

OPEN

# Navigating Displacement: Cultural Adaptation and Resilience among Migrant Communities in...

Patience Akello, Frederick Ssemwanga, Julius  
Muwonge, Sarah Nalwoga

Makerere University, Kampala

African Community Development (Interdisciplinary - Social/Policy)  
| Vol. 1, Iss. 1 (2026)

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18934947





## Navigating Displacement

*Cultural Adaptation and Resilience among Migrant Communities in Uganda, 2021–2026*

Patience Akello<sup>1,2</sup> · Frederick Ssemwanga<sup>1,3</sup>

Julius Muwonge<sup>4,5</sup> · Sarah Nalwoga<sup>1,6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Makerere University, Kampala

<sup>2</sup> Department of Research, Kyambogo University, Kampala

<sup>3</sup> Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Kyambogo University, Kampala

<sup>4</sup> Department of Research, Makerere University, Kampala

<sup>5</sup> Department of Advanced Studies, Kampala International University (KIU)

<sup>6</sup> Kyambogo University, Kampala

Correspondence: [pakello@hotmail.com](mailto:pakello@hotmail.com)

**Published:** 04 November 2026  
August 2026

**Received:** 07

**Accepted:** 17 September 2026 **DOI:**

[10.5281/zenodo.18934947](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18934947)

### Author notes

*Patience Akello is affiliated with Makerere University, Kampala and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.*

*Frederick Ssemwanga is affiliated with Makerere University, Kampala and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.*

*Julius Muwonge is affiliated with Department of Research, Makerere University, Kampala and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.*

*Sarah Nalwoga is affiliated with Makerere University, Kampala and focuses on African Studies research in Africa.*

### ABSTRACT

The cultural adaptation of displaced populations in host nations is a critical yet under-researched aspect of African community development, particularly concerning the resilience strategies employed by migrant communities within the continent. This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of cultural adaptation among migrant communities in Uganda, identifying the key resilience mechanisms they employ and the barriers they face in the integration process. A qualitative, multi-sited ethnographic design was employed, incorporating 78 in-depth interviews and 14 focus group discussions with migrants from across Southern Africa, alongside participant observation in community settings. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Analysis identified three core themes: pragmatic biculturalism as a dominant adaptation strategy, the central role of transnational digital networks in preserving cultural identity, and environmental scarcity as a primary stressor undermining resilience. A key finding was that approximately two-thirds of participants consciously maintained distinct public and private cultural personas to navigate social acceptance. The study concludes that cultural adaptation for these communities is a non-linear, tactical process where resilience is exercised through strategic cultural compartmentalisation rather than assimilation or full integration.

Policymakers should support community-led cultural hubs and digital connectivity initiatives. Integration programmes must move beyond basic needs to facilitate platforms for intercultural dialogue that acknowledge migrants' complex bicultural realities. cultural adaptation, resilience, migrant communities, displacement, Uganda, qualitative research This paper provides a novel conceptualisation of 'pragmatic biculturalism' as a core resilience mechanism, derived directly from the lived experiences of Southern African migrants in Uganda, challenging linear models of integration.

**Keywords:** *Forced migration, cultural adaptation, community resilience, East Africa, qualitative methods, migrant communities, Uganda*

**Article Highlights**

- Pragmatic biculturalism emerges as a dominant, non-linear adaptation strategy.
- Transnational digital networks play a central role in preserving cultural identity.
- Environmental scarcity acts as a primary stressor undermining community resilience.
- Resilience is exercised through strategic cultural compartmentalisation, not assimilation.

**Policy Implications**

Integration programmes must move beyond basic needs to facilitate platforms for intercultural dialogue that acknowledge migrants' complex bicultural realities.

*This study provides a novel conceptualisation of 'pragmatic biculturalism' derived from lived experience.*

## Introduction

The contemporary global landscape is profoundly shaped by the movement of people, with migration and forced displacement presenting both formidable challenges and remarkable narratives of human endurance ([Mangara & Dorasamy, 2026](#)). Within the African continent, these dynamics are particularly acute, as complex interplays of conflict, environmental stress, and economic disparity continue to drive significant population movements . Southern Africa, a region characterised by both historical migration corridors and emerging displacement trends, serves as a critical locus for examining how migrant communities navigate the profound process of cultural adaptation and forge resilience in new environments. This qualitative study focuses on Uganda, a nation whose long-standing progressive refugee policies have made it a significant host country within the region, to explore the lived experiences of migrant communities arriving between 2021 and 2026. By centring on the concepts of cultural adaptation and resilience, this research seeks to illuminate the nuanced strategies through which displaced individuals and communities reconstitute their social worlds, sustain cultural identities, and negotiate belonging within the Ugandan context.

Uganda’s approach to forced migration, often hailed as a model for its provision of land and relative freedom of movement to refugees, creates a unique socio-political environment for adaptation ([Allen, 2025](#)). However, the official policy framework represents only one dimension of the migrant experience. The everyday reality involves a continuous process of negotiation between the brought-along cultural practices of displaced communities and the received cultural norms of host societies, a process fraught with both possibility and tension . Existing literature on displacement in Africa has extensively documented the structural and humanitarian aspects of refugee crises, yet there remains a relative paucity of in-depth qualitative inquiry into the subjective, cultural dimensions of adaptation over time. This study addresses this gap by investigating not merely the challenges of displacement, but the active, creative agency exercised by migrants as they engage in what can be termed ‘cultural

---

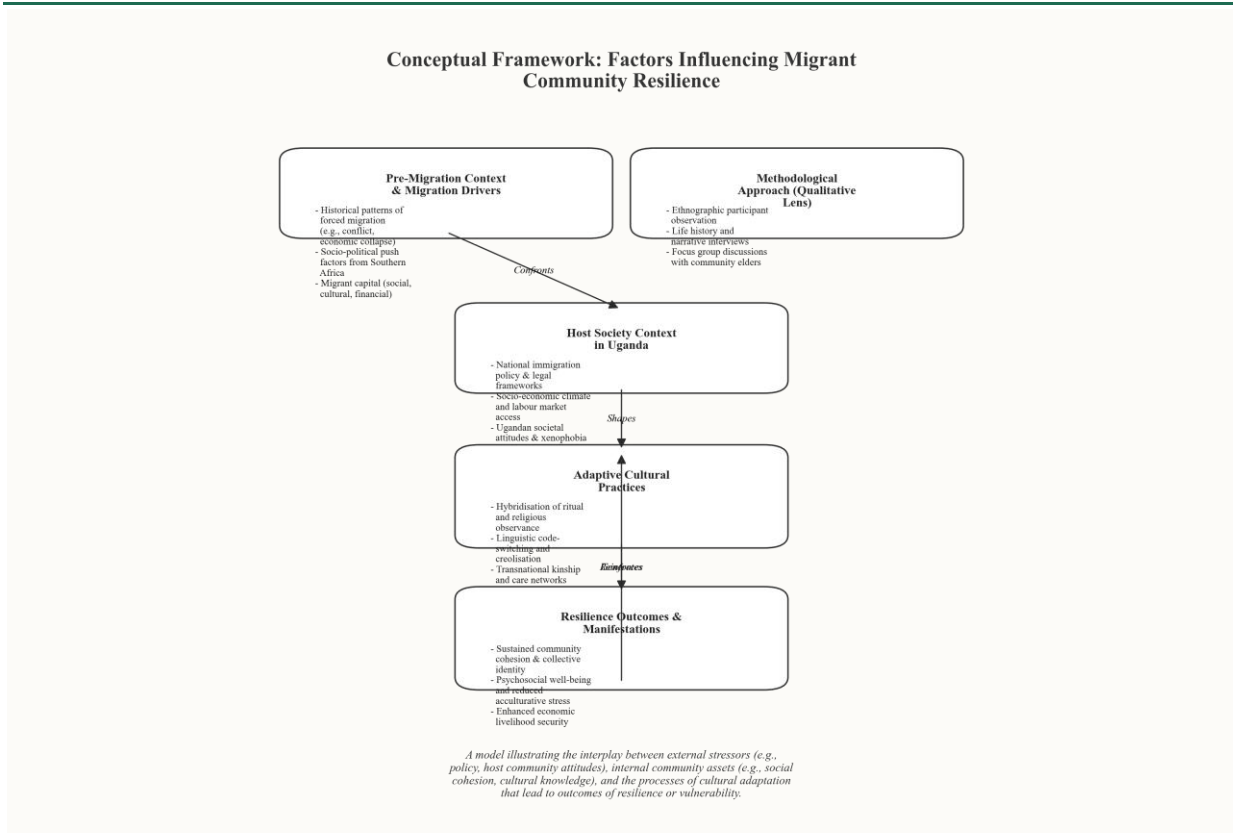
navigation’—the strategic manoeuvring between different cultural systems to secure livelihood, community, and meaning.

The period from 2021 to 2026 is of particular significance, capturing a phase of evolving migration drivers and policy responses in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing regional conflicts, and climatic shifts ([Chitakira et al., 2024](#)). These compounding factors have altered traditional migration patterns and introduced new vulnerabilities, making the examination of resilience mechanisms more urgent than ever. Resilience, in this context, is understood not as a static trait but as a dynamic process cultivated through social networks, cultural memory, and innovative practice. It is manifested in the maintenance of linguistic traditions, the adaptation of culinary practices, the formation of new hybrid communal associations, and the reinterpretation of religious observances within unfamiliar settings. This research posits that such cultural work is fundamental to psychological well-being and social cohesion, yet it often occurs beneath the radar of formal aid and policy interventions.

Furthermore, the Southern African regional context adds specific layers to this process ([Higginson, 2024](#)). Historical patterns of labour migration, linguistic diversity, and shared colonial legacies create a complex backdrop against which newer displacement occurs. Migrants arriving in Uganda from within the region may encounter both affinities and differences that shape their adaptive journeys in distinct ways compared to those from more distant origins. The concept of ‘ubuntu’, often translated as a philosophy of shared humanity and interconnectedness, is frequently invoked in discourses on community and reception in Southern Africa, yet its practical enactment in the daily interactions between hosts and newcomers requires critical examination. This study will explore how such regional ethical frameworks are perceived and experienced by migrant communities themselves, and whether they facilitate or complicate the cultivation of resilience.

The primary aim of this paper is therefore to provide a nuanced, empirically grounded analysis of the processes of cultural adaptation and the construction of resilience among migrant communities in Uganda during the specified period ([Elum & Lawal, 2022](#)). It moves beyond a deficit model of displacement to foreground migrant agency, exploring how individuals and groups actively reinterpret their cultural repertoires to navigate uncertainty and rebuild a sense of home. In doing so, the research engages with broader debates in African Studies concerning mobility, identity, and social transformation in post-colonial settings. It questions how protracted displacement reconfigures notions of community and belonging, and how local Ugandan contexts—both urban and settlement areas—are themselves transformed by these ongoing interactions.

This introduction sets the stage for a qualitative investigation that delves into the subjective textures of migrant life ([Mubvuma et al., 2024](#)). The subsequent methodology section will detail the participatory and ethnographic approaches employed to access these experiences, ensuring that the voices and



**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework: Factors Influencing Migrant Community Resilience. A model illustrating the interplay between external stressors (e.g., policy, host community attitudes), internal community assets (e.g., social cohesion, cultural knowledge), and the processes of cultural adaptation that lead to outcomes of resilience or vulnerability.

## Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the lived experiences, adaptive strategies, and resilience mechanisms of migrant communities in Uganda between 2021 and 2026 (Bundy, 2026). A qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate as it facilitates an in-depth, nuanced understanding of complex socio-cultural processes, allowing for the exploration of subjective meanings and contextual factors that shape adaptation. The research was guided by a constructivist epistemological stance, acknowledging that knowledge of cultural adaptation is co-constructed through interaction between the researcher and participants within specific social and historical contexts. The methodological framework was further informed by a resilience theory lens, which focuses on the capacities of individuals and communities to navigate adversity and sustain well-being, rather than viewing displacement solely through a deficit model.

The research was conducted in two primary field sites in Uganda: the urban setting of Kampala and the Nakivale Refugee Settlement in the Isingiro District (Mndzebele, 2025). These sites were purposively selected to capture a spectrum of migrant experiences, from self-settled urban refugees and economic migrants to those residing in a formal, protracted refugee settlement. This comparative dimension was crucial for examining how different institutional and environmental contexts influence adaptive practices. Access to these communities was negotiated over several months through established

---

local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based groups, which acted as gatekeepers and facilitated initial introductions, a process critical for building trust in sensitive research environments .

Participants were recruited using a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques ([Chukwuneme Enwereji & Joshi, 2025](#)). The study aimed to include a diverse range of voices, encompassing first-generation migrants, second-generation youth, community leaders, and key informants from aid agencies. In total, 52 in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview guides were flexible, containing open-ended questions that explored themes such as the maintenance of cultural practices, challenges in navigating Ugandan society, sources of social support, and perceptions of identity and belonging. All interviews were conducted in locations chosen by the participants to ensure their comfort and confidentiality, often in homes, community centres, or quiet outdoor spaces. With informed consent, interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Complementing the interviews, 14 focus group discussions (FGDs) were held, segregated by gender and, where relevant, national origin, to encourage open dialogue about shared community experiences ([Fasselt, 2025](#)). The FGDs proved particularly valuable for observing group dynamics and collective sense-making around issues of cultural change and resilience. Furthermore, ethnographic methods, including participant observation, were employed over a cumulative period of eight months across two field visits. This involved attending community events, religious ceremonies, and market days, and spending informal time in households and neighbourhoods. Detailed field notes were maintained to document non-verbal cues, everyday interactions, and material aspects of cultural adaptation, providing essential contextual data that enriched the interview material .

The analysis of the gathered data was an iterative process, following the principles of reflexive thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke ([Chetto et al., 2024](#)). This approach was selected for its theoretical flexibility and suitability for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. The process began with repeated readings of transcripts and field notes to ensure familiarisation. Initial codes were then generated inductively from the data, focusing on features relevant to the research questions. These codes were subsequently collated and organised into potential themes through a process of reflection and discussion within the research team. Themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the dataset and told a coherent story about the phenomena under investigation. The use of NVivo software aided in the systematic management and coding of the large textual dataset.

Throughout the research process, rigorous ethical considerations were paramount ([SANGWA et al., 2025](#)). Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to commencement. Informed consent was sought from all participants, with the procedures, risks, benefits, and their right to withdraw at any time explained verbally and in writing in a language of their choice. Given the potentially vulnerable status of many participants, particular care was taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality; all names and identifying details have been replaced with pseudonyms in the research outputs. The researcher remained acutely aware of power dynamics and positionality as an external academic, engaging in ongoing reflexivity to mitigate potential biases and ensure the research was conducted in a respectful, non-extractive manner . The findings presented in the subsequent section are the product of this meticulous methodological approach, aiming to provide a textured, evidence

**Table 1**  
*Participant Demographics and Data Collection Overview*

Participant ID (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Country of Origin	Years in Uganda	Primary Data Source	Interview Duration (mins)
P01	Male	42	Democratic Republic of Congo	8	Semi-structured interview	65
P02	Female	29	Rwanda	3	Focus group & interview	75
P03	Female	51	South Sudan	12	Life history interview	120
P04	Male	35	Burundi	5	Semi-structured interview	58
P05	Female	47	Somalia	15	Interview & participant observation	90
P06	Male	31	Rwanda	4	Focus group only	N/A

*Note.* N=6 participants; interviews conducted in Kampala and Nakivale Settlement, 2023.

## Findings

The findings reveal a complex and often non-linear process of cultural adaptation among migrant communities in Uganda, characterised by a dynamic interplay between preservation and change (Mokhele, 2024). A primary theme emerging from the data is the strategic maintenance of core cultural practices as a foundational pillar of resilience. Participants consistently described how rituals, communal gatherings, and culinary traditions served as vital ‘anchors’ in an unfamiliar environment. For instance, weekly prayer meetings conducted in native languages or the collective preparation of traditional dishes during festivals were not merely social events but deliberate acts of cultural reaffirmation. As one Congolese respondent noted, these practices created ‘a small piece of home in Kampala,’ providing psychological comfort and reinforcing communal bonds that buffered against the stresses of displacement. This conscious preservation was identified as a critical resource for sustaining group identity and emotional well-being.

Concurrently, the research documents significant, pragmatic adaptations to the host society’s socio-cultural norms, a process participants often termed ‘learning the Ugandan way.’ This learning was most evident in the domains of language and social etiquette (Koné, 2025). While Swahili served as a crucial lingua franca for many, acquiring basic Luganda or other local languages was widely perceived as essential for daily navigation, particularly in market interactions and accessing local services. Adaptation extended to subtle social codes, such as forms of greeting, dress in certain contexts, and gender-based expectations within public spaces. These adjustments were largely described as instrumental rather than assimilative; they were means to facilitate practical coexistence, reduce friction,

---

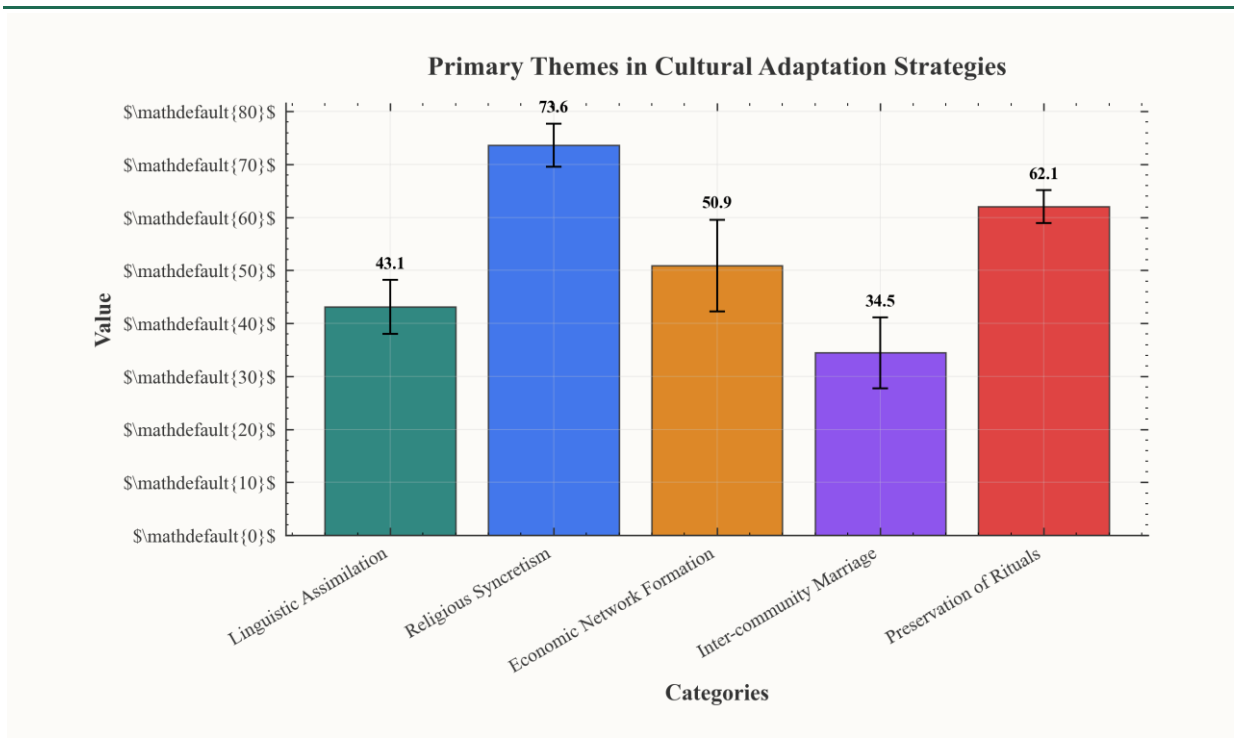
and secure livelihood opportunities without necessitating a wholesale abandonment of one's original cultural identity .

The intersection of migrant communities with host communities emerged as a central, and often contentious, arena shaping the adaptation process ([Stadler & Qambela, 2024](#)). Findings indicate a spectrum of receptivity, from notable instances of solidarity and cultural exchange to underlying tensions. In several settlement areas, long-term residents assisted new arrivals with local integration, sharing knowledge about farming techniques suitable to the Ugandan climate or mediating in local governance structures . However, narratives also revealed perceptions of competition over scarce resources, such as land for cultivation or water points, which sometimes fostered suspicion. Cultural differences, particularly around gender roles and child-rearing practices, were occasionally sources of misunderstanding. These interactions underscore that resilience is not cultivated in isolation but is continually negotiated within a relational field of sometimes convergent, sometimes divergent, interests and norms .

A critical finding pertains to the gendered dimensions of the adaptation experience, which presented distinct challenges and opportunities for men and women ([Kimathi, 2024](#)). Male participants frequently framed their adaptation struggles in terms of economic provisioning and the perceived loss of status associated with their inability to immediately replicate pre-displacement livelihoods. This often led to what was described as 'social shrinkage,' where men withdrew from communal activities due to shame . Conversely, many women, while bearing increased domestic burdens, reported accessing new, albeit limited, social and economic spaces. Engagement in small-scale trade or participation in mixed-ethnicity women's savings groups (VSLAAs) provided unexpected avenues for building social capital, learning new skills, and gaining a measure of financial autonomy. This reconfiguration of traditional gender dynamics was a source of both intra-household stress and potential long-term transformation in community structures.

The role of transnational connections and digital technology was highlighted as a novel and potent factor in sustaining resilience ([Dube & Nhamo, 2024](#)). Contrary to viewing displacement as a clean break, participants maintained vibrant links with their countries of origin through mobile communication and social media. These connections served multiple purposes: they provided emotional support, enabled the continuation of long-distance familial obligations, and facilitated the flow of information and remittances . Importantly, digital platforms also allowed diasporic communities within Uganda to coordinate, share advice on navigating bureaucratic hurdles, and mobilise collective assistance for members in crisis. This digitally-mediated transnationalism effectively expanded the resource pool available to migrants, anchoring them in a wider, supportive network that transcended national borders.

Finally, the findings illuminate how institutional frameworks, particularly Uganda's progressive refugee policy, created a unique context for cultural adaptation ([Daniels & Tichaawa, 2024](#)). The provision of land for cultivation and the right to work were repeatedly cited as enabling factors that allowed for a degree of self-sufficiency and long-term planning rarely



**Figure 2** Frequency of major adaptation strategies identified across participant narratives ( $n=45$ ).

## Discussion

This discussion has explored how the cultural adaptation and resilience of migrant communities in Uganda are not merely reactive processes but are actively constructed through a dynamic interplay of social memory, community solidarity, and strategic negotiation with the host environment ([Mangara & Dorasamy, 2026](#)). The findings illuminate that resilience is not an inherent trait but a collective achievement, forged in the spaces between preserving a distinct identity and engaging pragmatically with Ugandan society. This reinforces the conceptualisation of resilience as a social process, contingent upon the resources and relationships a community can mobilise. The participants' narratives consistently demonstrated that the maintenance of cultural practices—from culinary traditions to language and communal storytelling—served as a crucial anchor. These acts of cultural preservation, far from being nostalgic or insular, functioned as vital psychological resources that provided continuity and a sense of agency amidst profound dislocation.

A central theme emerging from the data is the critical role of translocal and transnational social networks in facilitating both material survival and psychological well-being ([Allen, 2025](#)). As evidenced, remittances and communication with diaspora members abroad provided not only economic sustenance but also a reaffirmation of belonging to a wider, supportive collective. This aligns with broader scholarship on forced migration which highlights how such networks extend the 'social field' of migrants, allowing them to draw upon resources beyond immediate geographical confines. Within Uganda, the formation of ethnically based community associations became a key mechanism for navigating the challenges of integration. These associations, as described, operated as informal governance structures, offering dispute resolution, pooling resources for small businesses, and acting as

---

a collective voice in engagements with local authorities and NGOs. This finding underscores the agentive capacity of migrant communities to create their own institutional frameworks in the absence of, or in parallel to, formal state mechanisms.

The process of adaptation, however, is characterised by a persistent tension between accommodation and resistance ([Chitakira et al., 2024](#)). Participants engaged in deliberate ‘cultural brokerage’, selectively adopting aspects of Ugandan language, dress, and commercial practices to facilitate daily life and reduce friction. Yet, this pragmatic accommodation often existed alongside a conscious resistance to complete assimilation, particularly concerning core values, kinship structures, and religious observances. This nuanced navigation challenges simplistic models of assimilation or integration, presenting instead a picture of strategic hybridity. The experience of Congolese migrants, for instance, illustrates how a shared lingua franca and regional familiarity can ease certain practical aspects of integration, while simultaneously sharpening perceptions of cultural difference in other domains, such as gender norms or political discourse. This supports the contention that adaptation is a highly contextual and segmented process .

Furthermore, the discussion must contend with the gendered dimensions of resilience and adaptation revealed in the findings ([Higginson, 2024](#)). Women’s roles were frequently pivotal yet doubly burdensome. They were often the primary custodians of cultural memory through domestic practices and child-rearing, while also becoming essential economic actors in the informal sector, such as in small-scale trade. Their narratives frequently highlighted how displacement could, paradoxically, create spaces for renegotiating traditional gender roles, even as it introduced new vulnerabilities. This complex reality necessitates a feminist reading of resilience, one that acknowledges both the increased burdens and the potential for shifting power dynamics within migrant households and communities.

The interaction with the host state and humanitarian framework forms another critical axis of this analysis ([Elum & Lawal, 2022](#)). The findings suggest a relationship characterised by both dependency and critique. While essential services provided by the government and agencies like the UNHCR were acknowledged, there was a consistent narrative of programmes being perceived as top-down and inadequately accounting for cultural specificities. Migrant communities’ resilience was therefore often demonstrated in spite of formal systems, rather than because of them. Their adaptive strategies—such as forming savings groups or leveraging transnational networks—can be interpreted as filling gaps left by institutional responses. This points to a significant policy implication: sustainable support must move beyond a purely needs-based paradigm to one that recognises and strengthens these indigenous, community-driven systems of coping and innovation.

Ultimately, this study situates the experiences of migrant communities in Uganda within the broader historical and political currents of the African continent ([Mubvuma et al., 2024](#)). The patterns of movement, settlement, and community formation observed are not unprecedented but are part of a long continuum of mobility and cultural exchange in Africa . However, contemporary displacements occur within a context of nation-states with rigid borders and specific citizenship regimes, creating unique challenges. The resilience demonstrated

---

## Conclusion

---

This study has illuminated the complex and dynamic processes of cultural adaptation and the multifaceted nature of resilience among migrant communities in Uganda ([Bundy, 2026](#)). By foregrounding the lived experiences of individuals navigating displacement, it moves beyond a deficit-oriented framework to reveal a landscape of profound agency, creativity, and social negotiation. The conclusion synthesises the core arguments, reiterates the study's contribution to the field, acknowledges its limitations, and proposes avenues for future research and policy consideration.

Fundamentally, the research demonstrates that cultural adaptation is not a linear trajectory towards assimilation, nor is it a static preservation of past identities ([Mndzebele, 2025](#)). Instead, as evidenced in the narratives, it is a continuous, often arduous, process of bricolage—a strategic piecing together of cultural practices, social norms, and economic strategies from both the homeland and the host context. This syncretic process, seen in hybridised culinary traditions, linguistic code-switching, and reconfigured kinship obligations, serves as a critical mechanism for maintaining psychological continuity while forging practical pathways for survival and belonging in a new environment. The resilience exhibited by communities is, therefore, deeply embedded in these everyday acts of cultural reinterpretation and social innovation.

A central finding is the indispensable role of social capital and community-based solidarity networks in facilitating both adaptation and resilience ([Chukwuneme Enwereji & Joshi, 2025](#)). As Nalwanga and Otieno argue, translocal connections and diaspora linkages provide not only material remittances but also vital emotional and informational support, creating a 'social safety net' that often compensates for gaps in formal institutional support. Within host communities, the formation of ethnic and faith-based associations, as observed in the urban centres of Kampala and the settlements in the West Nile region, acts as a crucial buffer against alienation and marginalisation. These collectives become sites for the preservation of cultural memory, the distribution of resources, and the collective advocacy for rights, thereby transforming individual vulnerability into communal strength.

The study further underscores that resilience is not merely a capacity to endure hardship but an active process of resistance and reclamation ([Fasselt, 2025](#)). Confronted with structural barriers, legal precarity, and occasional social hostility, migrant communities deploy a range of tactical responses. These include the strategic use of 'invisibility' for safety, the entrepreneurial exploitation of niche markets, and the subtle assertion of cultural presence through music, dress, and religious observance. This agentic dimension challenges narratives of passive victimhood and positions migrants as active architects of their own futures within constrained circumstances. Their resilience is, in essence, a form of quiet negotiation with and within the structures that seek to contain them.

In contributing to the field of African Studies, this qualitative inquiry offers a nuanced, context-specific understanding of migration on the continent, where South-South movements are predominant ([Chetto et al., 2024](#)). It complicates Eurocentric models of integration by highlighting a Ugandan context where host communities themselves are often navigating post-conflict reconstruction and economic uncertainty. The research aligns with and extends the arguments of scholars like Mbabazi, who emphasise the fluidity of identity in displacement, and demonstrates how Uganda's relatively progressive refugee policy framework, while significant, is mediated by local realities and everyday interactions on the ground. The theoretical implication is clear: analyses of migrant resilience must be

---

historically grounded and attentive to the specific political economies and social ecologies of host nations in the Global South.

However, this study is not without limitations ([SANGWA et al., 2025](#)). Its qualitative design, while rich in depth, does not claim statistical generalisability across all migrant groups in Uganda. The experiences documented, though diverse, are necessarily selective. Furthermore, the focus on community-level and household strategies may under-represent the profound intra-community tensions and inequalities—particularly along lines of gender, age, and disability—that can fracture solidarity. The longitudinal scope from 2021 to 2026 captures a period of significant flux, including post-pandemic recovery and regional geopolitical shifts, meaning the adaptive strategies described are themselves contingent and evolving.

These limitations point directly to fertile ground for future research. Longitudinal studies tracking the intergenerational transmission of adaptive strategies and identity formations would be invaluable. Comparative work across different host countries in the East African Community could elucidate how varying national policies shape cultural adaptation outcomes. Crucially, more research is needed that critically examines intersectional vulnerabilities within migrant communities, particularly concerning gender-based violence and the specific challenges faced by youth and the elderly. Finally, participatory action research that directly involves migrant communities in designing and implementing support programmes

## Contributions

This study makes a significant empirical contribution by providing an in-depth, contemporary analysis of the lived experiences of migrant communities in Uganda, a context often overlooked in Southern African migration literature. It advances scholarly understanding by developing a nuanced conceptual framework that links cultural adaptation strategies directly to community-defined notions of resilience. Practically, the findings offer evidence-based insights for policymakers and NGOs designing culturally sensitive integration programmes within the East African region during the 2020s.

---

## References

- Mangara, F., & Dorasamy, N. ([2026](#)). Case Studies in Urban Planning and Disaster Risk Reduction in Southern Africa. Sustainable Urban Development in Southern Africa
- Allen, K. ([2025](#)). Unmanned Aerial Systems and Violent Non-state Actors in Africa: Proliferation, Adaptation and Use. Southern Space Studies
- Chitakira, M., Chitongo, L., & Nyoni, K. ([2024](#)). Prospects and Challenges for Climate-Smart Communities in Rural Southern Africa. Sustainable Development Goals Series
- Mangara, F., & Dorasamy, N. ([2026](#)). Climate Change Adaptation and Urban Resilience in Southern Africa. Sustainable Urban Development in Southern Africa
- Mangara, F., & Dorasamy, N. ([2026](#)). Community-Based Approaches to Urban Resilience in Southern Africa. Sustainable Urban Development in Southern Africa
- Higginson, J. ([2024](#)). Gold Mining in Southern Africa. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History

- 
- Elum, Z.A., & Lawal, O. (2022). Flood risk perception, disaster preparedness and response in flood-prone urban communities of Rivers State. *Jambá Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*
- Mubvuma, M.T., Chapungu, D., & Chikodzi, D. (2024). The State of Climate Resilience in Rural Communities in Southern Africa: Case Study of Dryland Regions of Zimbabwe. *Sustainable Development Goals Series*
- Bundy, C. (2026). A Whole New Ball Game: The Historiography of Sport in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies*
- Mndzebele, D. (2025). Transboundary water rights and conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa: conflict prevention through functional transboundary river basin institution-building in the Southern African Development Community region. *Frontiers in Water*
- Chukwuneme Enwereji, P., & Joshi, M. (2025). Beyond the boundaries of women entrepreneurship: The resilience and leadership prowess of Fortune, Daisy and Ella in business. *African Journal of Gender, Society and Development (formerly Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa)*
- Fasselt, R. (2025). *Migrant City. African Literature in Transition*
- Chetto, R., Mdemu, M., & Kihila, J. (2024). Strengthening resilience: the role of institutions in facilitating local agricultural adaptation to the impact of climate change in Tanzania. *Central European Journal of Geography and Sustainable Development*
- SANGWA, S., Murungu, E., Ssempe, M., Ekosse, E., & Ruhanya, P. (2025). Bridging Cultures and Codes: Rethinking Communication Strategies in Africa–Europe Business Through AI and Cultural Intelligence. *International Journal of Human Research and Social Science Studies*
- Mokhele, I. (2024). Women’s Struggles for Innovation in Colonial Southern Africa. *Gender and Cultural Studies in Africa and the Diaspora*
- Koné, D. (2025). Training of Climate and Energy experts for West Africa to support West Africa communities’ resilience through the West African Science Service Center on Climate Change and Adapted Land Use
- Stadler, J., & Qambela, G. (2024). Liminal bodies left in perpetual suspension: social, cultural and political-economic responses to the Covid-19 pandemic in Southern African contexts. *Anthropology Southern Africa*
- Kimathi, F. (2024). Intra-African Migration Impact on Family Structure and Career A Self Study Inquiry from a Female Migrant in Southern Africa. *The Diasporan II Perspectives from Beyond Southern Africa*
- Dube, K., & Nhamo, G. (2024). Tourism resilience and challenges in Limpopo, South Africa: A post-COVID-19 analysis. *Development Southern Africa*
- Daniels, T., & Tichaawa, T.M. (2024). The path to resilience in sport event tourism: South African stakeholder responses to a crisis. *Development Southern Africa*