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MEDIA STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Evaluation of contemporary East African Kiswahili environmental songs

Brian Olewe Waswala^{1*}, Charles Daniel Owiti², Faith Jepkemei³ and Benard Kodak⁴

Abstract: This paper appraises the role of contemporary Kiswahili music, a form of oral art, in promoting environmental awareness and advocacy. Using case studies from Kenya and Tanzania, we analyse whether East African music infused with suitable environmental practices can help mainstream environmental education, arouse public interest towards nature, advocate for change in mind-sets, and call for proactive action on environmental conservation, while still offering entertainment. Ethnomusicological Kiswahili songs encouraging connection to nature were purposively chosen and acquired from YouTube. The lyrics of these songs were transcribed, translated, and analysed using Critical Discourse Analysis and Conceptual Metaphor Theories. By examining the context and meanings of these songs, we demonstrate that contemporary environmental songs are art forms of expression that advocate for increased environmental management by eliciting discussions and encouraging active societal eco-friendly remedial actions towards



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Brian Waswala is a Wildlife and Landscape Ecologist with extensive work experience on environmental education, conservation, and policy development for sustainable development in Africa.

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Benard Kodak is an Associate Professor of Linguistics in Kenya, focussing on linguistics, multimodality, and mass communication. This work focusses on present and emerging human dimensions in natural resource management through the lens of contemporary music as an ingenious avenue of mainstreaming environmental education for a peaceful, safe, sustainable, and resilient future. The study offers a novel model for understanding the link between contemporary music use, environment, and social well-being in East Africa.

PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Contemporary music as a form of entertainment can increasingly be used to arouse connection to nature, communicate sound environmental practices and encourage positive behaviour change. This article embraces the Conceptual Metaphor Theory of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), to create discourse on educational and environmental connections with an overarching view to addressing current and emerging environmental concerns. Through song lyrics analysis, we examine the thematic concerns addressed in the environmentally conscious songs; explore the use of music as an effective channel in promoting environmental conscious best practices; and identify the conceptual metaphors in an environmental discourse. The study proposed active use of music and related performing arts, which transcend generations and spheres of influence, to create awareness critical thinking, enhance natural resource governance, change people's attitudes and impart life-long skills consistent with environmental protection, enhance ecological integrity, and improve quality of life across all demographics.

ecological resilience and environmental integrity. This article contributes to the emerging discourse on educational and environmental connections through the use of contemporary music, entertainment, and metaphors, with an overarching view to addressing current and emerging environmental concerns. Consequently, we affirm that African music can be used for entertainment, communication of messages and promotion of positive behaviour change.

Subjects: Environmental Issues; Environmental Psychology; Environmental Communication; By Subject; African Music; Contemporary Popular Music; Music & The Arts; Languages of Africa; African Literature

Keywords: behaviour change; education; environmental conservation, *mazingira*; nature; contemporary music; edutainment

1. Introduction

Environmental challenges that reduce ecological and biological integrity, prevent political peace and limit socio-economic growth that could reduce poverty are common in East African region and many other parts of the world (O'Connell et al., 2017). Many current and emerging challenges are pushing social and ecological systems past planetary boundaries and towards critical tipping points (Rockström et al., 2009), highlighting the importance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations [UN], 2022). These impacts are exacerbated by poor governance, lack of connection to nature, and the over-exploitation of natural resources, without considering their capacity to regenerate. These trends are intensified by a myriad of anthropogenic activities ranging from widespread wanton ecosystem mismanagement, increased consumption patterns, human population growth, poor waste disposal and industrialization, and increased demand for food production (Pradhan & Waswala, 2014).

In Africa and across the world, music as a form of verbal art, has been used for centuries as a mode of education, entertainment, and for inculcating morals and ethics (Bosompra, 2007; Nzewi, 1999). As a mode of verbal communication, music transcends and permeates different races, age-groups, and professions, acting as an enabler and catalyst for mainstreaming inter-generational learning and transformative leadership opportunities (Rosenberg, 2008). Music is also used as a universal means of cultural expression through sounds and rhythms (Sievers et al., 2013), and music for edutainment [mix of entertainment and education] (Aksakal, 2015) is a learning channel that appeals to all age-groups. According to Publicover et al. (2018) musicians, like other artists, may sometimes address environmental themes in their work. Whether or not they view themselves as such, they may at times act as environmental educators, communicators, and advocates through their art and other activities.

Kodak and Awino (2019) posit that music is a form of entertainment that involves constructing mental images. They use Conceptual Metaphor theory to analyze metaphoric mappings in selected songs in their studies. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) conceptual metaphors are based on the notion that people describe certain conceptual domains by properties and ideas connected to other conceptual domains. Gavelin (2016) argues that there are two domains (source and target) within a conceptual metaphor and the link between these two domains is so intense that thinking of one without the other may be hard. Sabucedo et al. (2020) posit that conceptual metaphors provide easy-to-understand elucidations for threatening and unexpected events and can guide behaviour; they are a useful device, which helps us to understand perceptions appropriately (Anudo & Kodak, 2020). In this study, metaphors are used by musicians to create connections between the source and target domains.

Musicians have come up with songs about nature and environment, which appeal to our emotional well-being (Arbuthnott & Sutter, 2019). In doing so, they increasingly motivate the citizenry to conserve the environment through various innovative and current platforms, including

music and performing arts (Frantz & Mayer, 2014; Arendt & Matthes, 2016; Freitas and Fernandes (2018). Interestingly, music provides room for further debate, discussion, and response, with environmentally themed songs being applied to inculcate environmentally sound best practices (Beynon & Lang, 2018; Nisbet et al., 2009; Turner & Freedman, 2004).

According to Szczytko et al. (2020) present generations are becoming increasingly less connected to nature as compared to the past generations. Connection to Nature is defined broadly as diverse ways through which people relate to and identify with natural environments, as proposed by Restall and Conrad (2015). This growing disconnect with the environment has a negative impact on environmental integrity and resilience, human health, and well-being. Roberts et al. (2009) observe that the young generations spend copious amounts of resources, including time, listening to music, as it expresses the love, awe, concern, and pain of the artist on the subject matter.

Environmentally conscious East African musicians are increasingly embracing music as an innovative way to mainstream social and environmental education and building competencies for addressing the myriad of current and emerging socio-ecological concerns, most of which are anthropogenic in nature. In East Africa, Kiswahili is predominantly the major unifying language (Kishe, 2003; Ojwang, 2008; UNESCO, 1985). The use of Kiswahili and *sheng* [Kenyan urban slang, composed of a blend of Swahili, English and other languages] (Ndaka, 2023; Wabende, 2021) in contemporary music resonates primarily with the youth and women who are the main agents of change (Babtrakinova et al., 2017; Wanjala & Kebaya, 2016) and advocates for youth engagement in participatory conservation (Waswala et al., 2019). Such songs are available on YouTube under the theme *Mazingira* (Kiswahili word for “environment”). Like all awareness initiatives, it is imperative to identify and use not only languages but also concepts that are familiar to the target audience.

The major objective of this paper was to examine environmental songs in East Africa and their application in conveying scholar literature and messages (Rosenberg, 2008) on emerging environmental concerns. The following specific objectives guided the ethnomusicological research:

- (1) To examine the formal, linguistic and thematic concerns addressed in the environmentally conscious songs and influence connection to nature.
- (2) To discuss the use of music as an effective strategy in promoting environmental best practices and policy frameworks.
- (3) To identify and analyse the conceptual metaphors in an environmental discourse.

2. Methodology

Songs by East African musicians were identified, selected, and classified thematically. The theme of environmental conservation guided this process and songs in Kiswahili all entitled *Mazingira* (Kiswahili word for “environment”) were downloaded for analysis. The study adopted the methodology used by Thompson et al. (2021) and (Ogembo et al., 2021) which involved downloading songs from YouTube platforms, transcribing and translating followed by critical analysis of common themes that address environmental issues. Out of 12 songs in YouTube under the theme *Mazingira*, 4 were selected for analysis. The selected songs were chart-toppers produced between the years 2010–2020 by 2 musicians from Kenya and 2 from Tanzania. We chose songs in Kiswahili it is a national and official language in East Africa, and is gaining popularity in the region. Tenets of the Critical Discourse Analysis and Conceptual Metaphor Theory were applied to the content of the songs to bring out the common themes that addressed the objectives of this study. We followed Fairclough (1992), who used Critical Discourse Analysis to examine how particular texts and forms of the texts are associated with particular social practices and how they reproduce social identities and relations. Fairclough (1992) explains that understanding how social practices reproduce social identities and relations can be accomplished through the analysis of both the micro features of “texts” and “discourse practices” such as presupposition, cohesion, key words, metaphors, grammar, discourse representation and intertextuality, and the macro features of social practice.

A critical discourse analysis of the song lyrics exposes the close link between entertainment and education towards environmental conservation. The lyrics in the language of composition are presented in italics and then translated into English. The lyrics of all four songs were critically analyzed to our research objectives.

3. Results and discussion

The following four songs we examined are: Mazingira by Beka Flavour (Katuti Bakari Abdul [Beka Flavour], 2018) [Table A4]; Mazingira by Di Namite (Namite, 2019) [Table A1]; Mazingira by Evelyn Wanjiru (Wanjiru Evelyn [Bwenieve Digital], 2010) [Table A2]; and Mazingira Yetu by Larry Dwayne (Dindi Sam [Mazingira Yetu Organisation], 2020) [Table A3]. These songs primarily addressed the following themes:

3.1. The adverse impacts of unsustainable anthropogenic actions on environment.

The songs predominantly sought to identify and raise concerns about the impacts of unsustainable human activities on planet earth. The resultant ramifications include altered rainfall patterns resulting in drought and famines; increased incidents of flooding; reduction of air quality (air pollution) and increased respiratory diseases as attributed to industrial fumes; poor disposal of solid and liquid waste into primarily open spaces and water bodies such as rivers and lakes; wanton destruction of forests for fuel-wood, human settlement and agricultural production; use of illegal and unsustainable fishing methods (use of dynamite) that destroy fish populations, harm non-target fish and destroy breeding/spawning grounds. The songs illuminate and highlight environmental problems and advance real stories about social injustices. Also worth noting is that degradation of the environment and biodiversity loss also have negative impacts on tourism, a major source of livelihood in the East African region, especially when the aesthetic value is lost (Okello & Novelli, 2014). Indeed, incidents of weather variability are increasing in the Eastern Africa region, exposing the region to water-stress, drought, famines, and natural resource conflicts, which hinder ecological integrity and livelihoods (Ghebrezgabher et al., 2016). Common themes in the songs were that, should anthropogenic development be unsustainable, the effects might have dire socio-economic and ecological repercussions on future generations; disrupt households and societies; and water down national, regional and global efforts made towards sustainable development, as envisaged East Africa Vision 2050 (Gill et al., 2019), Africa Agenda 2063 (DeGhetto et al., 2016) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals report (United Nations [UN], 2022).

3.2. The valuable contribution of the planet to human wellbeing.

The musicians through their songs illustrate the relevance and importance of the planet's resources to human existence, health, well-being and development. According to Bolund and Hunhammar (1999) and Fisher et al. (2009), the planet offers four classes of ecosystem services namely: provisioning, regulating, cultural, and supporting services. The songs explore all four classes and raise concern that should anthropogenic activities remain unchecked, human well-being will be compromised. These findings support the importance of conserving green spaces as they contribute to mental and physical health; promote positive youth development; act as experiential learning laboratories (Cheng & Monroe, 2012); and enhance connection to nature among other aspects of well-beings (Arbuthnott & Sutter, 2019; Barton & Rogerson, 2017; van den Berg et al., 2015).

3.3. Call for collective behaviour change and individual responsibility.

The songs unanimously encourage and rally for environmental complementary conscious practices through inter-disciplinary and inter-generation collaboration as well as personal responsibility in averting ecosystem degradation as affirmed by Pradhan and Waswala (2014). This is because present and emerging environmental concerns are cross-cutting and cannot be left to one age group, gender or section of society to address. Critical society sector players especially the youth, the private sector, and governments shoulder the major responsibilities, as they are the ones who would suffer the brunt of degraded environments and arising impacts. Youth should be highly motivated, since their future is being impacted, even though they do not have nearly as much

responsibility as the older generations that created most of the problems. Additionally, it is the responsibility of the business sector and citizens to adhere to guidelines provided by the governments. They can also contribute to citizen science and early warning.

The idea that every human being has a right to a clean and healthy environment has caught the imagination of people across religious, cultural, constitutional, regional and continental divides (May, 2006). Worth noting is that the “right to live in a clean and healthy environment” is enshrined in the constitutions of Kenya and Tanzania (Awuku, 1994). Article 42, Constitution of Kenya [2010] (Soyapi, 2019) where calls for inter-generational equity means that “all people within the present generation have the right to benefit equally from the exploitation of the environment, and that they have an equal entitlement to a clean and healthy environment.” These include creating enabling environments and funding contributions for holistic waste management, promotion of green jobs and building designs, energy efficiency, reduce food waste, development of sustainable technologies, and capacity-building of citizens through curriculum mainstreaming through formal education, non-formal education, and communication platforms, including religious settings (Jenkins & Chapple, 2011; Waswala & Mboweni, 2019; Waswala & Mburu, 2022).

3.4. Acknowledge God as Creator of the earth.

Di Namite writes “*Mungu Amaeumba dunia*” (God created the earth) while Larry Dwayne states, “*Mazingira bora, ni maumbile yake Mola*” (God created a safe environment). These phrases acknowledge God as the Creator of the Earth and Universe, in line with Psalms 24:1. He put man in charge of the planet, to manage and conserve it (Waldron, 1990). Sadly, man has neglected this noble task of management as in seen in the present deplorable status of the planet. The songs urge the listeners to not only love the Earth, the only planet that can host life, but also willingly and zealously promote sustainable practices.

3.5. Commitment and resolve

The songs reflect determination, resolve, desperation, and other emotions aimed at addressing the current plight and projected anxieties emanating from environmental degradation and over-exploitation of natural resources. Environmental degradation has contributed to loss of life, poor health, and deprived livelihoods in East Africa. The musicians voiced their commitment for a better planet, critical to environmental work. This is seen in the lines of songs 1, 2 and 3 below:

- i. We have only a little time to save our world,
The world is unique, it is our home,
We have to love it. (Giuseppe Namite [Di Namite], Mazingira)*
- ii. Good environment contributes to good life (Wanjiru Evelyn, Mazingira)*
- iii. I will play my part to clean these rivers,
To heal the scars,
Like Wangari Maathai,
I will die for this. (Dindi Sam [Larry Dwayne], Mazingira Yetu)*

The lyrics imply that there is hope for a better future with a good life if people take good care of the environment. By remaining resolute and motivated as opposed to falling into despair, indeed, through positive collective responsibility, we can halt and reverse environmental degradation, thus contribute to a healthy, safe, and equitable future, in line with sustainable development (Ojala, 2012). The songs also emphasize that positive action can only arise when we all pull together, as opposed to frustrating efforts being undertaken to remedy the situation.

3.6. Role of contemporary music in mainstreaming environmental consciousness through edutainment

Environmentally conscious music for sustainable development, cannot be undervalued in creating awareness, enhancing natural resource governance, changing people’s attitudes and improving life-long skills. These subtle avenues contribute to a myriad of national constitutional Acts of

Parliament, sustainable development agenda and United Nations resolutions. These include the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4.7 (United Nations General Assembly [UNGA], 2022); UNEP/EA.2/Res.3 “Investing in Human Capacity for Sustainable Development through Environmental Education and Training” (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2016); UN General Assembly Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/45/30 “Rights of the child: realizing the rights of the child through a healthy environment” (UN, 2022); UN General Assembly Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/48/13 “The human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment” (Tang & Spijkers, 2022; UNGA, 2022); Future We Want (Brundtland & Khalid, 1987; Elof, 2021) and Post 2014 UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Taylor, 2014).

All four songs selected for this study address environmental conservation. This is in line with Williams et al. (2018) who assert time spent in natural environments promotes creativity, but few researchers have considered how this occurs (Arbuthnott & Sutter, 2019). This study thus presents the link between music and nature and concludes that the natural environment is a catalyst for creativity. Gray et al. (2001) observe that our world is filled with innumerable natural sounds, and from the earliest times humans have been intrigued and inspired by this “soundscape.” People who live close to nature perceive a wider range of sounds than those of us living in industrialized societies, who rely heavily on advances in sound technology. The sounds of whales in the ocean, for example, were first recorded in the 1940s, yet the Tlingit, Inuit, and other seafaring tribes have been hearing them through the hulls of their boats for millennia (Gray et al., 2001). Similarly, the ultra-low frequency communications of elephants have only just been recorded even though the Hutu and Tutsi tribes of East Africa have incorporated these sounds into their songs and stories for centuries (Gray et al., 2001). It is said that every known human culture has music. The contribution of nature to musical content is clear, and the place of music in helping conserve natural environments cannot be overstated.

3.7. Sustainable environmental conservation

Environmental conservation is a continuous process that warrants emphasis and repetition of best practices. The use of music is an effective strategy in mitigating environmental ills since it raises awareness, increases audience knowledge, changes attitudes and behaviour that seeks to be influenced, and sparks creative thinking and deeper discussion towards remedial home-grown solutions addressing anthropogenic concerns. Through various music genres, members of the public can slowly but subtly connected to nature, since it’s messaging is simpler and more attractive to the audience. Additionally, the songs aim to champion and mainstream active citizen stewardship to address current and emerging environmental, social and ecological challenges that negatively impact management and resilience of natural resource systems. Music is like a commercial advertisement, which when played and heard over time, resonates with the public. This thus brings to light the metaphorical conceptual mappings of imagery on to reality. Through conscious environmental music, citizens are able to hold to account duty bearers, rights holders, government and industry policy makers, economic planners and enforcement agencies to play their role in environmentally sustainable development and natural resource management systems, especially since their contribution is critical.

3.8. Hope for youth engagement in environmental conservation

The songs call for active youth participation in mitigating present and emerging concerns and offering sustainable solution (Narksompong & Limjirakan, 2015). This is seen in the following lines from song 4, Mazingira by Beka Flavour:

*We will make great strides collectively
If we conserve the environment
Our health will improve
Collective action, ladies and gentlemen
Old and young
It’s imperative that we conserve the environment.*

The young people are encouraged to continually participate by exercising critical thought and fostering creativity aimed at solving problems. The youth readily resonate with the songs and are increasingly embracing innovative ways to empower their peers through sound environmental practices and simplification of conservation jargon. The increased use of music and other performing arts to address present and emerging environmental concerns is thus timely and valuable since it reflects values and attitudes in society as stated by Sánchez González (2020). The use of local contemporary music as a conduit to raise social and environmental education has been on the increase by various musicians. Music, unlike the law through Acts of Parliament permeates into social space (Feisst, 2016). By also infusing environmentally sound practices into their music, artists can target communities and audiences to attain essential informal, non-formal and lifelong skills that seek to avert environmental degradation (Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017; Waswala & Mboweni, 2019).

3.9. Imagery in environmental conservation

Kodak and Awino (2019) posit that music as a performing art, is a form of entertainment and mental construction of imagery. This is highlighted by the musicians' use of various Swahili similes and rhetoric statements to emphasize and visualize the impact of anthropogenic activities that are injurious to the environment. "*Tusipoziba ufaa, tutajenga ukuta*" by Larry Dwayne, loosely translated to "If we don't seal the crack, we will end up building a whole wall" calls for immediate remedial interventions while we still can, as opposed to waiting for the ultimate loss. This metaphor corresponds to the adage "A stitch in time saves nine." As alluded by Rockström et al. (2009), the Earth is at an ecological tipping point. Larry Dawne in his song above also poses two satirical questions: "*Just imagine mtoi wako anauliza, what is a river? Utajibu? Utamwambia nini akiuliza, Lake Victoria ilifanyika nini?*" ["Just imagine your child asking you, what is a river, what will your answer be? What will you answer if he/she asks you, "What happened to Lake Victoria?"] Beka Flavour uses a rhetoric statement too: *Mabomo ya nini kwenye maji, kama mna vita na vietnamu?* ["Why use explosives in water, as if its Vietnam war?"] These creative satires, rhetoric and metaphors advocate for reflective and rational thinking on the impact of human activities on the environment.

4. Limitations of the study

This study was limited by certain attributes. By looking at only 4 songs, we can only offer a narrow perspective on East African music and are not able to generalize our findings. Also, we chose songs and examined their lyrics partly based on the song's popularity, when a wide range of factors may send a given song to the top of the charts. Responses to a song can be a reflection of melody, rhythm, marketing strategies, the physical appearance of the artist, and other things that have nothing to do with its lyrics or message.

5. Conclusion

The use of contemporary music is an under-tapped ingenious avenue of mainstreaming environmental education since it provides communities with both conservation information and ethics necessary for them to make sound and informed decisions about the use of their resources for a peaceful sustainable future. Music contributes to public education as it can convince people to not only value natural resources through advocacy and reach out to many people in a simplified format, mainstreaming of best practices, but also actively engage in the protection and conservation of natural resources for the long-term sustainable benefits. Furthermore, these songs encourage and can alter thought patterns and behaviours as they acknowledge we can hold others accountable for their actions, stop bad behaviour, and report instances of degradation to the appropriate authorities. This is in line with Sunderlal (2017) who found that music is an antecedent to the development of environmental sensitivity; music is not only instrumental in promoting environmental citizenship but can be a way to achieve an environmental revolution by inspiring communities to mobilize for change. Our work confirms Nketia's (1974) assertion that African artists' works can serve as instructional tools.

The active use of music as an innovative informal and non-formal way to enhance individual sustainable development competency and shift consciousness is critical. We propose the use of music for edutainment should be enhanced, nurtured and encouraged because it can promote awareness creation, critical thinking, natural resource governance, changing people's attitudes and improving life-long skills consistent with environmental protection, reducing ecological integrity decline and improving quality of life across all demographics. This study offers a novel insight for understanding the link between contemporary music use in promoting environmental conservation and social well-being edutainment in East Africa, which needs to be reconsidered and rectified.

It is crucial to actively use music as a creative non-formal and informal technique to improve individual sustainability development competency and change consciousness. This study provides a fresh perspective on the relationship between the use of modern music and environmental preservation and social well-being education in East Africa, which must be reevaluated and corrected. It also fills a knowledge dearth in scholarly circles on the significance of African ethnomusicological art in the discipline of environmental conservation.

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Disclosure statement

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Supplementary data

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Appendix

Table A1. Mazingira by Di Namite (Namite, 2019)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p>Chorus <i>Pamoja mimi na we Tuyatunze mazingira Sisi watoto Tuyatunze mazingira Mazingira yetu Tuyatunze, Tualinde Yanaharibika Tuyatunze, Tualinde Na dunia yetu Tuitunze, Tuilinde Inaharibika Tuyatunze, Tuilinde</i></p>	<p>Chorus Together you and I Let's conserve our environment. We the youth/youngsters/children Let's conserve our environment. Our environment Let's conserve, Let's protect it. It's getting ruined/spoilt. Let's conserve, Let's protect it. And our planet Let's conserve, Let's protect it. It's getting ruined/spoilt. Let's conserve, Let's protect it.</p>
<p>Stanza 1 <i>Dunia iko mashakani Tuitunze mazingira jamani Tukapande miti wote tuinusuru dunia jamani Watapata tabu jamii ya kesho Tuitunze misitu, Tutunze bahari Vyanzo za maji tusiziharibu Mungu Amaeumba dunia Watu wake wote pamoja na amani Wote tuitunze dunia Ibaki kuwa kama zamani</i></p>	<p>Verse 1 The earth/planet is in peril. Let's conserve it. Let's all plant trees. Let's save the planet. Lest the future generations suffer Let's conserve our forests, Let's conserve the ocean. Our water sources let's not spoil/degrade them. God created the earth. Every one of us and all living things Let's all collectively conserve the earth. So it stays pristine like earlier times</p>
<p>Chorus <i>Mafuriko kibunga husabishwa na Na uchafushi wa maziingira Hali ya hewa kuwa mbaya husababishwa na Na uchafushi wa mazingira Moshi ya viwanda, ukomeshwe Plastiki material, ukomeshwe Utupwaji wa taka, uboreshwe Ukataji miti, ukomeshwe Uchomaji was mitistu, ukomeshwe Uvuvi haramu, ukomeshwe</i></p>	<p>Chorus Flooding is caused by Destruction of the environment Poor air quality is caused by Destruction of the environment Stop air pollution emanating by factories Stop the use of plastics Improve on waste disposal Stop cutting and burning forests Stop wanton destruction of forests Stop illegal and unsustainable fishing practices.</p>
<p>Chorus <i>We have only a little time to save our world The world is unique, it is our home We have to love it.</i></p>	<p>Chorus We have only a little time to save our world The world is unique, it is our home We have to love it</p>

Table A2. Mazingira by Evelyn Wanjiru (Bwenieve, 2010)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p>Chorus Mazingira bora, maisha bora Tushirokiane kuitunza mazingira Ndio tupate hewa safi, maji safi, afya bora Mazingira bora ni maisha bora Tushirokiane kuitunza mazingira Ili tupate hewa safi, maji safi, afya bora</p> <p>Verse 1 Mazingira yetu, tuyatunze Mazingira yetu, tuimarishe Mazingira yetu, yaboreshe Mazingira yetu, maisha bora</p> <p>Miti tusikate Tupate mvua tele Tusitupe taka ovyo Tusafishe mazingira yetu Mazingira bora, ni maumbile yake Mola Tushirikiane, tuifadhi mazingira Mazingira, tuhifadhi mazingira yetu</p> <p>Chorus Oh mazingira × 3 Tuitunze Oh mazingira × 2 Mazingira Tuitunze Tuipambe Tuiboreshe Tuikuze Mazingira yetu ni maisha bora Afya bora</p> <p>Oh mazingira × 3 Tuitunze Oh mazingira × 2 Mazingira Tuitunze Tuipambe Tuiboreshe Tuikuze Mazingira yetu ni maisha bora Na afya bora</p> <p>Tuipambe mazingira, Tuimarishe mazingira, Tuiboreshe mazingira, mazingira Wewe kijana, mazingira, Wewe mtoto, mazingira, Linda mazingira, mazingira. Wewe baba, mazingira, Wewe mama, mazingira, Wewe mzee, mazingira. Na wewe dada, mazingira Ipambe maingira Mazingira ee</p> <p>Chorus *2</p>	<p>Chorus Good environment contributes to good life Let's work together to conserve the environment So as to get clean air, clean water and good health Good environment contributes to good life Let's work together to conserve the environment So as to get clean air, clean water and good health</p> <p>Verse 1 Our environment, lets conserve it Our environment, lets improve it Our environment, let's Our environment, great life.</p> <p>Let's not cut down trees So as not to alter rain patterns Let's dispose waste well And keep our environment clean and safe God created a safe resilient environment Let's come together, to conserve the environment The environment, let's conserve our environment</p> <p>Chorus Oh the environment × 3 Let's take care of it Oh the environment × 2 The environment Let's take care of it Let's improve it Let's make it better Let's nurture it Our environment contributes to better life Good health.</p> <p>Oh the environment × 3 Let's take care of it Oh the environment × 2 The environment Let's take care of it Let's improve it Let's make it better Let's nurture it Our environment contributes to better life And good health.</p> <p>Let's beautify the environment, Let's improve the environment, Let's better the environment, environment. To the youth, the environment, To the young child, the environment, Protect the environment, the environment. To the gentlemen, the environment, To the ladies, the environment, To the elderly, the environment. And you ladies, the environment Conserve the environment The environment</p> <p>Chorus *2</p>

Table A3. Mazingira Yetu by Larry Dwayne (Mazingira, 2020)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p><i>Tusipoziba ufaa tutajenga ukuta Tutunze mazingira Na masaa ndio sasa, We got to protect our environment, The future generations will judge us By our actions today. Tusipoziba ufaa tutajenga ukuta Tutunze mazingira Na masaa ndio sasa, We got to protect our environment, The future generations will judge us By our actions today.</i></p>	<p>If we don't seal the crack We'll end up building a whole wall Let's protect the environment The time is now We got to protect our environment, The future generations will judge us By our actions today. If we don't seal the crack We'll end up building a whole wall Let's protect the environment The time is now We got to protect our environment, The future generations will judge us By our actions today.</p>
<p><i>Rivers cannot take it no more, no no no The reason being, zina-choke From all the plastic and waste material Being disposed Take a trip down Nairobi River I promise there is nothing to smile about Nothing to smile about All you see is pampers and condoms Floating around Blocking the flow of water Fish zinashindwa tulifanya nini to deserve this Tourists wanadai There is really nothing to see here We are careless Tu na care less for the rivers That came off from earth Give us water, plus it's a natural resource Tuchunge our resources The Source is God who put us in charge So let us take charge, let us take charge.</i></p>	<p>The rivers cannot take it no more, no no no, The reason being, they are choking, From all the plastic and waste material, Being disposed Take a trip down Nairobi River I promise there is nothing to smile about Nothing to smile about All you see is pampers and condoms Floating around Blocking the flow of water Fish are wondering What did they do to deserve this? Tourists believe There is really nothing to see here We are careless We care less for the rivers That came off from earth Give us water, plus it's a natural resource Let's protect our resources The Source is God who put us in charge So let us take charge, let us take charge.</p>
<p>Chorus <i>Cause if we have clean rivers Then tukona clean lakes When we have clean lakes Then we have more fish Then tukona more food Feeding up the nation Everything is all good Na mimi kama Larry Duane I will play my part to clean hizi rive To heal the scars Ka Wangari Maathai I will die for this Big up to kila msee anacheza kama yeye Making sure innovations Don't destroy our earth Now the slums are going green Mazingira yetu, ayaya hewa safi, Haya hewa safi</i></p>	<p>Chorus Cause if we have clean rivers Then we have clean lakes When we have clean lakes Then we have more fish Then we have more food Feeding up the nation, Everything is all good And I, Larry Duane I will play my part to clean these rivers To heal the scars Like Wangari Maathai I will die for this Congratulations to all who are doing a good job Making sure innovations Don't destroy our earth Now the slums are going green Mazingira yetu, wow, clean air, Indeed, clean air.</p>

(Continued)

Table A3. (Continued)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p>Chorus And Kenyans, Our rivers are in a bad deplorable state, pathetic, Waste is disposed everywhere, quite bad, Waste and plastic are presently the fish, We really need to do something To change this Take responsibility, be responsible, Reuse, reduce, recycle, Stop turning our forests into dumping sites, Indeed, it's a bad sight, We need to take action now, Otherwise all will be completely messed up, Just imagine your child asking, "What is a river?" What will your answer be? What will you answer if he/she asks you? "What happened to Lake Victoria?" No no no Indeed, it is crazy We really need to change this. We really need to change this now I said we really need to change this now Change this now (echo)</p>	<p>Chorus And Kenyans, Our rivers are in a bad deplorable state, pathetic, Waste is disposed everywhere, quite bad, Waste and plastic are presently the fish, We really need to do something To change this Take responsibility, be responsible, Reuse, reduce, recycle, Stop turning our forests into dumping sites, Indeed, it's a bad sight, We need to take action now, Otherwise all will be completely messed up, Just imagine your child asking, "What is a river?" What will your answer be? What will you answer if he/she asks you? "What happened to Lake Victoria?" No no no Indeed, it is crazy We really need to change this. We really need to change this now I said we really need to change this now Change this now (echo)</p>

Table A4. Mazingira by Beka Flavour (Beka, 2018)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p>Kuyatunza mazingira Ni wajibu Wa kila mtanzania Tena bila kufosiwa Manyumbani tunapoishi Wenywe tuelemishane Kuifadhi mazingira Vyanzo vya maji tuvilinde Na tuviheshimu Tuvitunze tuvipende Hivyo ni vitu muhimu Na baharini tusiende kutupa takataka Tuwache samaki waringe Hio ni nyumba yao ya maisha Wavuvi pia tujifunzee kuwacha uvuvi haramu Mabomo ya nini kwenye maji Kama mna vita na vietnamu? Na viwandani chombe chonde Moshi huharibu mazingira Na maji taka vile vile Si mazuri kwetu sie binadamu</p> <p>Tutapiga hatua tukiungana Kuyatunza mazingira Afya zetu ziwe salama salimini Hatua, baba na mama Wazee kwa vijana Tuhifadhi mazingira, muhimu sana</p>	<p>Conservation of the environment That's the responsibility Of each Tanzanian citizen Without being compelled/forced In our homes, where we stay/live Let's inform each other About conservation of the environment Let's conserve our water sources And respect them Let's conserve and them These are vital resources Let's not dispose waste into water bodies Let's allow the fish To enjoy their homes Fishermen, lets strive to avoid illegal fishing Why use explosives (dynamites) in water As if its Vietnam war? And factories spew fumes That affect air quality and the environment Likewise, discharge of raw effluence Harms us humans.</p> <p>We will make great strides collectively If we conserve the environment Our health will improve Collective action, ladies and gentlemen Old and young It's imperative that we conserve the environment.</p>

(Continued)

Song in Kiswahili	English Transcription
<p>Chorus <i>Tusikubali tusikubali × 2</i> <i>Nchi yetu Tanzania</i> <i>Tusikubali tusikubali × 2</i> <i>Mazingira yawe machafu</i> <i>Tusikubali tusikubali × 2</i> <i>Nchi yetu Tanzania</i> <i>Tusikubali tusikubali × 2</i> <i>Mazingira yawe machafu</i></p> <p><i>Mimi nikulinde wewe</i> <i>Uyatunze mazingira</i> <i>Wewe unifunze mimi</i> <i>Kuhifadhi mazingira</i> <i>Ofisini na barabarani,</i> <i>Tuyatunze mazingira</i></p> <p><i>Mitaani na mashuleni</i> <i>Tuyatunze mazingira</i> <i>Makopo ya maji yenyewe uchafu</i> <i>Mifuko pia yenyewe uchafu</i> <i>Vikitumiwa na kutupwa</i> <i>Yachafua mazingira</i> <i>Kukata miti</i> <i>Pia ni uchafu</i> <i>Kuchoma misitu</i> <i>Ovyo ni uchafu</i> <i>Twapaswa kubadilika</i> <i>Mi na we.</i></p> <p><i>Tutapiga hatua</i> <i>Tukiungana kusafisha mazingira</i> <i>Afya zetu zile salama salimini</i> <i>Hatua baba na mama</i> <i>Wazee kwa vijana</i> <i>Tuhifadhi mazingira, muhimu sana</i></p> <p>Chorus <i>Tusikubali kuchafua mazingira yetu</i> <i>We na mimi</i> <i>Tuyapende wenyewe</i> <i>Tuwache kupikia mika</i> <i>Tutumie mikati zingine</i> <i>Mistitu isije kuisha Tanzanina</i> <i>Ukame tutakaribisha</i> <i>Na viumbe wote tutateseka</i> <i>Na tena tunaweza kufaa.</i></p> <p><i>Tusikubali *4, mazingira yawe machafu.</i></p>	<p>Chorus Let's not allow nor entertain × 2 Our country Tanzania Let's not allow nor entertain × 2 A dirty environment Let's not allow nor entertain × 2 Our country Tanzania Let's not allow nor entertain × 2 A dirty environment</p> <p>I'll protect you Let's preserve the environment You teach me To conserve the environment At work and on the streets Let's preserve the environment In the community and in school Let's preserve the environment</p> <p>Mugs of water are dirty Plastic bags also are dirty When used and poorly disposed Soil the environment Unwarranted tree felling Also destroys the environment Burning/degradation of forests Harms the environment too We all need to change our behaviour You and I.</p> <p>We will make great strides collectively If we conserve the environment Our health will improve Collective action, ladies and gentlemen Old and young It's imperative that we conserve the environment.</p> <p>Chorus Let's not dirty (degrade) our environment You and I Must appreciate it Let's not use charcoal for cooking Let's opt for alternative energy sources To avoid depleting Tanzanian's forests Lest we cause droughts At the expense of other living organisms And ultimately, lead to our deaths.</p> <p>Let's not allow *4, a dirty environment.</p>