



TUMAINI LETU

IMPACT
REPORT 2020

ABOUT US

The Dzaleka Refugee Camp is the only permanent refugee camp in Malawi. It was established in 1994 in response to the surge of displaced people fleeing genocide and violence in Rwanda and Burundi and the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

More than 46,726 refugees and asylum-seekers (as of 30 June 2020), mostly from the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi, with additional refugees from Somalia, Ethiopia, and other countries. Children born at the Dzaleka Refugee Camp have spent their whole lives in this camp.

While Malawi has ratified the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, it has yet to agree to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. Therefore, it enforces nine reservations or restrictions that limit the rights of refugees. Refugees at Dzaleka are not permitted to leave the camp without authorization, nor do they have the right to seek employment or own property outside the camp. They cannot attend public schools and universities, which significantly isolates the refugees, limiting their financial capacity. Furthermore, it restricts their access to opportunities otherwise available to Malawians, creating conditions of poverty, dependence, and despair. These issues become generational in scope as families continue to raise children and grandchildren within the confines of the camp.

Tumaini Letu ("Our Hope") is a non-profit organization based within the Dzaleka Refugee Camp. The non-profit is registered with the Malawi government under the Trustees Incorporation Rules (Reg. No. TR/INC 7454). Tumaini Letu was founded in 2012 by Trésor Nzengu Mpauni (widely known as Menes la Plume), a refugee from the DRC who is also a poet, musician, and advocate for refugees' rights.

Tumaini Letu's flagship project is the annual Tumaini Festival, a two-day celebration during which visitors are welcomed into the Dzaleka Refugee Camp to enjoy musical and cultural performances. The performers include residents of the camp, citizens of the Malawi community, and performing artists from all over the globe.

The only festival in the world held within a refugee camp, Tumaini aims to promote intercultural harmony, foster mutual understanding, and create a peaceful coexistence between the refugees and the Malawian people. After escaping the atrocities of war and other violence in their native countries, refugees at Dzaleka are jobless. The annual Tumaini Festival provides desperately needed employment, which gives refugees hope.

VISION

Create an inclusive and equitable extended community where refugees are embraced and can fulfill their true potential, a society that accepts and celebrates differences.

MISSION STATEMENT

Promote and support the economic, social, and cultural inclusion of refugees in Malawi so that refugees are integrated and empowered, becoming self-reliant individuals who contribute to the development of Malawi in harmony with the host community.



CORE VALUES

- EMPOWERMENT
- RESPECT
- EMPATHY
- EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION
- HARMONY AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE
- CREATIVE AND ARTISTIC IN APPROACH
- ACCOUNTABILITY AND OPENNESS

AREAS OF FOCUS

- REFUGEE RIGHTS ADVOCACY
- ARTS AND CULTURE
- COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND JOB CREATION
- YOUTH ENGAGEMENT



DZALEKA REFUGEE CAMP STORY

The Dzaleka Refugee Camp Storytelling Project is implemented in partnership with the Malawi National Commission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with funding from the REI Foundation.

The project intends to contribute to the education and community empowerment activities of the integration assistance component of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the government of Malawi's agreed areas of activity. Tumaini organizes folktale sessions in the camp benefiting 2,000 pupils from the schools within and outside the Dzaleka refugee camp.

During the past year, the project raised awareness of the need to incorporate traditional cultural knowledge as an essential dimension of humanitarian programs following UNESCO's guidelines on intangible cultural heritage. In addition, the storytelling project recognizes that refugees' social and cultural reintegration as fully-fledged members of their community depends upon the preservation and transmission



TELLING PROJECT

"It has long been assumed that, in crossing international borders, individuals searching for asylum tend to lose connections to their culture and identity." – Malkki. 1995

of their traditional cultural knowledge to the extent that such knowledge helps provide a sense of unity and common identity.

The Dzaleka Storytelling Project promotes sharing traditional knowledge through folktales, fostering intercultural dialogue and understanding amongst the refugees and the local communities. In doing so, Tumaini Letu aims to transmit cultural knowledge. Tumaini Letu takes a holistic approach to repatriation. The UNHCR has promoted this type of approach.

Life at Dzaleka Refugee Camp entails meeting the basic needs of food and physical protection provided

by international humanitarian organizations. Often culture is considered a less important aspect of human life and is simply forgotten. The project partners have, throughout the year, learned that experiences of violence and exile do not eliminate culture. Even under harsh living conditions in Dzaleka, social mechanisms of cultural transmission continue to take place. Some of these social mechanisms work in favor of the preservation of traditional knowledge. Nevertheless, children, teenagers, and young adults who have spent a

large part of their lives in the refugee camp are mainly concerned with their cultural identity. Solutions to transmit the cultural traditions from the older refugees to the younger ones, as intended by the Dzaleka Storytelling Project, lessen the concern.

At Dzaleka, the project has adult refugees trained in storytelling convey folktales to the younger generation according to the country of their origin. Storytelling is retelling a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gestures. The storyteller creates a series of mental images associated with words. The audience stares, smiles or leans forward to hear more. The oral tradition of storytelling makes it possible for a culture to pass knowledge, history, beliefs, and experiences from one generation to the next.

The early storytelling sessions attracted about sixty pupils from the refugee camp per session. The sessions adopted the classroom setting, which involved physical interaction between the storytellers and students. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the project changed the mode of delivery. In partnership with the Dzaleka community radio, Yetu Radio, the second phase of the project transpired. The storytellers recorded the folktales, which were aired on the radio, reaching more people.



THE ANNUAL TUMAINI FESTIVAL

Tumaini Festival, one of the country's foremost arts and cultural festivals, did not occur in 2020. Tumaini Letu decided to cancel the event in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic lest the event put the community at Dzaleka Refugee Camp and its surrounding villages at risk.

INSTEAD, THE ANNUAL TUMAINI FESTIVAL, WHICH TAKES PLACE THE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER, WILL RETURN IN 2021 BETWEEN NOVEMBER 4 AND 7.

Historically, nearly one million people have attended the Tumaini Festival, and the event has provided a platform for 304 performing acts. The artists come from around the globe. The Tumaini Festival has united performers from eighteen different nationalities, including Belgium, Brazil, Burundi, DRC, France, Italy, Japan, Malawi, Mozambique, Norway, Poland, Rwanda, Somalia, South Africa, Korea, United Kingdom, Zambia,



and Zimbabwe. The sixth annual Tumaini Festival attracted more than 40,000 festival-goers! Moreover, the number of people in attendance has been growing annually. An event of this magnitude would present a considerable risk of spreading the coronavirus.

HAVING TAKEN THE YEAR OFF, TUMAINI LETU, THE FESTIVAL ORGANIZER, FOCUSED ON GROWING THE FESTIVAL SO THAT WHEN IT RETURNS WITH THE SEVENTH EDITION, THE ANNUAL EVENT WILL BE BIGGER AND BETTER.

The decision to postpone the annual celebration was not an easy decision to make looking at the after-effects of the yearly celebration. The decision negatively affected both the Dzaleka refugees and the host communities as the festival is the main money stream for the camp. Above all, the Tumaini Festival also brings hope and connects refugees with the host and internal community. Malawian poet Chris Msosa, who frequently performs at Tumaini Festival, described the development as a big blow. Chris stated that "It's hard and this whole year has been hard already. For someone who has been performing and knowing how we already struggle in Malawi and to have a platform like Tumaini Festival (called) off, it is sad."

TUMAINI LETU COVID-19 RESPONSE MUSIC PROJECT

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC REMAINS A HINDRANCE TO THE DELIVERY OF TUMAINI LETU'S SERVICES TO THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY AT THE DZALEKA REFUGEE CAMP.

In 2020, there was a surge in Covid-19 cases in Malawi, and the refugee camp was no exception. As of 31 December 2020, a total of 90 Covid-19 positive cases were recorded among refugees and asylum seekers, 2 deaths. Responding to the situation in the camp, the UNHCR is implementing several interventions to respond to Covid-19 and prevent its spread. The interventions include: promoting learning during school closure, gender-based violence risk

mitigation and response, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and child protection.

The number of refugees has grown exponentially, reaching the incredible figure of 45,000 people living in a space designed for a maximum of 10,000.



Life in the refugee camp is a suspended time. You cannot go out without a valid reason, and written authorization is required. Everyone lives the day in the hope of “winning the golden ticket”: being chosen for resettlement with the opportunity to start a new life in another country: Canada, the United States, or Australia. Unfortunately, the wait can last many years. With the spread of Covid-19, the situation is, if possible, even more dire. Given the crowded conditions of a refugee camp, it is almost impossible to maintain



the necessary social distances and implement critical precautionary measures.

Tumaini Letu considered implementing a project with Dzaleka Refugee musicians in response to the risks and impact of the pandemic. This project's primary objective is to raise awareness and mobilize the community to prevent the global pandemic. The project also aims to bring joy and hope to Dzalekandas and the surrounding host communities. The project brought forth

the expectation that life should continue during and after the pandemic in the refugee community.

For the project, Tumaini Letu invited artists from across the camp and the host community to a series of workshops to discuss issues affecting artists due to the pandemic. Tumaini Letu organized the event to instill faith in artists to use their talent to spread the message of hope and joy to fellow refugees and Malawi as a whole. The project united artists from Burundi,

Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Malawi.

The artists then collaborated in composing a song in seven languages, offering all residents of Dzaleka Refugee Camp an opportunity to get the message of hope and joy in their native language. One of Malawi's finest music producers created the eleven-minute song. The song complements the project's core objective: raise awareness; bring joy and hope.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AWARD FOR REFUGEE ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT

Tumaini Letu's flagship program, the annual Tumaini Festival, was the 2020 edition of the Sharjah International Award for Refugee Advocacy and Support. The Tumaini Festival is an art and cultural event that has attracted 99,000 attendees and united 304 groups of artists from 18 different countries over the past six years while also generating around \$150,000 of funds annually for the community.

The Sharjah International Award for Refugee Advocacy and Support is an initiative by The Big Heart Foundation, a Sharjah-based global humanitarian charity. In collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the group identifies and promotes one outstanding organization across Asia and Africa that has made an extraordinary humanitarian effort to improve the lives of



refugees, internally displaced or stateless people. The Sharjah International Award began in 2017, chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Jawaher Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, who is also the UNHCR's first Eminent Advocate for Refugee Children.

The charitable foundation selected Tumaini out of 180 nominated organizations from Africa and Asia. The foundation applauded Tumaini's unique and innovative approach to refugee advocacy and support. It also credits Tumaini with the uniqueness of its flagship initiative, the annual Tumaini Festival, which is the world's first international festival taking place in a refugee camp.

Because of travel restrictions in place due to Covid-19, the 2020 Sharjah International Award Ceremony took place online on

the 19th of August. His Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Supreme Council member of the United Arab Emirates and ruler of Sharjah, and His Excellency, Mr. Filippo Grandi, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, were among the speakers during the virtual ceremony. The third speaker was Mr. Trésor Nzengu Mpauni (Menes La Plume), the founder and director of Tumaini Letu.

"This award is a seed of growth which will help us strengthen our team and implement more innovative programs to transform refugee lives and benefit our host country."
– Mr. Trésor Nzengu Mpauni

Tumaini Letu received the award when humanity and solidarity are needed more than ever before, a time when everyone is shaken by a pandemic and still uncertain of what the future holds. At this very moment, one percent of the global population is forcibly displaced due to war and persecution, living in dangerous conditions, and exposed to possible death. Being an organization founded and run by refugees, Tumaini received the award on behalf of all the inhabitants of Dzaleka Refugee

Camp. When congratulating the efforts of Tumaini Letu, Mariam Al Hammadi, director of The Big Heart Foundation, applauded the organization's success. He underscored the group's progress toward "transforming refugee camps into living societies where the inhabitants can exercise their rights to live and regain what has been lost on intellectual and emotional levels in the Republic of Malawi."

THE ELEVATE PRIZE

Tumaini Letu was one of the twenty finalists of the inaugural Elevate Prize powered by MIT Solve. This award recognizes and supports individuals and organizations who address our most challenging global issues. Nearly 1,300 leaders, innovators, activists, and risk-takers from almost 120 nations comprised the competition. Award recipients are acknowledged as individuals who inspire others to uplift their community.

THE OCKENDEN PRIZE

Tumaini Letu was a 2020 finalist of the Ockenden Prize, which Ockenden International Organization presents. Since its inception in 1951, this award has sought to support locally-based or refugee-led organizations that work directly with refugees and displaced people to advance self-reliance. The Ockenden International awards individuals and organizations focused on identifying solutions to the challenges faced by displaced people, raising awareness of their needs, and rewarding outstanding projects.



In 2020, Tumaini Letu raised **\$180,000** for its operations and activities thanks to the support and generosity of donors and partners.

90% of our expenditure was directed towards project costs and organizational growth, and **10%** was spent on administrative costs.

For full audited accounts please contact tresor@tumainifestival.org



TUMAINI LETU

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