religious society promotes a sense of self-examination with increased resulting changes to the Gospel and offers Christians an effective way of relating to their culture. This bridges the tacit and explicit knowledge while preserving the national, community, and cultural memory.

The capacity to manage documentary heritage in Uganda is one of the strategies that would foster industrial and socio-economic development. It would have been expected that the Uganda Vision 2040 rolls up such aspiration with regard to the development of national heritage. This is why a strategy for safeguarding documentary heritage is required in Uganda. In Uganda, the legal framework such as the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, 2006 and the National Library of Uganda Act (NLU) and other legal deposit provisions guarantee the protection of literary works, whose capacity requires intervention. Recently, the government has embraced home-based schooling, teaching in the local languages, promoting locally authored books, student-centered learning, open learning, and technology as mitigating resilience interventions. Effectively embracing the above requires a precise mechanism to access oral history. A strategy for increased awareness on the accessibility of cultural heritage utilization of oral history for socioeconomic resilience and transformation is required.

4.0 Discussion

Oral history is an invaluable tool for understanding individual experiences, historical, cultural and social testimonies to reveal and illuminate and transform the society. Utilization of oral history from classical, hermeneutical, colonial and contemporary reminisces conveys diverse messages and values that contribute to give meaning to people's life (historical, artistic, political, religious, social, spiritual, scientific, natural, etc.). The major challenge is limited accessibility, lack of conservation and preservation programmes of documentary heritage (analogue, digital and oral history), and inadequate sensitization. The lack of public awareness about the importance of integrating access to oral history documentaries hinders their preservation and utilization for educational and cultural purposes. We shall adopt the foundational principle of the seven spheres of influences, of mountains for transformation of society developed by Dr. Bill Bright, Loren Cunningham, and Francis Schaefer in 1975: Family, Religion/Church, Education, Government, Media, Celebration (Arts, Entertainment, and Sports) and Economics (Business, Science, and Technology) (Benedict, 2013).

4.1 Governance

The recollection of ordinary persons can best provide vital records, memories and life histories of the people. Oral history has its origin in the works recording memories of significant people. Several projects in the world have helped in promoting oral history as a transformation of the economy. For example, the historical documentation of phenomenological hermeneutics by Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies (2014). At the National Library, Athens, there is exhibited personal histories and community narrators including an oral history of World War Two (Athens-Clarke Country Library, 1994). These oral history recollections

that demonstrate social transformation include the Black Oral History collection, the Civil Rights Digital Library, Digital Library of Georgia. Further, the Oral Testimony from Survivors of the World Trade Center from the Encyclopaedia detailing the events of September 11 is one best example of testimonies about the horrors of that day coming from the survivors. Such oral history collections give reflection on memories on the potential of oral history as a research tool in a society. Use of Oral Archives provides opportunities where oral testimonies can be an important way to understand historical events. This provides an opportunity for memories of national governments to bring together a number of oral testimonies into a digital collection. For instance, the African oral history collection covering the African veterans of the Second World War which is archived at Washington University Library demonstrates this. Oral history is useful in both litigation and the precedents as a basis for legal decisions and providing lives of outstanding jurists. Similarly, the complex of legal issues surrounding the creation, copyright, and “fair use” of an interview requires oral historians to progressively pay more attention to legal precedents.

4.2 Economics (Business, Science, and Technology)

In an effort to build capacity, national Governments have attempted to promote various innovative capacity building programmes. In Uganda, for instance, programmes like Skilling Uganda promoting Skills (*Emyoga*), Parish Development Model, Buy Uganda Build Uganda, among others, have been adopted to support effective utilization of the opportunities and skills for communities’ transformation. Oral history, along with biographical approaches, has increasingly become a powerful tool for amplifying the voices of marginalized groups by capturing their lived experiences and highlighting their influence on accounting practices (Hammond & Sikka, 1996: 92).

4.3 Academia and Literacy

To ensure equitable access, sharing and use information in all forms of intellectual life for education development: Recently, there has been a number of attempts to adopt home-based schooling, teaching in the local languages, promoting of locally authored books, student-centred learning, open learning and technology as mitigating resilience interventions, most of which utilise use of oral history programmes. Oral history makes our memories and heritage connect. The pedagogical implication is that oral history occupies a number of people with a common identity and common social, political, and historical development, as well as other social factors such as economic growth, educational background, age, and religious beliefs (Chong, 2008).

Through family history, each member contributes to the community history. This multidisciplinary facet makes oral history an incredible tool to implement in the classroom and an opportunity for including the community in the university curriculum. Oral history for educators in the classroom bridges the gap between the curriculum and community. It brings history home by linking the world of textbooks and classroom with the face-to-face social world of the students’ home community. This serves both as a means to preserve the contemporary history of education as a discipline and as a teaching strategy in social studies.

Initiatives of projects to record the history of instruction in a given field focus on teaching, providing effective lesson plans for using oral history in the classroom. Oral history is not only a tool or a method; it also is a theory of history which maintains that the common folk and the dispossessed have a history and that this history must be written. There is need for balance between historical records that are formally documented with those whose culture has no unwritten records. Furthermore, oral history provides a special attribute to gender studies for oral history projects on women by harvesting recollections of groups and classes of people largely disenfranchised from the historical records.

4.4 Family and Society

In Africa, Folklorists have made significant contributions to the methodology of oral history (see the discussion of oral history manuals below), while membership roles in oral history associations often cross with those in folklore societies. Sometimes the two fields hold joint conferences. One explanation for these crossings is the oral nature of many of the traditions recorded by folklorists and oral traditions (the legends, the myths and folktales). Methods for collecting oral lore and oral history overlap, though the former tends to be more spontaneous in the collecting approach. The narrative genre of the “life story” is different from life history or oral biography. A life story is not necessarily interested in the historical accuracy of life narratives but in the way the story is expressed. Indeed, the International Council of Archives (ICA) Annual Conference, held in Yaounde, Cameroon in 2018 on the “Indigenous Peoples of the World”- African countries showcased the South African (SA) peoples, the indigenous Indian communities in the USA and Canada, including the Aborigines of Australia, and the Maoris of New Zealand that models the place of Oral history in the transformation of society. In addition, the “*Once Upon a Time: Oral Traditions as History of Africa*” project has had an impact on recollections of most precolonial African civilizations used in oral history. The idea behind this is that when one uses a word and designates a name and believes in that name, he has acquired knowledge of the essence of that person (Vansina (2003). According to Vansina, all cultures are distinguished by important words backed by speech. Such words inherited from forefathers are promoted by the oral traditions and the attitudes of members of society towards speech. This is why a strategy to help literate society shed off the ideological prejudice is required.

4.5 Media and Celebration (Arts, Entertainment, and Sports)

Oral history has a long stand in Media and Literature, as there have been writers before the use of literature. Over time, oral people have conducted interviews to document the literary process and its context (Dunaway, 2018). Oral history has influenced literary studies in primary education: biography, both oral and written; and literary history, literary profession and publishing (as well as the work of specific writers). One inter-disciplinary quarterly which examined this trend is *Biography*. With such knowledge, skills and values in heritage tourism, if well developed, will enhance sustainable development (since it emphasizes the conservation of cultural heritage resources and it is non-consumptive (Woodward, 2004). This requires long-term growth of the tourism sector.

Producers have explored historical subjects in documentary and fiction formats in broadcasting. In radio, television, and film, producers have sought to raise popular historical consciousness, to broadcast “to the man [and woman] in the street” in order to develop “historical mindedness”. For example, oral testimony has been incorporated into full-length Hollywood feature films, such as *Reds* and *Zelig*. In Hong Kong Heritage Project (HKHP), Walking Books (Allsop, 2022) is a major business archive and a soon-to-be museum. Its work in collecting and recording oral histories since 2007 has recorded 530 oral history interviews. The exhibition fosters audience engagement as well as encouraging understanding and empathy for history as well as other people. As Kareem (2021) emphasizes, to create an effective film distribution system based only on new media requires coordination between traditional and online distribution as traditional distribution. Kareem thus recommends increased content makers and online distribution processes, a task that requires increased utilization of oral history techniques to enable easy access and utilization of already documentary Heritage.

Heritage is a source of economic development. Cultural heritage has always been among the main attractions for travelers in the 21st century. Oral Heritage tourism has increased immensely and has become a vital economic resource for many countries. Heritage is unique and irreplaceable. Uganda’s Quadrennial Periodical Report 2020 provided the strategies for the integration of culture in sustainable development frameworks of various domains (cinema, design, arts, music, performing arts, publishing, and visual arts (MoGLAD, 2022). A strategy to mitigate the deterioration or the disappearance of a cultural property and the messages it conveys would be a source of pride for socio-economic transformation of the country.

4.6 Religion

Oral records are the main tool of capturing the progress and events about historical events, major religious developments, especially Church and biblical testimonies. It is a fact that the Quran was preserved during the Prophet’s time by oral and written transmission. Further, the Jews’ prayer from Deuteronomy 6:4 is based on oral history. The writing of the gospel after the death of Jesus is based on stories that had been passed on. We would say that storytelling was the center of Jesus’ Movement. For 40 years after Jesus’s death, nothing was written about the gospel or his life. During that time, we have very little in terms of written records on Christianity. Furthermore, the Old Testament was entirely oral literature that gained written form later. The spread of Christianity in many parts of the world utilized the use of oral history. Orality has continued to play a role in areas of translation, interpretation and evangelism. The purpose of the church is to be a servant of its message - “You are the salt of the earth” (Mathew 5:13). As salt is a preservative, the Church, must get into what it is trying to preserve, thus a need for strategies for preserving oral history as a tool for socioeconomic transformation.

5.0 Conclusion and Way forward for Uganda

In general, oral history has played a role in bridging the gap in documentary heritage for the socio-economic transformation of society. The global developments and opportunities in Africa for oral history illuminate the sustainable development, preservation needs, capacity building, and a need for an oral history forum for social transformation. There are, therefore,

three needs for the integration of oral history as a socio-economic transformation tool; the need for building capacity, providing a forum for oral history, and promotion of preservation of documentary heritage, including oral history.

5.1 Capacity Building on Oral History Heritage

There is need for awareness building, and training of stakeholders on the need for oral history heritage including authors, teachers, heritage custodians (librarians, archivists and museum curators), government officials and publishers and book-sellers. This would involve participation in public events in schools, museums, libraries, cultural exhibitions, schools, home and community libraries, and international and national celebrations. The specific focus areas would involve oral history awards and essay writing competitions for junior writers. This includes sharing of success stories, debates, open days, oral history expositions, mentorship programs through writing competitions, and recognition of various authorities in Uganda oral literature, including engagement in media/TV supported events, talk shows, and re-creations, benchmarking, and publication. Training of trainers would aim at developing skills and competencies among oral history researchers, writers, translators, and custodians of documentation memory, publishers, and policymakers on effective cultural heritage documentation. Some areas of emphasis are: code of ethics for compilers, researchers, translators and writers, copyright protection, writing digest, legal deposit, authority description, general descriptions and metadata, compilation, narration and conservation. Training on effective content integration in teaching and learning and training in using web-based instruction to promote oral history integration.

5.2 A Forum of Oral History Tellers to Bridge Generational Gap

A forum of oral history tellers and custodians to inspire and spark interest in bridging the generation gap is recommended. This could include holding an open day with exhibitions, essay competitions and a symposium with participation from stakeholders that share cultural/heritage developments. Publicity and publication would include engagement in media/TV/radio programmes and supported events such as talk shows and recreations, benchmarking, oral history mentorship services and publications. Occasional oral history mentorship meetings are meant to revive the African fireplace experiences to bridge the generation gap. In addition, writing memory books that capture experiences of family history, recorded history in memory institutions would be promoted. Furthermore, there could be an outreach visit programme to memory institutions, schools, community centres to put oral history under spotlight and raising public interest. Lastly, guidelines on access to pertinent oral history collections would be developed to guide the safeguarding memories and ensuring implementation.

5.3 Preservation of documentary heritage

It is crucial that developments and best practice in scholarship, technology and science in the preservation of oral history to be applied in our region be adopted. To address most of the challenges of preservation of digital records, there is a need to encourage cooperation amongst government, memory institutions and the private sector and utilization of good practices in terms of outreach programmes, promotion programmes in schools, communities

and official functions. Some of the areas of focus include: Influence curriculum to integrate the documentary heritage, civil education, formation of museum schools, school and community heritage clinics and forming online communities. In addition, there is a need to raise awareness about the importance of preserving and identifying documentary heritage, as well as to recognize and support national champions who promote its conservation and accessibility. There shall be sensitization of the public, recognition of those who are in possession of these documents and the provision of incentives for them to make these documents available for preservation and registering. This programme would encourage innovative thinkers to utilise modern technologies to connect younger generations to the existing heritage.

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