

**Theatre for Development as a  
Participatory Development Process in Uganda: A Critical  
Analysis of Contemporary Practices**

Submitted by Keneth Bamuturaki to the University of Exeter  
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## **Abstract**

In Uganda, relative to its neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, the practice of Theatre for Development (henceforth TfD) has been considered quite problematic. Within the arts fraternity in Uganda, there have been critics who hold that TfD exists and is practiced in Uganda on one hand, while on the other there are those who argue that TfD does not exist as a distinct form of practice in Uganda. Those who dispute the existence of TfD in Uganda say that TfD is just a commercial label coined by people who want to take advantage of the large amounts of money from donors. These rivalling critical positions compelled me to postulate that TfD practice in Uganda could be embroiled in neoliberal tendencies where the funding factor shapes the nature of practice.

Consequently, this thesis sets out to examine the nature of TfD practice in Uganda keeping in focus the basic principles that underpin its practice such as participation, giving voice, community ownership, dialogue, time and sustainability as the critical framework. Alongside these principles, the thesis kept in view the forces or processes which influence the TfD process such as postcolonialism/, power related dynamics, the politics of funding and global capitalism among others. The thesis focused on analysing how the above principles and forces have played out in projects by local and international practitioners in Uganda. It also made an effort to reflect on the nature of TfD practice in Uganda by drawing from my own practical experiences in a child rights TfD project.

Looking at the work by local practitioners such as IATM, and Rafiki Theatre Company, this thesis discovered that TfD practice in Uganda has been hindered by the high-handed role of international development funders who determine the issues which the projects address. Through the work of international practitioners such as Jane Plastow and Katie McQuaid, it was however, discovered that implementing the ideal TfD process espousing the empowerment participation or the bottom up model in Uganda is not completely difficult to achieve. Their work offered a fundamental challenge to local practices in that the facilitators made a good effort to observe closely the core principles of effective practice such as participation, giving voice, balancing the dynamics of power

and sustainability, something local practitioners need to emulate. However, the discussion in the thesis indicates that the work by international practitioners was not devoid of the influence of the forces that normally threaten effective practice such as the facilitator-participant power dynamics, issues related to project funding and postcolonial and neo-colonial inclinations.

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## **Chapter One:**

### **General introduction**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This thesis critically examines Theatre for Development (TfD) practice in Uganda from 2000 to 2015. TfD is conceived as a practice that adopts a participatory development approach. The participatory nature of TfD has been highlighted by numerous scholars. For instance, Marcia Pompeo Nogueira, a Brazilian theatre scholar, considers TfD to be 'a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more dialogical process, where theatre is practiced with the people or by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns and encouraging them to voice and solve their own problems' (2002: 04). In the same way, Frances Harding, a scholar in African theatre at the London School of Oriental and African studies, posits that:

Theatre for Development is a practice which enables communities, as stake holders in development, to participate by outlining their fears, needs and aspirations. The process defines a new system in which the voices of development beneficiaries speak. This is important as there is increasing awareness of the need to hear the voices of those whom development affects and to listen to their fears and hopes (1997: 38).

Juma Adamu Bakari, another scholar from Tanzania emphasizes the participatory nature of TfD by distinguishing it from mainstream conventional theatre practice. He posits that:

TfD differs in a number of ways from the mysterious conventional bourgeois theatre of audience performer separation. Conventional theatre is mysterious in that it puts more emphasis on product than process. This product is not to be seen by the audience until it is well polished. As such the entire process of production is hidden from the public. With the former, the attempt is to place the people at the centre for their own development, in terms of deciding what to do and how (1998: 117).

TfD is a process that adopts an inside-out or development from within, endogenous or bottom-up approach as opposed to outside-in or development from without, exogenous or top-down approach (Chinyowa, 2009: 02; Epskamp, 1989: 11; Mangeni, 2007: 31). In the postcolonial developing world and Africa in particular TfD developed as a practice used in non-formal education and development support

programmes (Epskamp, 2006: 02). Writing about the history of the development of TfD in the context of non-formal education, Zakes Mda (1993) identified three levels or models of practice namely agitprop, participatory theatre and theatre for conscientisation. Agitprop describes 'not only those plays that have a political content, but all plays used as development communication that are message-oriented and exhortatory, rather than focusing on a process of community analysis and community decision making'(Mda, 1993: 49-50). Participatory theatre is produced by the people for the people with spectators. Participation is organised on cue without grassroots control. Awareness is raised from inside but conscientisation is limited by lack of grassroots determination of the process (Mda, 1993: 50). Theatre for conscientisation is produced by the people for the people without spectators. Consciousness is raised from inside as a process of group or collective analysis of social reality. There is continuing dialogue which may lead to long term collective action and participation and control increases as catalysts pull out and as the spectator becomes a dramatic actor and eventually a social actor (Mda, 1993: 50). Musa notes that 'this is a format where the people are involved in developing and staging the play. There is maximum collective participation, with all members of the community included in the cast in some form' (1998: 136).

Effective TfD practice is a democratic process in which the exercise of power is balanced between professional theatre practitioners and members of a community seeking change. The aim of such a process is to create a safe space for dialogue so that community members may collectively voice and own the process of transforming their situation.

This research was motivated by my desire to learn more about effective TfD practice in Uganda and to position myself in this field as a practice-based researcher. In 2006 and 2007, my formative years as a postgraduate student in applied theatre research at Makerere University, I was dismayed to learn that there were mixed feelings about the nature and extent of TfD practice in Uganda. While some observers were optimistic about TfD in Uganda, there were people in the Ugandan arts fraternity who argued that it was not yet well established as a form of practice. This kind of feeling was explicit at a memorial lecture organized in 2006 in honour of Rose Mbowa, the precursor of TfD practice in Uganda. At this memorial lecture, the keynote speaker,



Jessica Kaahwa gave a talk on the subject: *TfD in Uganda: A Myth or Reality?* In her presentation, Kaahwa argued that as a strategy informed by the participatory concepts of Freire and Boal, TfD was a practice capable of effectively enrolling men and women so that they can work out their own development. The paper raised several unanswered questions on the nature, purpose and successes of TfD practice in Uganda. For example, after the presentation one was left wondering about the extent to which TfD practice in Uganda was rooted in liberatory theory, and the possibility and sustainability of an effective TfD practice in Uganda. Some discussions before and after the lecture indicated that a void surrounded what really constituted TfD in Uganda and how it is practiced. My memory of the informal discussions triggered by this lecture compelled me to consider research on the nature of TfD practice in Uganda.

In 2009, I developed a desire to commence my PhD studies with a view of doing research in the area of TfD. I approached Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare, a senior member of academic staff at the then Department of Music, Dance and Drama of Makerere University, to discuss my intentions. Ntangaare had been one of the internal examiners for my MA thesis on *Participatory Theatre as a Tool for Political Empowerment in Uganda* and had known about my interest in TfD. I sought to register for the PhD programme at Makerere University and I was considering her to be my supervisor. Her response to my request was frank. She said, 'I do not believe in the whole concept of TfD in Uganda. I do not even believe that there exists TfD practice in Uganda. Maybe the practice exists in Kenya and Tanzania' (Personal communication, 2009). This response indicated that, although, over the years, there had been a number of projects in Uganda purported to be TfD, Ntangaare did not agree that these projects fitted the description of what TfD practice entails.

I made a further effort to learn more about TfD practice in Uganda but this was fruitless because of scant literature on the subject. Practitioners such as Rose Mbow, Eckhard Breiting, Jessica Kaahwa, and Patrick Mangeni had been engaged in the field, but their publications were not readily available in all the libraries at Makerere University. In fact, the only accessible publication about TfD practice in Uganda was a book chapter by Jessica Kaahwa *et al* (2000) on *Theatre for Development Strategies*. This work documented the important role TfD had played in the rehabilitation of Uganda

after 20 years of political turmoil, but had not been clear about the theory underpinning effective TfD practice.

Considering the apparent void that surrounded the practice, I postulated that TfD practice in Uganda had been shaped by forces in the socio-cultural, political and economic environment; especially the influence of postcoloniality and globalization. Such a hypothesis seemed to be true given that TfD is indeed one of the postcolonial movements that emerged in the 1970s as a response to problems of living that confronted the postcolonial developing world. It is a movement which emerged in response to the widespread failure of neo-liberal and economic models of development that were being promoted by the Global North to develop the Global South. Consequently, in order to understand the nature of TfD practice in Uganda, I noted that there was a need to explore its postcolonial framework and how this shaped TfD's goal of democratizing the theatre space to engender participation, dialogue and ownership. This would be in line with Byam's view that 'with a clear understanding of postcolonialism, we can discern the critical foundations of popular theatre and how the relationship between art and society, guided by power, has given it new meaning in Africa' (1999: 01). It would also be consistent with Richard Kagolobya's view that, 'a reader, student and researcher of post-independence cultural phenomena needs to understand post-colonial theory in order to come to terms with the post-colonial cultural labyrinths' (2011: 103). I was also aware that since TfD was a postcolonial phenomenon, it needed to be understood in the context of related processes such as globalization with all its cultural, economic and political manifestations. Thinking about globalization and its threefold manifestation, I realized that TfD was mostly a donor-funded practice where local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) played a pivotal role. In fact, all the case studies under examination in this study, such as, the International Anti-Corruption Theatre Movement (IATM), Rafiki Theatre Company and the Walukuba TfD project, were externally funded by government bodies and international donor agencies.

In Chapter Three, I discuss the forces which shape the nature of practice in TfD. Analyzing the concept of postcolonialism, I argue that while many countries in the developing South, including Uganda, achieved independence, they are still subject to

subtle forms of influence from the powerful countries of the North; a condition described as neocolonialism. As for globalization, I note that it is the Global South which is mostly influenced by cultural, political and economic flows from the Global North. Finally, in Chapter Three, I observe that postcolonialism and globalization are power-laden processes which are likely to affect the balance of power or the democratic process expected in TfD practice.

Consequently, the aim of this study is to examine the nature of TfD practice in Uganda with a view of analyzing the extent to which it had been deployed as a tool for fostering dialogue, participation and ownership of development issues by the community. The study investigates the macro-forces shaping the practice, such as postcolonialism and globalization, and analyses the role played by development capital in shaping the TfD process. It is argued that while sponsorship of TfD practice in Uganda may produce performances of power which disrupt or distort effective TfD processes, it is unlikely for a practitioner to successfully execute a TfD project without funding.

In terms of the methodology, this study adopts a qualitative multi-case study research design in which I analyse the practices of other practitioners and my own effort at TfD practice in order to discuss the nature of TfD practice in Uganda and the challenges practitioners face in facilitating a bottom-up process. Yin (2009) asserts that this approach can be used in many situations to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organizational, social, political and related phenomena. He states that:

In all these situations, the distinctive need for case studies arises out of the desire to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life styles, small group behaviour, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries (Yin, 2009: 04).

The case study design was found to be most appropriate to this study because of its ability to foster a close investigation of social and cultural phenomena such as TfD. Using the case study design, this study examined the nature of TfD practice in Uganda by closely looking at the forces at play in various TfD practices and processes. Within

the case study research design, I used interviews, observation studies, study of documents and email correspondences to gather the data.

### **1.1 Research Problem and Research Questions**

Relative to the other east African countries, Uganda seems to lag behind in terms of effective TfD practice. The practice in Uganda seems to lack vitality and a clear focus with sporadic projects sponsored by NGOs and international organisations. In Uganda, there are divergent outlooks on TfD practice. Some scholars and practitioners, such as Jessica Kaahwa, Patrick Mangeni and Richard Kagolobya, argue that TfD exists. Conversely, critics such as Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare and Alex Mukulu argue that TfD does not exist in Uganda as an independent form of practice. They assert that TfD is a label used by theatre practitioners aiming to attract funding from development funders, describing the practice as 'donor-funded theatre'(Ntangaare, 2011). These divided critical positions raise a question concerning the practice of TfD in Uganda: is TfD in Uganda entirely shaped by the politics of international development funding? Moreover, what kind of TfD is being practiced in Uganda? Is it neo-colonial agitprop or does it adopt a conscientisation approach? This question begets multiple specific questions which will guide the discussion on the nature of TfD practice in Uganda: 1. To what extent is TfD practice in Uganda based on the core principles of practice? 2. Whose voices are privileged in TfD practice in Uganda? 3. Who determines the issues which TfD addresses? 4. What are the forces informing contemporary Ugandan TfD practice? 5. To what extent are contemporary practitioners mindful of balancing power related dynamics between themselves and the communities and between themselves and the funders?

### **1.2 Uganda: Situating the study in Political Contexts**

Uganda is located in the Eastern region of Africa and is a founding member of the former East African Federation, now called the East African Community. It shares borders with Southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Kenya and Tanzania. Uganda achieved independence from Britain in 1962. Colonization forced together, in an unstable 'union', a number of different, self-governing, ancient kingdoms and chiefdoms including the Kingdom of Buganda, the Kingdoms of Bunyoro and Tooro

and the Kingdom of Ankole. What became the post-colonial nation of Uganda is thus made up of different ethnic groups and tribes with numerous languages and dialects. Post-independence Uganda has struggled to maintain this forced (colonial) unity of what were formerly sovereign, self-governing territories, and to establish a/one national language.

The development of TfD practice in Uganda has been affected by a slow and questionable process of democratisation. According to Musa, people in communities where TfD operates 'must have the freedom to mobilize themselves into active groups and hold meetings without posing a threat to the powers that be' (Musa, 1998: 147-8). Similarly, David Kerr asserts that, 'a prerequisite for any development of popular consciousness is a modicum of democracy. People must be able to think about issues and to debate them freely. They must be free to mobilize in pursuit of their own interests' (1991: 70). Such comments bring into focus the predicament of TfD practice in countries that have experienced political dictatorships, such as post-independence Uganda. The foremost source of Uganda's political problems in the 1970s and 1980s emanated from its independence constitution negotiated at Lancaster House in the United Kingdom. The independence constitution granted full federal status to Buganda and semi-federal status to other kingdoms such as Bunyoro, Tooro and Ankole, while other tribes in the north and the eastern regions were to be governed from the centre in a unitary fashion. According to Twaddle and Hansen, this power imbalance in favour of one group keen to maximize its position of advantage, 'in part prompted the militarization of Uganda, initially mildly under Milton Obote's first presidency, then manically and uncontrollably under Idi Amin'(1998: 11).

Political turmoil provoked by constitutional crisis in 1966/1967 led to the 1971 coup d'état that installed Idi Amin's regime. Mahmood Mamdani, a renowned Ugandan historian and political scientist notes that, 'as a result of the 1971 military coup which ushered in the Idi Amin regime, the army became the supreme organ of the state' (1983: 42). All the forces of repression were centralized under the army. The inspectorate general of police was replaced by a police council whose members were army officers and the council made military training compulsory for all police officers.

Thus, Mamdani puts it, 'the distinction between the army and the police, between those supposed to guard the rulers against external threat and those supposed to maintain law and order was removed' (1983: 43).

A number of critics (Benge & Kiguli, 2000; Breitinger & Mbowe, 1994; J. A. Kaahwa, 2001, 2004; J. Kaahwa & *et al*, 2000) have argued that the culture of participation in Uganda improved with the advent of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime through its Local Council (LC) system. However, while the NRM regime has been applauded for having introduced popular democratic participation, its approach to political participation in the later years of its reign raises questions as to whether it is 'participation to empower 'citizens or 'participation to domesticate' citizens to its regime of power (Dicklich, 1998; Kidd & Byram, 1982). Susan Dicklich (1998) is critical of the nature of participation offered through the LCs in the later years of the NRM regime arguing that they promote 'a heavy top-down emphasis on political participation since directives often come from above (the district level) and are filtered through to the village rather than rising from the grassroots upwards' (1998: 151). Citing James Midgley's classification of the modes of political participation; namely, the anti-participatory mode, the manipulative mode, the incremental mode and the participatory mode, Dicklich argues that the manipulative mode can be used to describe the NRM regime (1998: 152). In the manipulative mode:

...the state supports community participation but does so for ulterior motives. Among these are a desire to use community participation for purposes of political and social control and recognition that community participation can reduce the costs of social development programmes and facilitate implementation. Co-operation may also occur because the state seeks to direct participatory aspirations through alternative mechanisms which it has established and which it regards as legitimate and satisfactory. Although the state does not oppose community involvement, it seeks to neutralise spontaneous participatory activities hoping to channel them through established mechanisms (Midgley, 1986: 41).

Furthermore, the expectation of popular participation has in the last decades of the Museveni-led NRM rule been hindered further by the fact that the regime became increasingly repressive. Lutwama notes the repressive nature of Museveni's reign thus:

His government is increasingly being associated with corruption (tribalism, nepotism and misuse of public funds), an oppressive and expensive army, a

police force and electoral commission that lacks independence from the president, suppression of political opposition, little attention to the quality of public services (especially health and education), relentless privatisation of the nation's key institutions, unfulfilled promises and above all the manipulation of people's ignorance and powerlessness in order to stay in power (2010: 50).

Political repression at the expense of popular participation in Uganda has been strongly entrenched through the militarisation of police and using parliament as a rubber stamp to enact draconian laws that stifle freedom of assembly and speech. One of the draconian laws that has been enacted is the Public Order Management Act 2011 which gives the Minister of Internal Affairs and the police sweeping powers to stop any public meeting. Clause 6(1) of the Act defines 'public meeting as a gathering, assembly, concourse, procession or demonstration of three or more persons in or on any public road as defined in the Traffic and Road Safety Act or other public place or premises wholly or partly open to the air.' Clause 7(1) stipulates that an organizer shall give notice in writing signed by the organiser or his or her agent to the Inspector General of Police of the intention to hold a public meeting, at least seven days but not more than fifteen days before the proposed date of the public meeting. One wonders how possible it is to implement a people-centred, participatory TfD process in such contexts.

### **1.3 Expounding on the Case Studies under Examination**

#### **1.3.1 Case studies involving Ugandan practitioners from 2000 to 2015**

This study first and foremost critically analyses the work done by Ugandan practitioners in organisations such as the International Anti-corruption Theatre Movement (IATM), Rafiki Theatre Company and the GIZ project in Karamoja. In analysing their work, I am interested in understanding the nature of TfD practice in Uganda relative to basic principles that underpin effective TfD practice. As such, I seek to ascertain the extent to which their work fostered participation of communities in change. I am also keen to find out whether the practitioners were aware of the politics involved in funding TfD projects. In particular, I want to know whether the practitioners were aware of the power usually exerted by funding organisations and how this affects processes of change. In doing so, I examine the impact of global capitalism on TfD practice in Uganda, the discussion of which is presented in Chapter Three of this thesis.

### **1.3.2 My Own Attempts at Practice**

In order to deepen discussion on TfD practice in Uganda, I also reflect on my own attempts at TfD practice. In this case, I focus on my own carefully planned and executed TfD project with school participants in Wakiso district in central Uganda. Analysing my own practice, I further explicate the critical dynamics of TfD practice such as the significance of participation, time and sustainability, balancing the power dynamics in a TfD process, and the necessity of mobilising the power base of the community.

### **1.3.3 International Perspectives of TfD practice in Uganda—Jane Plastow’s practice**

This study also analyses Jane Plastow’s work. Since the late 2000s, Plastow, a practitioner from University of Leeds, UK, has been engaged in TfD practice in Uganda through fieldwork and skills training. In 2015, Plastow with anthropologist Katie McQuaid, conducted an eight-month long TfD project in Walukuba sub county, Masese Division, Jinja Municipality in Eastern Uganda. The Walukuba TfD project focused on issues of environmental sustainability. Making a departure from traditional message-based theatre designed to deliver information in a top-down manner, the project aimed to work in a non-prescriptive mode. It aimed to provide an alternative social space in which community members could share ideas, identify key social and environmental concerns, and begin to generate new multi-stakeholder partnerships. The work further aimed to challenge existing hierarchies to ensure that all community members have equal space to share their voices and ideas, regardless of age, gender education level, tribe, religion and income.

Understanding contemporary Ugandan TfD practice requires a clear analysis of how Plastow’s work has been influenced by notions of globalisation, the politics of funding and facilitator-community power dynamics. I seek to explore how Plastow implemented a participatory, bottom-up process of TfD, and what factors played against implementation of the desired TfD process.

With permission from Plastow, I observed the Walukuba project closely for a period of six consecutive weeks. I have made an effort to discuss how the TfD process may be shaped by the dynamics of power sometimes beyond the control of the practitioner.



As a way of exploring further the issues discussed in the chapter on contemporary Ugandan practice (by indigenous practitioners), the subsequent chapters on Plastow's practice query whether it is easier for a practitioner to come from abroad to successfully implement a bottom-up TfD process.

#### **1.4.0 Methods of Data Collection**

##### **1.4.1 Interviews**

Interviews were used to obtain information from sources such as the TfD practitioners, Uganda theatre academics and members of the communities who participated in the TfD projects. The interviews were based on open questions. As Denscombe notes, 'it would be tempting fate to proceed to an interview without having devoted considerable time thinking through the key points that warrant attention' (2000:118). For this reason, the researcher prepared an interview guide or schedule which was a set of questions focusing on the topic at hand, the aim of the study and the key research questions.

Although I had some pre-planned questions to ask during the interview, I allowed questions to flow naturally, based on information provided by the respondent. In fact, it is the flow of the conversation that dictated the questions asked and those omitted, as well as the order of the questions. I ensured that the interview was conversational, but at the same time maintained my primary role as a listener. The interviews were largely one to one involving a meeting between the researcher and one respondent. On one occasion, I used the focus group discussion technique in which I interviewed a group of Makerere university students who had participated in the final year TfD practical examination.

##### **1.4.2 Observation Studies**

Observation of TfD processes brought to the study a much needed ethnographic dimension enabling the researcher to have direct experience of TfD practice in Uganda. Observation studies took the form of both participant observation and non-participant observation. The participant observation technique was used where I participated in practical TfD projects either planned and convened by other practitioners or planned

and implemented by myself. In the case of observation of practical projects facilitated by other practitioners, the aim was to investigate whether the practitioners adhered to the aesthetics and core principles of TfD practice.

Judith Bell advises that, 'before you begin to consider observation as one of your data collection techniques, you need first to decide what you wish to observe, what your main areas of interest are. . .' (2005: 184). In the case of this study, the observation answers queries such as: are the practitioners mindful of the need to actively engage the target community in the process? Is the TfD process developing out of the stories and passions of the people? Are the practitioners and other stakeholders involved continuing with a 'neo-colonial paradigm' (Kerr, 2009: 107), where TfD adopts message packaging? How spontaneous is the process? Non-participant observation was used where the researcher did not have the opportunity to be present during the implementation of the TfD projects. In this case, he observed recorded videos of the process.

#### **1.4.3 Study of Archival and Documentary Evidence**

Study of documents involved analysing annual impact assessment reports obtained from the archives of both IATM and Rafiki Theatre Company. The aim of studying documents was to analyse how the TfD practice relates to the aims and objectives of funding organisations in order to understand the influence of the politics of development funding and global capital on TfD practice in Uganda. The documents were also analysed to find out any hints on the procedure of implementing the TfD process.

#### **1.4.4 Email inquiries and/or correspondence**

I used this method with respondents who because of their busy schedule while in Uganda were not readily available for face-to-face interviews such as Plastow and McQuaid, facilitators of the Walukuba project. Using this method, I was able to probe their practice seeking to find out more about the decisions they made during the project and their plans for the sustainability of the project. Examples of such inquiries are presented in appendices 1 to 7.

### **1.5 A Note on Fieldwork Practice**

The fieldwork for this research was conducted in three phases that is, in 2011, 2014 and 2015. In 2011, I conducted interviews involving TfD practitioners and theatre academics in Uganda. This process however, did not yield sufficient results to critically analyse TfD practice in Uganda. Much of the data generated was dated and could not give a clear picture of contemporary TfD practices. Getting a clear picture of contemporary practices in Uganda required a close observation of ongoing TfD practices. This had not been possible in the 2011 fieldwork because it had been difficult to find any on-going practice. Contemporary TfD practitioners such as IATM and Rafiki Theatre Company were in recess, waiting for new funding. As a result, the fieldwork for this study stretches over a period of time because it took long for me to find an ongoing project which I could observe. While I waited for a project by another practitioner, I theorised and made effort to execute my own TfD project in Gganda Wakiso, in central Uganda, in 2014. The aim of conducting my own project was to help me comment on TfD practice in Uganda using my own experiences. At last, Jane Plastow, a UK based practitioner and her assistant Katie McQuaid permitted me to observe their work in the Walukuba TfD project in 2015 which forms a comparison with practices by local practitioners and my own practice.

### **1.6 The Structure of the remainder of the Thesis**

Chapter Two presents a broader African perspective on TfD. It highlights how TfD has evolved on the continent highlighting the Kamiriithu project in Kenya as exemplary TfD practice. The chapter then moves to discuss the development of TfD in Uganda in its nascent stages. Chapter Three presents the conceptual and theoretical framework of the thesis through literature review. In the first part, the thesis discusses the core principles of TfD such as participation, ownership, participatory research, time and/or sustainability. There is an effort to present modern critiques of participation in development practice to provide a framework for interrogating the TfD practice in Uganda. Having discussed the core principles, the chapter moves to analyse the forces that influence TfD practice such as /postcolonialism and globalisation . It is the concepts and processes discussed in this chapter which serve as the critical framework for analysing the practice in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter Four looks at work by local practitioners such as IATM, Rafiki Theatre Company and GIZ projects. It analyses the nature of practice relative to the principles that underpin effective TfD practice and the forces that have shaped the work. Here, the politics of global capital is singled out as a key factor shaping the nature of practice.

Having analyzed the practices by local practitioners in Uganda in Chapter Four, Chapters Five and Six focus on my own practical experience. Whereas Chapter Four demonstrates that the power of international capital may adversely impact on the TfD process, it also acknowledges that funding is a crucial aspect of the sustainability of the TfD process. By looking at my own practice in Chapters Five and Six, I discuss how lack of funding for my Child Rights TfD project in Wakiso, Uganda affected my implementation of the process.

The Chapters Seven to Nine focus on the Walukuba TfD project which was facilitated by international practitioners, Plastow and McQuaid in Jinja district, Eastern Uganda. The chapters extend the discussion on the issues such as the TfD process, time, funding and power developed in Chapter Four. In contrast with Chapter Four where the politics of funding negatively shape the TfD process, Chapters Seven and Nine demonstrate that the availability of funding can enable a skillful facilitator to positively facilitate the implementation of a TfD process. This is evidenced by the fact that Plastow and McQuaid used the funding obtained from the UK based Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC Care For the Future fund ) to implement a participatory, dialogical and sustained TfD project at Walukuba instead of using the money to buy the participants into the project.

Chapter Seven analyses the nature of practice illustrating how their initial engagement with the community was an effective way of doing participatory research in TfD. Chapter Eight uses the Walukuba experience to demonstrate the fact that if a TfD workshop is structured well to engage the participants in the whole process, the experience can be highly transformative for the participating community.

Chapter Nine looks at the notions of power, time and sustainability. I have interpreted the issues of power quite broadly. First, in the Walukuba project, the issue was quite critical given Plastow's and McQuaid's assumed positions of power as white practitioners and highly educated women. Their expectations of the community had an

impact on the facilitator-participant power dynamics. Other observations of power concerned the issue of finances and how the facilitators dealt with it to keep the operations of power in balance. The concept of power in the chapter is also interpreted in terms of engaging those who have the power to decide and make things be—politicians and civil leaders. Finally, the chapter considers the significance of the time factor in the TfD project, looking at how it fostered effective community engagement in a community steeped in historical, cultural and patriarchal oppression. The chapter also demonstrates that investing ample time in a TfD project is crucial in ensuring the possibility that the work will continue after the departure of the external facilitators.

Chapter Ten concludes the study providing recommendations for further practice-based research.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Development of TfD Practice in Africa and Uganda**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, I present the development of TfD practice in Africa, and subsequently in Uganda, in order to clarify the historical and geographical contexts for analysing contemporary TfD practice in Uganda. I begin by explaining the evolution of the concept of TfD and presenting the Kamiriithu TfD project as a typical example of effective practice. I then discuss how TfD developed in Uganda by analysing a few examples of TfD work in its nascent stages.

#### **2.1 The Evolution of the Concept of TfD**

The levels or models of TfD practice defined in the previous chapter have existed against the backdrop of the shifting conceptualisations in development practice. They are vital aspects of the historical and conceptual development of TfD. In effect, Musa argues that 'preference for a particular approach of Theatre for Development over another is often a function of the prevailing paradigm of development'(1998: 137).

In his excavation of the paradigms of theatre and development, Musa revealed that the agitprop model of practice was an offshoot of the modernisation model of development, which focuses on disseminating messages aimed at changing people's attitudes. Whereas throughout this thesis I use the term agitprop theatre to refer to message oriented, and exhortatory performances, it should be pointed out that the term has a radical legacy rooted in socialist and participatory theatre practices. According to Mda (1993), the term agitprop originated in the 1920s with the formation of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda, a section of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The function of the department was to give ideological direction to the population through all media of communication such as radio, the press, film television, theatre, literature and art.

Placing the agitprop theatre in the context of modernisation, Musa argues that:

Whenever theatre is employed within the framework of modernisation, it is mostly the agitation and propaganda (agitprop) approach and more often than not, the intention is to control and manipulate rather than promote dialogue. This exhortational communication style reflects the emphasis on mass mobilisation rather conscientisation. [. . .] Mass mobilisation as a medium of communication suggests that the leadership sets the agenda, owns the project and dictates the strategy. Communication or more appropriately information, is geared toward selling the vision of the ruling elite and recruiting the support of the masses for a set task (1998: 138).

The concept of modernisation above needs further exposition. The modernisation approach, also called the 'dominant paradigm'(Melkote & Steeves, 2001), is a colonial and postcolonial notion of development that emerged in the 1950s and 60s and peaked in the 1970s. According to Rogers Everett, this paradigm emphasised 'economic growth as indexed by a nation's gross national product and per capita income; reliance on industrial technology, respect for exogenous innovation and expert initiative and a blame-the-victim attitude toward less developed societies' (1962: 57). Jacob Srampickal in his book on TfD in the Indian subcontinent titled, *Voice to the Voiceless*, links the modernisation/dominant paradigm with the notion of cultural colonialism asserting that the basic foundation of modernisation is:

. . . the way in which the western world was transformed from a traditional to a modern society, that is, from an agrarian to an industrial civilization, with advances in science and technology and a rise in the standard of living of people. So development implied the bridging of the gap between the rich and the poor nations by means of an imitative process, in which the less developed countries gradually assumed the qualities of the industrialised nations. In practice, modernization envisages a gradual transition from tradition to modernity and considers the stage achieved by the industrialised countries as the ideal. In its more simplistic form the modernization paradigm served as a development ideology that rationalised cultural colonialism (1994: 03).

The notion of cultural imperialism in Srampickal's last point highlights the fact that modernisation was characterized by the need to export the development cultures of the western developed economies to the underdeveloped nations in the Global South whose cultures are considered to be impediments to development. Richard Kagolobya comments on the imperialist stance of development in the modernisation paradigm and argues that, 'development in economic and planning parlance in developing countries has been looked at as systematic transformation of traditional or indigenous societies

into modern ones, characterized by advanced technology, material prosperity, stability and other attributes of western societies' (2010: 213).

According to Melkote and Steeves (2001: 72), modernisation operates at the macro level. This means that the approach is hierarchical and operates on a large scale, focusing on expansive geographical areas, usually the whole nation. Expounding on this characteristic of modernisation, Melkote and Steeves cite Rodger (1976) and note that:

Problems (are) identified and solutions offered at higher levels of government. Information and other inputs are then channeled down to local communities. In the modernisation approach to development, participatory or autonomous development by local communities (is) considered slow, inefficient, and more often than not unlikely (2001: 72).

Consequently, in terms of the approaches to facilitating communication for development, the dominant or modernisation paradigm of development is based on a 'linear', transmission model of communication where information passes from sender to receiver (Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 30; Rajasunderam, 1996: 05). It relies both on a communication model based on persuasion, information transmission, and on a development model based on increasing economic activity and changes in values and attitudes (Bessette, 1996: 09). The process of development in the modernisation paradigm is characterized by mass media which focuses on the transmission of innovation and persuasion of people, a process also termed as the 'diffusion of innovations' (Melkote and Steeves, 2001: 104; Cooper, *et al*, 2010).

As the word suggests, diffusion of innovations refers to a method of implementing development where information relating to new innovations is persuasively channelled to communities so that they adopt these innovations and improve their development practices. It involves the movement of innovations from people who consider themselves to be knowledgeable about development to the local communities who are deemed less knowledgeable.

The participatory theatre approach developed as a consequence of the emergence of new thinking in development practice which sought to address the weaknesses of the modernisation approach (Musa, 1998: 138-139). This resulted in the advent of the self-reliance paradigm of development practice. One of the exponents of the self-reliance paradigm was Louis Ramiro Beltran who conceived of national development as:



a directed and widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change, geared toward producing substantial changes in the economy, technology, ecology and overall structure of a country so that the moral and material advancement of its population can be obtained within conditions of generalised equality, dignity, justice and liberty (cited in Musa, 1998: 138).

Writing about the conceptual development of TfD, Musa notes that ‘the self-reliance model provided a different perspective for looking at the nature of development, development communication and the role popular theatre can play in development’ (1998: 138). The approach emphasises grassroots participation in the development process which naturally demands a two-way flow of information and a dialogic model of communication where both communicators are active speakers and listeners interchangeably.

The theatre for conscientisation approach was developed in the context of a more radical paradigm of development—the ‘culturalist’ paradigm which has variously been referred to as the democratic model, the conscientisation model and ecological model (Musa, 1998: 139). This paradigm takes the propositions of participatory development in the self-reliance model a step further and is concerned with the emancipation of people from all forms of dependence. It is distinguished from other paradigms of development in that it focuses on the liberation and empowerment of each person in the community (Musa, 1998: 139).

The main theoretical engine to the development of the theatre for conscientisation model has been the work of Paulo Freire. Pivotal to Freire’s influence on the development of the theatre for conscientisation model of TfD has been the notion of problem-posing education. Problem-posing education means that learning becomes an interactive process in which the identified community and the practitioner engage in naming the world in dialogue with one another. In Freire’s words, ‘if it is in speaking their word that people, by naming their world transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings’ (1970: 69). In another work with Shor, Freire emphasises the significance of dialogue and argues that ‘the pursuit of humanisation cannot be an isolated individualistic activity’ (1987: 109).

In Freire’s pedagogy, learning becomes an undertaking with the people of the community by engaging in a collective and critical process of identifying the social and

historical realities underpinning the oppression of the people, a process Freire describes as ‘thematic investigation’(Freire, 1970, 1972). This is the opposite of the banking concept of education where the scope of action allowed to students extends only as far as receiving, filling and storing the deposits which denies the students (the members of the community in the case of TfD) of critical inquiry, creative invention of knowledge and of being human (Freire, 1970: 53).

This would involve implementing a dialogical process of learning with the leaders of the revolution, that is, the development practitioners are challenged to enter the cultural context of a large community with respect to the latter’s potential to work out their own strategies for change. In this way, education or development work becomes a cultural synthesis (Freire, 1970: 162-164) where the actors do not come to ‘teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn with the people, about the people’s world’ (Freire, 2009: 311).

While it is true that Freire’s work was not aimed at articulating a theatre based theory, many scholars in the field of TfD (such as Tim Prentki, 1998, 2006a: 04; Bott, 2007: 30; Byam, 1999; Fair, 2000: 180) have broadly acknowledged that his work helped Boal to develop a participatory theatre paradigm which has been widely used in theatre for conscientisation processes. Commenting on the theoretical link between Freire and Boal’s work, Prentki observes that:

Freire was the inspiration for the theatrical theory and practice of Augusto Boal, who acknowledges the debt in the title of the book which marks the formal beginnings of the TfD movement, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Boal 1978), drawing directly upon Freire’s (1972) own publication, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2006).

Writing about the link between Boal’s work and Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Prentki adds that:

In particular, it is his (Boal’s) theory of forum theatre which has come to embody Freire’s concept of “naming the world”—the constant struggle between the powerful who seek to name the world for the rest of us in the interest of an unjust status quo and the resistance of the powerless who fight to claim the right to assert the validity of their own lived experience (2006: 04).

Considering the models of practice outlined above, it is the theatre for conscientisation that best describes effective practice in TfD.

The shift in the conceptualisation of the application of theatre, elaborated above, was prompted by the failure to achieve the desired outcome of development as theorised in the modernisation approach. According to Bessette, one of the leading scholars in participatory development processes, 'development practitioners started questioning the modernization model because they saw that communication did not lead to development, and observed that in fact, the countries of the South appeared to be sliding further and further into poverty, low salaries, and poor living conditions' (1996: 10).

The criticism against the dominant paradigm was premised on the argument that the transfer of products, ideas and technology from the North cannot be considered legitimate development. For example, J. Crush was critical of the unidirectional flow of information arguing that, 'the stage theory of development proposed by Rostow and the linear bias of social change strait jacketed objectives of development into frozen states assumed to share common characteristics and the objects of development (the people) are stripped of their history [...] (1995: 09).

At the heart of the new thinking in development practice was a pressing need to respect the culture and history of the target communities. In Kees Epskamp's words, 'there was a shift from viewing culture as a factor of resistance, a formidable opponent to change as it was in the 1950s, to viewing it as an essential ingredient of development' (2006: 29). A general feeling emerged, that 'because the way of life of a community is largely determined by cultural factors, it is not possible to intervene in its development without taking the cultural beliefs and practices of the community into account' (Gould, 2001: 71). Breitinger describes this trend as 'development culturalism' (1994: 157) while UNESCO called it the 'cultural dimension of development' (UNESCO, 1995, 1998).

### **2. 3 The Development of Theatre for Conscientisation in Africa**

Inspired by the desire for a more people centred and bottom-up approach to theatre, the first attempt at theatre for conscientisation in Africa was the Laezda Batanani project, planned and implemented in 1974 by a team of university expatriates who were working in the Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural studies at the

University of Botswana in 1974. The team of University staff, which included Ross Kidd, Martin Byram, Frank Younman and Adrian Kohler, aimed at finding more participatory processes of engaging communities in finding solutions to their problems. The team sought to experiment with the critical pedagogy theories of Paulo Freire, who by that time had been working in Africa in Guinea Bissau.

The Botswana experience became a source of inspiration for practitioners to begin similar projects in various countries such as Zambia, Nigeria, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Swaziland (see for example, Boeren, 1992: 48) because of its seemingly successful attempt at using theatre as a participatory and dialogical tool for development. I have used the phrase 'seemingly successful' in reference to Laedza Batanani to highlight the fact that while the Laedza Batanani project aimed to implement a theatre for conscientisation process, it did not succeed in doing so. Rather as Kidd & Byram, (1982) would put it, it was a pseudo participatory process lacking in its intention to engender effective dialogue, critical investigation of issues, and consequently critical awareness. Most of the TfD endeavours in Africa that attempted to follow the Laedza Batanani model exhibited similar limitations.

On the whole, prominent scholars of African TfD namely; Okagbu (1998), Juma Adamu Bakari (1998), John Tiku Takem (2003), David Kerr (1991), Amandina Lihamba (2004) and Kennedy Chinyowa (K. C. Chinyowa, 2007c, 2011b), articulate a deeper indication of the problem of form and ideology in Africa's TfD practice highlighting key loopholes. Expressing skepticism on the effectiveness of TfD in Africa, Osita Okagbu, an African theatre scholar at Goldsmiths, University of London, whose research focuses on African and Caribbean theatres asserts that the:

...majority of the TfD programmes and practices in Africa seem not to be aiming at achieving the transformation of the theatre process into a potential context and theatre itself into a language of exploration and expression for the deprived communities...and that even when and where they are aiming to achieve this objective, they are in the main unable to do so (1998: 24).

Okagbu adds 'for many projects in Africa, the Theatre for Development approach is limiting and restrictive as it confines the theatre input to role play situations. Their philosophy of TfD in most cases is located within the domain of the agitprop mode of theatre' (1998: 25). Confining the theatre input to role play situations as observed by

Okagbu might result from the fact that TfD practitioners go to communities and engage them in temporary participation in plays, and then leave the community before initiating an effective process of making theatre, dialogue and discussion. His argument could also point to the problem of lack of continuity of TfD projects in Africa. For Okagbu, the problem of effective TfD practice in Africa relates to the development paradigm employed. He observes that, 'TfD fails in its inability and sometimes inexplicable unwillingness to work within paradigms in development communication in which real and active participation from all sides of the communication equation is the central objective and mode of practice' (Okagbu, 1998: 29). According to Kennedy Chinyowa, the problem of form and ideology is manifested in the fact that:

Most 'popular', or for that matter, 'community' theatre groups tend to take theatre to rather than make theatre with the people. The effectiveness of popular theatre has thus been overshadowed by a 'top-down' or exogenous communicative paradigm that elevates the individual artist at the expense of the target community. Popular theatre as a medium of development communication has been reduced to a 'showy spectacle' as the community can only speculate on what they will have seen as a guideline for action (2007b: 133).

Elsewhere, Chinyowa observes that 'most applied drama and theatre projects in Africa are one-off events with limited follow-up in terms of building capacity through knowledge and skills or organizing people for action' (2011: 339). The implication of one-off performances is that there is little time available to allow the process to be permeated in the community to foster community ownership. Takem, in his research on TfD and environmental education in Cameroon, argues that, 'while TfD practitioners in Africa aspire towards liberation, many projects end up domesticating, by constructing myths of development, participation and community. However, TfD committed to popular participation even in oppressive societies can apply covert strategies of subversion to contribute to social change' (2003: 231). Takem's assertion implies that while TfD practitioners in Africa have good intentions of fostering the development of communities by encouraging participation and community building, in most cases they are unable to achieve these desired intentions.

In Africa, the most outstanding experience where TfD reached the ideal form of theatre for conscientisation was the Kamiriithu popular theatre project in Kenya. The project has been lauded by many critics such as Byam (1999), Kerr (1995), Mda (1993), Mlama (1991), Bakari (1998) and Plastow (1998) as a model of an effective TfD process.

While it could be argued that the mode of the Kamiriithu project was that of a well-devised and performed play—*Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I will Marry When I Want), characteristic of the product motif—an analysis of this project aptly illustrates the theatre for conscientisation concept of TfD and an effective application of its core principles. This project is credited for having eschewed agitprop or the taking theatre to the people model, and adopting the cultural and bottom-up process of collective learning desired in theatre for conscientisation. Adopting a bottom up-approach to problem solving, efforts to find solutions to the socio-economic and political problems of the people in Kamiriithu started with the people themselves.

The hallmark of the bottom-up and cultural process of development in the Kamiriithu project was the committee system, which comprised of the local communities operating in a very democratic way with a built-in system of self-criticism, so that even the poorest, least prestigious, most inarticulate member of the community could make their view heard (Kerr, 1995: 242). Byam argues that the committee approach allowed the villagers' input at each stage, a feature that Freire defined as critical to the pursuit of liberation (1999).

Ngugi wa Thiong'o observes that 'although the overall direction of the play *Ngaahika Ndeenda* was under Kimani Gecau, the whole project became a collective community effort with peasants and workers seizing more and more initiative in revising and adding to the script, in directing the movements on the stage' (wa Thiong'o, 1981: 77). Elsewhere, wa Thiong'o elucidates on the collective participatory process of making theatre at Kamiriithu and testifies that:

The Kamiriithu practice was part of education as a process of demystifying knowledge and hence reality. People could see how the actors evolved from the time they could hardly move their legs or say their lines to a time when they could talk and move about the stage as if they were born talking those lines or moving on that stage. Some people in fact were recruited into the acting team after they had intervened to show how such and such a character should be

portrayed. The audience applauded them into continuing doing the part. Perfection was thus shown to be a process, a historical social process, but it was admired no less. On the contrary, they identified with the perfection even more because it was a product of themselves and their collective contribution. It was a heightening of themselves as a community (1986: 57).

Writing about the Kamiriithu collective experience, Kenyan scholars, Chesaina Ciarunji and Evan Mwangi note that:

Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Miiri created the plot, the peasants provided the songs and made changes to the work to suit their taste. The resulting product was a text that was revolutionary and popular, incorporating local theatre forms and treating thematic issues with which the community could identify (2004: 223).

van Erven describes the collective process described by wa Thiong'o above as an 'impromptu forum theatre' (2001: 174).

Furthermore, the bottom-up model of problem solving was enhanced by the fact that the problem solving process was deeply rooted in the culture of the people—indigenous Kenyan forms of performance, which had historically been part of the Kenyan community way of life. wa Thiong'o writes, in an emphasis of the significance of the traditional forms of performance in the popular theatre process of Kamiriithu, that in *Ngaahika Ndeenda*, they 'tried to incorporate song and dance as part of the structure and movement of actors . . . The song and dance becomes a continuation of the conversation and of the action' (1986: 45). Commenting on the bottom-up nature of the Kamiriithu project, Chinyowa observes that, 'the selection of actors remained in the hands of the community. The period of rehearsal became a time of community rebirth.' (2007: 10).

The collective process of Kamiriithu was enabled by the fact that 'the theatre facilitators and development workers, instead of acting as outsiders, assumed the status of Antonio Gramsci's 'organic intellectuals' by willingly committing 'class suicide' to become one with the community' (Chinyowa, 2007: 11). In this vein, wa Thiong'o (1997) remarks that the six months he spent with the villagers were the true beginning of his education, the time during which he learnt the creative nature of the people's language.

## **2.4 The Development of TfD Practice in Uganda**

In its nascent stages, TfD practice in Uganda was a mixture of two paradigms of practice. On one hand, efforts were made to implement a practice of TfD based on the principles of effective practice and aimed at community participation and conscientisation. On the other hand, there were projects purported to be TfD but adopting a centre to periphery approach or the colonial paradigm in which information was seen to move from the theatre practitioner to the communities. In the sections below, I elaborate examples of practice under the two paradigms.

### **2.4.1 Attempts at Participatory Theatre Processes and Conscientisation**

The tendency toward appropriate TfD practice in Uganda seems to have been motivated by the shifts in development thought and practice highlighted above, which emphasised the participation of the beneficiaries of development in deciding the kind of development they needed and how they wanted to achieve it. Commenting on the shifts in the conceptualisation of development practice and how TfD practice in Uganda became part of this shift, Eckhard Breitingger and Rose Mbowa observe that:

The rise of theatre for development also marked a change in international relations. It was both the symptom and the result of the failures of 20 years of development policies that had insisted on the implantation of the materialistic and technological cultures of the North in the countries of the South as the only road to development, irrespective of the cultural and social environment [. . .] New Development policies—and theatre for development is an important ingredient in that process—have re-oriented and relocated the target definition processes and the decision making processes. Target communities and not aid organisations from outside define what development is going to be for them and what kind of development they want . . . (1994: E6-E7).

The new trend of the need for communities to define what was good for them and the kind of development they wanted saw the implementation of two people-centred TfD processes, namely, the 1986 Nattyole TfD project and the 1994 Lubombo participatory theatre project. These projects were significant in terms of highlighting the ideal TfD process. They displayed important points for reflection thereby providing a context for analysing contemporary TfD practices. These points relate to community mobilisation and community building in TfD, collective identification and prioritisation of problems,



choosing an appropriate paradigm for problem analysis, play making and performance, collective action and empowerment (conscientisation). The following discussion highlights the two projects focusing on the aforementioned points.

#### **2.4.1.1 The Nattyole and Lubombo TfD projects**

In the Nattyole project, community mobilisation was well-planned by the project leaders: Vincencia Sserwanda and Jonathan Muganga, who saw the necessity of engaging the whole community through influential people in the area such as the parish priest, elders, women leaders, resistance councillors and school leaders to discuss strategies for mobilisation (Kaahwa, *et' al*, 2000: 193).

As a way of community building and creating confidence among the women, a club named 'TusitukireWamu', which means 'let's rise together', was founded and the women elected their leaders. The project facilitators together with the core group set up an agenda for their work with regards to problem identification and prioritisation, which included identification of health risks and social problems, analysis of causes and sources, strategies and solutions and community mobilisation activities. Mbowa observes that 'subsequent meetings of the club identified and prioritised the Nattyole community's problems as malnutrition among children less than five years, infant mortality due to immunisable diseases, diarrhoeal diseases, alcoholism among men and poverty' (1998:264).

In the case of problem analysis, the club members were quick to choose an appropriate paradigm of analysis—the cultural performance paradigm. They agreed that the mobilisation of the communities and heightening of health awareness could be best affected through entertainment: by educational songs, poems, dances, plays that reflect the social problems of the area (Muganga, 1990: 07). Since more than half of the community members had no formal education and thus could not read or write, the composition of the plays had to follow strictly the conventions of oral composition and rely exclusively on oral forms of expression rather than introducing modern dramatic techniques.

In the process of playmaking and performance, community volunteers collectively got involved in playmaking and performance. The resulting play was titled *Omwana wa*

*Balyokwabwe* which means *Balyokwambwe's Child* and it treated the theme of proper nutrition as the key to development. It addressed itself particularly to those parents who attributed infant mortality and infant ill health to witchcraft rather than malnutrition. Emphasising the need for a balanced diet, the play pointed at the social responsibility of the parents to prevent malnutrition-conditioned ill health of their children and advocated for appropriate techniques of food production, harvesting, storage and preparation of food.

As a result of this community centred process, the project had a profound impact in terms of conscientisation and empowerment. This was evidenced by the action that was collectively taken by the community resulting from the engagement of the community in the TfD process for a fairly long period of time. Social empowerment of the community resulting from the *TusitukireWamu* club activities grew to such an extent that with the assistance of the parish priest they were able to re-open a dispensary (Kaahwa, *et al*, 2000: 195).

After seven months, hygiene, health, general living conditions and even the income of the people had improved remarkably. The messages about balanced diet and proper nutrition were soon found to be practical solutions. The club members established a demonstration garden on the land near the Catholic Parish Church in order to show people how to plant crops necessary for a balanced diet (Kaahwa *et al*, 2000: 194).

In the case of the Lubombo TfD project, efforts were made by the project facilitators to achieve a close working relationship with the community. To achieve this, the project facilitators: Baron Oron, Milton Bakebwa, Julius Gizamba and Rose Mbowa lived in the community from 21<sup>st</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> April 1994 (Mbowa, 1998: 266). The facilitators organised a local animators' meeting, as a starting point, which was attended by opinion leaders from the community including the local council chairperson, the women's leader, youth leader, the two AIDs counsellors, an assistant medical officer from a local clinic and a teacher.

The next stage of the process was devoted to community building and mobilisation. Community mobilisation was done through dancing and drumming at the local school as agreed collectively by the Lubombo community.

Having mobilised the community, the Lubombo theatre project engaged the community in the process of information gathering and problem identification. Adopting a collective approach meant that it was not the facilitators from Kampala who investigated the community's problems. Rather, it was the local animators and interested members of the community who took centre stage. The process of problem identification was implemented using what Mbowa described as 'the outreach flooding' method, in which people moved out in pairs to different directions in the community, interviewing people wherever they met them—at trading centres, along the roads and at home. According to Mbowa, the process of collective research 'helped to mobilise the whole community and to promote ownership of the workshop throughout Lubombo village' (1998: 267).

With the problems affecting the people identified, the community was facilitated through a process of collective identification, analysis and prioritisation of issues. The whole process of problem identification and discussion was enabled by the well-established tradition of local councillors. For example, Mr. Sekatawa who chaired the process of problem identification and discussion was one of the local councillors. In the process of exploring the prioritised problems through performance, there was continued use of the community's artistic and performance heritages. Bakebwa, one of the facilitators of the project points out that 'the artistic riches of the people were celebrated through songs and creative exploitation of proverbial names and sayings' (1994: 91).

Unlike TfD processes that involve performing fully written plays, the Lubombo theatre employed a model of continuous interventions by members of the audience posing and solving problems within the framework of loosely structured dramatic sketches. As a new issue was raised by one of the characters in the sketch, the character would put a question to the audience and seek its opinion on a possible solution to the problem. In this way, everyone who attended the three days of the rehearsals participated. In Mbowa's words, 'all got involved in discussing their lives as they addressed the dilemmas and contradictions highlighted in the sketches' (1998: 267).

From the above elaboration of the theatre process, one notes that the Lubombo theatre process was somehow an adaptation of August Boal's notions of 'simultaneous

dramaturgy' and 'intervention' in the theatrical process to foster community participation. In simultaneous dramaturgy, Boal suggests that:

it is a question of performing a short scene of ten to twenty minutes proposed by a resident, one who lives in the barrio (community)... Having begun the scene the actors develop it to point at which the main problem reaches a crisis and needs a solution. The actors stop the performance and ask the audience to offer solutions' (1979: 132).

As a result of the process of collective participation in the process of problem identification and performance described above, there ensued a process of critical consciousness or conscientisation about the problems facing the community, particularly the AIDs scourge. For example, through the process of simultaneous performance and proposition of solutions, people came to realise the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption. The process further led to a meaningful discussion on the issue of condom use. The men at the theatre workshop had repeatedly pointed out that using a condom was like sucking a sweet in its wrapper. Mbowa reports that 'the discussion on condom use had revealed widespread ignorance about condom use and the risks of unprotected sex (Mbowa, 1998: 268). As a point of action, the community decided that condoms be sold at places of convenience such as disco halls.

The most profound action that was suggested and implemented by the community resulting from the Lubombo participatory theatre project related to the problem of orphans. The dramatic sketch had featured two parents dying and leaving a crowd of orphans to be cared for by a grandmother. This scenario related to the exact situation on the ground: in Lubombo village there was an elderly grandmother living with thirteen orphans and lacking basic support. Upon becoming critically aware of this issue, 'the community resolved to support the helpless orphans by identifying an income generating project whose proceeds would go towards supporting vulnerable groups like the children, the sick and elderly' (1994: 94).

In Mbowa's view, 'the dependency mentality of the people had met with a cure at community level that is; a critically awakened awareness shaping responsible action and behaviour. The community had more effectively than before become its own legislature' (1998: 268-9).

#### **2.4.1.2 Early TfD projects and the Stepping Stones Concept in Uganda**

The tendency toward participatory practice in these earlier projects was also shaped by that fact that Rose Mbowa, the main architect of TfD, had been exposed to instances of good practice in TfD through the flow of cultural products of globalisation and attending workshops on TfD in Africa and consequently came to know of successful TfD accounts such as the Kamiriithu project in Kenya and the Kumba workshop in Cameroon.

One of the key instances of the influence of the global flow of cultural products on Rose Mbowa's work was the concept of the Stepping Stones. In the wake of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the British activist Alice Welbourn had written a manual which would be used in HIV/AIDS training programmes. The package consists of a series of workshops with communities, which, according to Welbourn, aim to 'enable individuals, their peers and communities to change their behaviour individually and together through the Stepping Stones which the sessions provide' (Welbourn, 1996: 03). According to Majorie Mayo, 'through the workshop sessions communities are provided with knowledge about HIV, which set the framework for discussion of strategies to promote sexual health through safer sex' (2000: 171).

The notion of peer group formation, which is also popularly used in TfD, is worth noting about the Stepping Stones programme. Commenting on peer group formation as used in the stepping stones, Mayo reveals that 'the approach involves working in subgroups of between ten and twenty participants, divided according to factors such as gender, age, education level and social cultural wellbeing' (2000: 172). The programme employs role play to explore issues involving sex and risk-taking. Through role play in small groups, participants design a scene which leads to a potentially risky sexual encounter, providing a pretext for further discussion of issues relating to risky sex behaviour. The approach is 'participatory focusing upon people listening and talking to others like themselves to enable communities to work out what they want to achieve for themselves . . .' (2000: 173).

Mbowa was part of the development of the Stepping Stones concept to the extent that the video which accompanies the training manual was filmed in Uganda and it

recorded the work of Rose Mbowa, showing how members of a rural community discussed and re-enacted their own problems and developed their own solutions.

During the 1990s, Mbowa executed some of her TfD projects in the framework of the Stepping Stones programme. Working with rural and urban communities in Masaka and Entebbe, Mbowa engaged different groups of people using role play to explore issues relating to sexuality in a participatory and supportive environment. For example, in Entebbe, Rose Mbowa worked with five groups, which included three groups of women; one for very young girls, another for girls aged 14-16, and a third for older women who were in their thirties. As an example of effective TfD practice, Mbowa's theatre work which relied on the Stepping Stones model in the Entebbe project proved to be an effective cultural process of problem identification and analysis. Using role play, Mbowa facilitated the various groups in the workshop to explore their dilemmas and needs. Each peer group enacted a drama in which they examined and articulated their needs (1997: 43-47).

#### **2.4.2 The Agitprop, Centre to Periphery Paradigm**

While there were efforts to implement a 'poetically correct' (Nogueira, 2002) TfD practice in the early stages of the development of TfD in Uganda, a colonial paradigm nourished by the colonial practices of taking theatre to the people also continued. The phrase "colonial paradigm" is used here to mean a centre-to-the-periphery flow of development information whereby plays containing development messages are pre-packaged by experts and then performed in communities. This paradigm is characterised by lack of faith on the part of the theatre practitioners that the people in the community are capable of working out the remedies to their problems.

The colonial paradigm is rooted in what Ker describes as the Mr. Wise and Mr. Foolish formula (1991: 63, 2009: 100, 1995: 160) which featured in Uganda's colonial government didactic theatre performances. In these performances, the colonial extension workers used comic figures to mock what was considered to be a lack of knowledge on issues relating to development. Characteristic of the colonial plays was 'an ideology investing colonial communicators with unlimited wisdom by constructing African audiences in the role of backward children who needed constant paternal

guidance' (Kamlongera, 1989 cited in Kerr, 2009: 100). In Jane Plastow's words, the agenda in the colonial theatre was 'paternalistic, patronising, Westernising, and demeaning to the mass of ordinary African people' (2014: n.p.) .

Writing about colonial developmental theatre in Uganda, Mbowa observes that:

The Social Welfare Department created one central figure, Kapere dressed in checkered black and white shirt and shorts who appeared in all plays, did everything wrong and thus became the medium of instruction. Kapere's capriciousness, his adventures and misfortunes and his funny exaggerations shaped the audience's taste for farce (2000: 212).

Mr. Wise and Mr. Foolish formula has remained surprisingly common in post-colonial plays about HIV and AIDS. Kerr notes that, 'Mr. Wise the colonial expert, has evolved into a Western trained doctor or health worker while Mr. Foolish is still the superstitious recalcitrant, often influenced by an identikit evil or mercenary witch-doctor' (2009: 100). In Plastow's view:

this form of Westernising, coercive and neoliberal performance has retained a far stronger hold over modern African applied theatre than is commonly acknowledged, and [. . .] what purports to be TfD is often in fact a reactionary practice intended to domesticate rather than transform the lives of African subjects (2014: n.p.).

The colonial paradigm became the driving force in TfD practice in Uganda as the campaign to develop the war-stricken communities in Uganda took root. Two factors explain why the colonial paradigm solidified in Uganda's TfD practice. First, the government of Uganda and local and international NGOs, which were at the forefront of fostering social change after decades of political turmoil, were more interested in information dissemination rather than engaging the communities in defining the kind of development the latter required. They wanted to reach as many people as possible with influence-oriented information in order to change the attitudes of the communities. Second, by the time Uganda had its first TfD project at Nattyole in 1986, there was the looming threat of HIV/AIDS (see Tim & Suzette, 2004: 1141).

In the early years of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, Ugandan communities did not understand it. In a society that had deep-rooted superstitions, many people attributed the epidemic to witchcraft. When they learnt that the disease spread through sexual contact, they created myths around the problem which increased the risk of infection.

One such myth was the belief that 'if one sleeps with a virgin he is cleansed from HIV infection, which put many young girls at risk' (Otieno, 2011: 188). In such contexts the stakeholders—mainly development funders and theatre practitioners—were inclined to spread information to as many people as possible to curtail the raging epidemic.

Uganda's early history of TfD practice is consequently marked by many projects espousing the colonial paradigm such as the school Music Dance and Drama festivals, the post-war women's theatre performances, the civic education project where theatre was used to mobilise communities in the making of the new constitution, the Kabarole Basic Health Services project, the Rural Water and Sanitation Project (RWASA) in eastern Uganda. At this point, it is prudent to say that in the development of TfD in Uganda, the colonial agitprop model has the largest footprint. In the subsequent sections this chapter critically highlights in some detail two examples.

#### **2.4.2.1 The Magere Kito Women's Cooperative Theatre Performances**

The earliest traces of the colonial paradigm in TfD practice in Uganda can be sited in one of the post-war development programmes in Uganda—the 1987 Magere Kito Women's cooperative group in Masaka. The Magere Kito Women's Cooperative Group was located in Masaka district in a village called Magere Kito. Breitinger and Mbowa observe that, 'its objective was to support the women in improving their income and living conditions' (1994:E27). One of the dramatic sketches which was popularly performed by the women of Magere Kito to demonstrate the work of the women in the cooperative is described by Breitinger and Mbowa below:

The sketch focused on two characters. There is the diligent and good wife, who applied what she has been taught by the other women. She achieves a high yield from her gardening and produces a fair quality of handcrafts. The quality assessment committee of the cooperative is impressed by the quality of her wares. Her industry and success bring more happiness to her family. On the other hand, there is a lazy and careless wife who is not interested in improving her work. She is evasive when queried by her husband about work in the cooperative. She is also elusive when the committee members come to check on the improvement and progress in her work. Her wares are rejected due to poor quality and thus she cannot improve her income (1994: E27).



The scenario described by Breitinger and Mbowa echoes the Mr. Wise and the Mr. Foolish formula, a colonial legacy of using the arts in development programmes highlighted earlier in this chapter. It classified some women as clever and industrious and others as foolish and less diligent, as depicted by those tropes. The scenario also highlights one of the ideological weaknesses of TfD practice in post-colonial Africa identified by Ross Kidd which is “scapegoating the poor”, a tendency based on a deprivation view of disadvantage: that poverty is self-inflicted, that poverty is entailed by certain deficiencies (1979: 05). Such an ideology, Kerr argues, ‘results in a strategy based on changing the poor rather than changing the system of deprivation that makes them poor’ (1991: 62). Using stereotypical characters similar to the ones used in the sketch above is patronising in the way that ‘it tends to reflect a crude division between reactionary traditional characters and progressive modern characters’ (Kerr, 1991: 63, 1995: 160).

The women’s sketch is reminiscent of the theatre practices of the colonial government’s Social Welfare Department in Uganda in the 1940s where dramatic sketches were externally designed and performed in communities to instruct people about good farming practices. The lazy and careless woman reminds us of the capriciousness of the character Kapere, who was common in the colonial dramatic sketches in Uganda (see Mbowa, 2000: 212) where stereotypical characters were used to ensure that communities learnt by looking at the mistakes of the characters.

An ideology founded on the Mr. Wise and Mr. Foolish formula in Uganda’s early TfD projects took root in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the campaign to fight against HIV/AIDS deepened. In her studies of campaign theatre in Uganda, Frank attests that ‘there were always two types of characters: those who knew about AIDS and those who did not know about it’ (1995: 147). Frank further argues that ‘like the Medieval morality plays of northern Europe, Campaign theatre against AIDS in Uganda exemplified stock characters of “human genus persona” targeting illiterate characters who were themselves depicted as promiscuous characters in need of pre-colonial moral values (Frank, 1995: 137, see also Ola, 2010: 70).

#### **2.4.2.2 The Kabarole Basic Health Services (KBHS) Project**

The KBHS was an early 1990s health intervention programme jointly sponsored by the Ugandan Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the German Association for Technical cooperation (GTZ). The aim of the project was to provide basic health services to the rural communities in Kabarole in Mid-western Uganda.

The available literature on the KBHS project reveals that it was an imposition from above espousing a top-down colonial approach to problem solving as opposed to the bottom-up approach espoused in effective TfD processes. This shortfall is evidenced from the testimonies of Steven Kaliba, Buryanoha Karekezi and Walter Kipp relating to the play making process:

It is quite a different issue to appreciate the enormous time and energy spent making such near master-pieces. The process is as long as it is exciting. First, a workshop is organized. The actors and actresses meet with health workers, professional doctors and members of the district health team. Other participants come from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Information and other governmental institutions. These persons have special knowledge which is important for the composition of plays and songs. Professor Rose Mbowa who heads the Department of Music Dance and Drama at Makerere University needs special acknowledgement. So does the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE) of the same university. The group is doing a brain storming to develop appropriate messages and designs to be integrated in the plays and songs. The next stage is script writing when the messages envisaged at the workshop are given dramatic expressions. These include body expressions, mimicry, voice projection tone variations, overcoming stage fright, plot development, the casting and choice of costumes. The group members go through the script and rehearse until the play is ready to be staged (1994: E19).

In the above quotation, Steven Kaliba *et'al* reveal the different groups of people who would be engaged in designing the plays, namely, the district health team, officials from different government ministries and institutions and professionals from Makerere University. This clearly indicates that it was largely the people at the top who were involved in the creative process, leaving out the target communities. Moreover, as the case was with the Laedza Batanani project, these people were considered to be already empowered. It is also evident that the play devising workshops took place in a venue away from the communities. Consequently, finished theatre pieces would be devised and then taken to the people. The project, therefore, employed the concept of 'theatre

as a product' as opposed to 'theatre as a process' which would be envisaged in a participatory TfD process.

Furthermore, Kaliba *et al* have revealed what may be considered a common pitfall in Uganda's emerging TfD practice: a lack of respect of the people's knowledge and their potential to discuss issues that affect their lives. In the quotation, we read, 'the people involved in the play making workshops had special knowledge in the making of plays' implying that the rest of the community members did not. But in an ideal TfD process, the facilitators should have profound faith in the people, in their ability to understand and analyse issues affecting their lives.

Furthermore, the Kabarole Basic Health Services programme was largely designed as an Information Education Communication (IEC) strategy. In an interview with Steven Kaliba about this project, he revealed that the use of theatre was meant to provide the necessary IEC aspect to the three components of the project namely; Primary Health Care, secondary prevention and tertiary health care (Kaliba, 2011). As the name suggests IEC strategy relies on dissemination and transmission of information, an approach favoured in the dominant or the modernisation paradigm of development previously discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

These projects, which I have critiqued as having been top-down, adopting a colonial paradigm, do need to be applauded for the success they achieved when Uganda battled HIV/AIDS and struggled to achieve recovery after decades of turmoil. This study argues, however, that such an approach to TfD should not have continued to the present.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have discussed the development of the concept of TfD practice in Africa and Uganda with the aim of providing a context for analysing contemporary practices in Uganda. Looking at the early development of the concept in Africa, beginning with the Laedza Batanani and discerning the views of prominent Africa scholars, the chapter has highlighted the fact that the concept of TfD in Africa has been quite problematic. However, it has acknowledged that the Kamiriithu project was unique in exhibiting the basic traits of theatre for conscientisation, as it centred the people of Kamiriithu in analyzing the issues affecting their lives. A review of the early experience

of TfD practice in Uganda has indicated that while effort was made to implement a people-centred process in some projects, the practice largely adopted an agitprop colonial paradigm with much of the work espousing a message dissemination model. The subsequent chapters will investigate the extent to which contemporary TfD practices in Uganda have circumvented the tendency to disseminate a message to centre the people in the process.

## **Chapter Three:**

### **The Conceptual Framework and Literature Review**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter I discuss the conceptual underpinnings of TfD practice in order to provide a critical framework for analysing contemporary practices in Uganda. I begin by examining the core principles of TfD practice such as participation, participatory research, passion, collective creation, sustainability and the use of the time resource. I also attempt to analyse some critiques of the concept of participation in modern development practice discourse. This will enable me in subsequent chapters to pinpoint the nature of participation in Ugandan TfD practices. Having reviewed the core principles of TfD, I delve into the forces that in most cases play against effective TfD in the post-colonial developing world, such as neo-colonialism, globalisation and its associated forces of neoliberalism and global capitalism.

#### **3.1 The core principles of TfD**

##### **3.1.1 Participation and Ownership**

In TfD usage, the concepts of community participation and ownership are closely linked since ownership develops as a result of community engagement. Considering ownership, Joan Lazarus, a US based applied theatre practitioner makes a reference to organisational communication specialist Margaret Wheatley's (1994) understanding of the concept that:

[. . .] we know that the best way to build ownership is to give over the creative process to those who will be charged with its implementation [...]. It does not work to just ask people to sign on when they haven't been involved in the design process, when they haven't experienced the plan as a living, breathing thing (2012 : 55) .

This means that ownership in TfD is achieved when the participants are facilitated to engage in the whole process of making theatre. In this way, they develop personal links with the process. In the same vein, Sara Clifford and Anna Herrmann consider ownership to be a process in which the 'group takes control over the decision making

process and experience the responsibility which exists with this role' (1999: 39). Generally, ownership in TfD has to do with having the community identify with the process, enjoy it and develop a feeling that they have to control it and drive it to success. In Clifford and Herrmann's view, 'ownership can be fostered through the use of games, exercises, group work and discussion which establish a way of working to involve participants in actively running the group (1999: 39).

Turning to participation, TfD practitioners such as Byam (1999) and Jumai Ewu (1999), have acknowledged that participation is at the core of an effective TfD process. Commenting about best practice in TfD, Byam posits that, 'the key determinant of the effectiveness of Theatre for Development continues to be the degree of popular participation throughout the process' (Byam, 1999: 31). In the same way Ewu observes that:

[...] the objective of TfD is to encourage community participation and dialogue in development whereby community participation in theatre becomes symbolic of and catalytic to its participation in development. Community participation in various levels is essential and the extent of its presence is the key index of TfD's success (1999).

Commenting on the structure of participation in TfD, Kidd and Byram posit that 'participation in TfD projects should be both a goal and methodology' (Kidd & Byram, 1982: 97). By participation as a goal and methodology, Kidd and Byram suppose that 'the popular theatre programme attempts to increase participation of community members in the development projects by involving them in the planning and running of the popular theatre programme' (Kidd & Byram, 1982: 97). Nici Nelson and Susan Wright, both social anthropologists and community development practitioners articulate similar notions of participation by describing it as a *means* and as an *end*. As a *means*, participation is used to 'accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively or cheaply and as an *end*, participation entails that the community or group sets up a process to control its own development' (Nici & Susan, 1995: 1).

Chinyowa observes that 'participation in theatre should be based on a process rather than product, partnership rather than patronage, and diversity rather than uniformity' (2009a: 335, 2010: 66). By 'partnership rather than patronage,' Chinyowa refers to a process in which the TfD practitioners work closely with the members of the

target community on an equal terms-basis instead of a situation where the practitioner assumes a powerful and all-knowing position in the process. He suggests by 'diversity rather than uniformity' that all the members of the community, regardless of their social status, have an equal stake in the process.

For Rahman, a renowned participatory development practitioner and scholar, participation in development should be spontaneous, implying that the 'process emerges out of the organic impulses of the communities, distinct from a process that emerges as a result of a discreet act of intervention by some external force with a conscious objective of promoting participation' (1993: 152). According to Christopher Odhiambo, participation in TfD is about 'subverting and democratising the theatre space by allowing both the audience and actors to have equal access to the space during and after the performance' (2001: 89-92). In a critique of TfD practices in Africa which, he notes, continue to adopt a diffusion of innovations paradigm, Okagbu advocates for popular participation in TfD arguing that:

Participatory development communication which involves a sizeable input from the indigenous or target community, that seeks local solutions to problems as opposed to 'expert' outside advice and with an increased self-reliance of the people to be 'developed' is the ideal and it is this ideal which Theatre for Development should model itself on (1998: 30).

John O'Toole (1976), a the leading exponent of Drama -in-Education, identifies three categories of participation in applied theatre processes which appropriately apply to TfD. They include extrinsic participation, integral participation and peripheral participation (cited in Prendergast, 2009). These levels of participation, especially extrinsic and integral participation, determine whether a TfD process will adopt an agitprop model or will develop into a cultural process of conscientisation.

For instance, extrinsic participation is typical of agitprop message-oriented theatre since the community only participates by providing feedback in a post-performance discussion. It is with integral participation that the theatre process potentially develops into a cultural process of conscientisation. In this kind of participation, the community becomes a central part of the theatre process by being active in all the stages. They are invited to engage both verbally and in some cases physically with the performance.

Consequently, best practice in TfD practice eschews peripheral and extrinsic participation in preference to integral participation.

Tufte and Mefalopulos working as World Bank consultants on participatory approaches to development communication have highlighted four levels of participation. These include passive participation, participation by consultation, participation by collaboration and empowerment participation (Tufte, & Mefalopulos, 2009: 6-7). Sheila Preston, an applied theatre scholar at the University of London, draws from the field of participatory development and Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) to create a taxonomy of participation similar to that of Tufte and Mefalopulos. Her classification includes 'passive participation, participation in information gathering, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives, functional participation, interactive participation and self-mobilisation' (Preston, 2009: 128-129).

In passive participation, the people in the target community are simply told what will happen or has already happened. They do not have any input in the development programme (Preston, 2009: 128). Participation by consultation is an extractive process where target communities answer questions posed by outside researchers or development experts. Decision-making is kept in the hands of external professionals who are in no way under obligation to incorporate the community's input (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009: 06). Participation by collaboration is where selected groups of people in the identified community discuss and analyse predetermined objectives set by the project (Tufte & Mefalopulos, 2009: 06). Functional participation is where 'people participate by forming groups to meet pre-determined objectives related to the project and such involvement tends to occur after major decisions have been made' (Preston, 2009: 129).

In empowerment participation, similar to Preston's notion of interactive participation:

The members of the target community are viewed as capable of initiating the process and taking part in analysis of development goals which leads to joint decision-making. The outsiders are equal partners in the development efforts and the primary stakeholders or the community are *primus inter pares*, that is, they are equal partners with a significant say in the decisions concerning their lives. Dialogue identifies and analyses critical issues and an exchange of knowledge and experiences leads to solutions. Ownership and control lies in the hands of the primary stakeholders (2009: 07).



Of the levels of participation delineated above, empowerment or interactive participation is the most applicable to TfD practice.

We learn from the above that in order to achieve effective community participation in TfD the practitioners have to avoid tokenistic models of participation such as the extrinsic participation, peripheral participation, and consultative participation, and adopt more engaging frames of participation such as integral participation and empowerment participation.

For Nici Nelson and Susan Wright (1995) participation should be transformational rather than instrumental. Nelson and Wright define instrumental participation as 'getting people to buy into the donor's project' and transformational participation as 'getting communities to decide on their own priorities' (1995: 05).

### **3.1.2 Criticism of Participation in Development and TfD Practice**

In order to analyse notions of participation in contemporary Ugandan TfD practices, an awareness of the arguments relating to the practice of participation in modern discourses of development practice is necessary. As Jane Plastow (2010: 183) puts it, the concept of participation has recently been problematised in development studies and needs not to be taken at face value. Preston observes, on the problematic nature of participation that, 'participation, even if liberatory in intention and highly desirable, is far from trouble-free in practice; to achieve genuine participation is itself complex and difficult amidst the myriad of agendas, power relations and competing ideological interests rife in most projects and settings' (2009: 127). She relates the complexity of participation to Gramsci's concept of hegemony which means 'spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group' (Gramsci, 2009: 139). In Preston's view:

Harnessing the consent of a group through the communal spontaneity of participation might carry a useful hegemonic function in society. The seductive feeling of participating and joining in with others is a less neutral or benign act but, rather, manipulation into compliance with a social order (2009: 128).

Expounding on the problematic nature of participation, Chinyowa reveals that:

In both contemporary educational and development discourse, the idea of participation is increasingly being regarded as falsely leading to an erroneous interpretation of the social construction of reality by dominant groups with the

people's transformation. The strategies being deployed in the name of participation such as dialogue, giving voice, conscientisation and empowerment are deemed to create the illusion of liberation while they reinforce prevailing oppressive structures (2015: 12).

Majid Rahnema describes participation as a 'modern jargon that uses stereotyped words to support the most fanciful constructions which are ideal for manipulative purposes' (1992: 116). Elsewhere Rahnema is critical of participation especially if it adopts an interventionist approach. He argues that:

participation which is also a form of intervention is too serious and ambivalent a matter to be taken lightly or reduced to an amoeba word lacking in any precise meaning, or a slogan, or fetish, or, for that matter, only an instrument or a methodology, reduced to such trivialities, not only does it cease to be a boon, but it runs the risk of acting as a deceptive myth or a dangerous tool for manipulation (2009: 144).

Rahnema seems to imply that such participation has implications relating to power relations and impacts negatively on the oppressed or marginalised sections of the community. In Rahnema's view:

when A considers it essential for B to be empowered, A assumes not only that B has no power—or does not have the right kind of power—but also that A has the secret formula of a power in which A has to be initiated (2009: 143).

Due to its susceptibility to manipulation, Chambers (1997) argues that participation has been 'disembedded' from its sociocultural roots and perceived as a 'thing', 'object' or 'resource' for keeping the market economy alive. The idea of 'keeping the market economy alive' relates to the money element associated with discourses of development. Projects that claim to foster participation in modern times attract a lot of funding from the neoliberal world. Players in the field of development, in most cases, articulate in their application for funding proposals an aspect of participation aimed at empowerment. The major question, however, is whether the aims of participation are thereafter adhered to and achieved in practice. To answer this question in the TfD context, Doho argues that 'in most cases local communities seem to have been used as "guinea pigs" and not as veritable practitioners of theatre for change' (2008:166). The phrase 'guinea pigs' used by Doho points to the fact that sometimes people who claim to be TfD practitioners and the commissioning bodies themselves have ulterior

intentions—different from working closely with the communities—to engender a process of people centred development. For example, it is true that some people enter TfD practice to earn a living, not necessarily because they aim to improve communities, while in most cases commissioning bodies are not after the quality of the process but about the statistical indicators of projects' success such as the number of people who attended the show and are believed to have picked the message (see for example Odhiambo, 2005: 192-198). Annie Slowman presented the problem of using communities as guinea pigs in the following observation:

A cause for concern in participatory theatre is where the name is used but there is little substantive participation occurring. Participatory theatre has become a buzz tool that development agencies, governments and theatre groups are using more and more but often not including some of the core elements of participatory practice (2011: 9).

Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989) gives an indication of the complexity of participation describing terms such as 'participation', 'empowerment', 'voice', 'dialogue' and 'consciousness' as 'repressive myths'. Ellsworth, on the concept of repressive myths, explains that 'when participants want to put these terms into practice, they often find themselves perpetuating the same relations of domination they are fighting against' (cited in Chinyowa, 2015: 12). In Ellsworth's view, the narratives associated with these terms often remain partial, incomplete and limited in the sense that they advance the interests of one side (the dominant group) over the other (the less privileged) (cited in Chinyowa, 2015: 12). Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari in their critique of trends in participatory development, assert that 'participatory processes have turned so manipulative that they harm those who are supposed to be empowered, a situation they described as 'the tyranny of participation'(2004: 03). Reflecting on the dual's assertion Chinyowa notes that the discourse of participation embodies the potential for an unjustified exercise of power that is reminiscent of tyranny because development practitioners tend to ignore the complexities of power relations between 'facilitators' and 'participants', and also between 'donors' and 'beneficiaries' (2015:13-4).

### 3.1.2 Participatory Research

In TfD practice, practitioners and scholars draw from Freire's critical pedagogy theories, especially the notion of problem-posing education to foreground the participatory research methodology as key to working with communities in a theatre for development workshop.

According to Byam, prolific TfD scholar, 'this type of research is contrary to traditional research paradigms in that the participants are also the subjects and the teachers hold no elite distinction while gathering information through their active involvement in the community' (1999:24). Describing it as emancipatory *action research*, Margaret Ledwith, a community development and theatre for social change scholar argues that:

It adopts a methodology and methods that are collaborative, and in doing so commits to identifying and challenging unequal power relations within its process. It is rooted in dialogue, attempting to work *with*, not *on* people and intends that its process is empowering for all involved. More than this, it is committed to collective action for social change as its outcome (2005: 73).

Thompson, in his seminal publication *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond* explicitly articulates the significance of the participatory research methodology in community based theatre processes such as TfD. Describing it as 'Theatre Action Research' (TAR), he views it as a process of fostering what he calls 'a democracy of the ground' (2003: 147). In order to contextualize his views on the place of participatory research in applied theatre processes, Thompson draws inference from a Ghanaian proverb that, 'a person who rides a donkey does not know the ground is hot' and from Horton and Freire's aphorism that, 'we make the road by walking' (Horton & Freire, 1990).

By alluding to the aforementioned proverb and saying, Thompson aptly suggests that for theatre to work as a participatory research process, the members of the target community must take the central role in the analytical process, because they best understand the compelling need for change or the problems that oppress them. Thompson advocates a continuous process of reflection in Theatre Action Research. Referring to the interpretation of the results of action research, he posits that, 'whereas this can be viewed as a final moment in the reflective cycle, more usefully it should be

seen as part of an action research spiral [. . .] Here reflection, rather than completing the project leads to further actions that are again reflected upon' (Thompson, 2003: 150).

### **3.1.4 “Passion”, “Collective Creation” and “Spontaneous Improvisation”**

The concepts of “passion” “collective play creation or devising” and “spontaneous improvisation” are at the core of an effective aesthetic in TfD. Quite interconnected, the concepts are premised on the need to build on the community’s inherent performance forms and human and linguistic resources. The notion of ‘passion’ was coined by Prentki (2003) and may be interpreted as involving the target community by engaging their bodies, minds and hearts in a creative process of analysis and improvisation. In Prentki’s view, ‘passion is of critical importance in relation to any claim for social transformation which the TfD process may wish to make’ (2003: 41). Collective creation is an ideal which builds on people’s passions and consequently, the TfD process is a result of the combined effort of people in the target community in that, the people themselves decide on its subject matter, create the storyline and volunteer as actors. As Errol Bray, an applied theatre specialist with an experience of working with young people has put it, the process of collective play building/devising:

Enables a participant to come to grips with the pleasures and problems of every aspect of drama and theatre, to be playwright, performer, director, composer, technician, designer critic. It introduces the participants to the creative discipline and co-operation required in theatre [. . .] The process involves rehearsing the play as it is created, thus developing a strong presentation that comes to belong to the group in a very personal and committed way (1991: 01).

In Prendergast and Saxton’s view, ‘the presentation becomes the stimulus for engagement with a large community (audience) about issues and themes under investigation, which leads to broader possibility of potential revelation and /or change’ (2009: 19). Writing about improvisation in TfD, Chinyowa observes that:

Applied to TfD, improvisation as a discursive frame lies at the heart of the playing process itself. It is the improvising, the spontaneous spirit, that engages the co-players drawing them into the action, articulating new role relationships and generating patterns of participation, contradiction and integration (2007b: 22, 2009b:44).

He adds that improvisation provides a pretext for 'reflection-in-action' (2009b: 43) and 'as an on-going process of individual and collective reflection, improvisation also contains elements of adaptability and synthesis' (Chinyowa, 2009b: 43).

### **3.1.5 The Concepts of 'Sustainability' and 'Time' in TfD**

In TfD practice, 'sustainability' and 'time' are two different but closely related concepts. Sustainability relates to the extent to which the target community is empowered to continue with the TfD process even after the animateurs have left the community (Fox, 2009). Commenting on the concept, Etherton and Prentki observe that, 'development agencies use the concept of sustainability to indicate a purpose of social and economic change beyond the time-frame of the project' (2006: 140). Although there are claims that a TfD session can produce sweeping and immediate results, as was the case with the school TfD project described by Mangeni (1998), effective TfD frequently needs ample time to complete the process of conscientisation. This point is in line with Prentki's view that, 'there has to be more or less a fixed period for the animateurs' involvement before full self-reliance takes over' (1995: 392). Regarding the significance of the time factor in fostering sustainability in TfD, it has been debated whether one-off TfD sessions can engender the desired empowerment or conscientisation (see for example Chinyowa, 2011: 339). For instance, Aitken is of the view that conscientisation is not something which may be achieved in a 'single setting or human exchange' (Aitken, 2009: 504). She argues that:

It would seem facile to suggest that any one-off applied theatre intervention could in and of itself be 'empowering' in this wider sense and one of the severest tensions for an applied theatre company is surely the question of what impact their short-term interventions can be expected to have within the ongoing reality experienced by participants (Aitken, 2009: 504-5).

The problem of limited time allowed for TfD may be illustrated by an experience described by Mangeni (1998). Mangeni argues that TfD was able to cause change within two hours in a school community. While it is true that the session described by Mangeni produced some immediate results such as causing panic in the school administration concerning the issue of election of prefects, it leaves a searching mind

querying: what kind of change was envisaged? Would it be sustainable change, involving the human transformation of the participants?

I argue that the result achieved by the session—engendering debate on the issue of election of prefects—was sufficient only for a session which was simply an examination session for a TfD postgraduate student. If the chief aim, however, had been the sustainable conscientisation of the school community, it would not have been achieved in two hours. The article reveals that the students identified a host of problems such as a biased and corrupt school administration, poor teaching, ill-qualified staff and poor services at the school canteen (Mangeni, 1998: 94). To structure a process that would allow the analysis of such deep-seated issues needed more time than two hours.

Accentuating the centrality of the factor of time in TfD practice, Prentki reveals that:

Time is so often the crucial constraint which compromises the effectiveness of the process. In the first instance enough time is needed to allow for the development of the necessary technical skills for the participants to be effective communicators in the theatrical medium [...]. Secondly, time is required to work with the participants on what happens after the performance; on what the performance is for; and on how it might best be used in the service of broader aims of sustainable change within the community (2003: 46).

Elsewhere, Prentki observes that:

The severest constraint upon the effective use of TFD is that of time. Especially when working with groups who have long social and cultural histories of oppression and silence, it is unreasonable to expect the TFD process to be implemented rapidly. Facilitators need time to integrate themselves into the community to the level where the most marginalized gain the trust and confidence to undertake an active role in the process (1998: 421).

When ample time is given to a TfD process, the community becomes imbued in the process, ensuring the possibility that the process of empowerment will continue even after the amateurs of the process have left.

The idea of investing ample time in a TfD process relates to the theoretical foundations of the process of conscientisation or empowerment. Commenting on the empowerment process, Darder *et al* argue that 'it is a recurrent, regenerating process of human interaction that is utilised for constant clarification of the hidden dimensions of reflections and actions' (2003: 15). Similarly, Blackburn notes that, 'rather than seeing empowerment as a goal or an endpoint, it may be more useful to regard it as a state of

mind: an ongoing encounter with reality, which is itself permanently changing' (2000: 05).

In light of the above, this study queries to what extent have contemporary TfD practitioners in Uganda been cognisant of empowerment or conscientisation as a process and how has this fact impacted their practice? How far has the political aim of TfD that is, to foster the conscientisation or empowerment of communities been realised in contemporary practices in Uganda?

### **3.2 Understanding the forces that shape TfD**

#### **3.2.1 Postcolonialism, Decolonisation and TfD**

Whereas the 'post' in postcolonialism might appear to refer to a definite time period after independence from colonial rule, postcolonial theory scholars such as Ashcroft *et al* (2006), Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins (1996), Alan Lawson (1992) and Richard Kagoloby (2011) have indicated that the term carries an aura of an indefinite and often ongoing process of colonisation. Ashcroft *et al* in their work on postcolonial studies argue that:

The term 'post-colonial' is resonant with all the ambiguity and complexity of the many different cultural experiences it implicates [...] it addresses all the aspects of the colonial process from the beginning of the colonial contact. Post-colonial critics should consider the full implications of restricting the meaning of the term to 'after colonialism' or after independence. All post-colonial societies are still in one way or another subject to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem...all these testify to the fact that post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction (2006).

Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins in their work on *Post-Colonial Drama: Theory, Practice, Politics* posit that, 'post-colonialism is not a naive teleological sequence that supersedes colonialism but rather an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourse, power structures, and social hierarchies' (1996: 02). For Kagoloby, a Ugandan theatre scholar:

Working with post-colonial theory is an analytical process aiming at understanding first the colonial history and how the colonial ideologies were used to interfere with the indigenous cultural heritage... in short, post-colonial



can also be viewed as an analytical conversation with the formerly colonized peoples' historical past in a bid to understand the present realities in formally colonized lands (2011: 104).

Some observations can be made about the views by the postcolonial scholars above. First, they indicate that in order to understand the implications of postcolonial processes on socio-political processes such as TfD, a critic needs to review how the long history of colonisation shaped colonised societies and how this history continues to model socio-cultural and political processes even after declarations of independence, a situation described as neo-colonialism. This begets an important question which this chapter subsequently explores—how did the colonial experience shape the practice of TfD in Africa?

Second, Gilbert and Tompkins' view does not only imply that the concept of post-colonialism is broader than just an epoch after independence but also it raises vital concepts that often inform discourses on development and TfD in particular—'power structures' and 'social hierarchies.' In context of this thesis, the phrases 'power structures' and 'social hierarchies' may be interpreted variously. On one hand, they articulate the reality of the existence of the power imbalance between the developed Global North and the developing world in the South. Understood thus, the phrases imply a situation where the developing countries continue to depend on the North for development aid which leaves them in a subservient position. As a result, the developing countries have continued to work with ideologies developed from abroad which effectively muffles their ability to determine themselves. Munyaradzi Chatikobo and Katharine Low, in their recent dialogue on applied theatre from a Southern African perspective, pinpoint the postcolonial reality of the Global North-Global South power politics as one of the key challenges in applied theatre practice. They argue that:

The power relations that occur between governments in the Global North and the Global South affect the implementing agencies and the targeted communities. At the end of the day, because of the power politics, the community ends up suffering. Maybe not suffering, but they will get the crumbs, etc. [ . . . ] Sometimes I feel if we fail to deal with the Global North-Global South politics, we end up paying lip service to partnerships with the communities that we are supposed to serve. We do not have the time—a lot of the time is spent in negotiations and doing the paperwork. And a lot of resources are taken up there. We end up leaving a very small percentage to benefit—and we end up

leaving very limited time to impact the communities (Munyaradzi & Low, 2015: 388).

In their view, if applied theatre practitioners are to achieve their goal of fostering effective community engagement, they need to have an understanding of the reigning postcolonial global contexts.

Lastly, the phrases 'power structures' and 'social hierarchies' articulate the reality of socially stratified communities where there is a class of the 'haves' and 'have nots', with decision making entirely a reserve of the privileged. This resonates with what Etherton and Prentki have described as 'a centre/periphery or colonial paradigm whereby the NGOs, resource persons and the theatre facilitators are often from the centre' (2006: 141). At another level, the phrases express how the experience of colonisation impacted the power relations and African social structure by altering the way African societies were organised.

Turning to the question of how the colonial experience shaped TfD in Africa, one needs to bear in mind the stultifying legacy of colonisation in Africa in the area of arts and culture. Before colonialism, Africa and Uganda in particular had been endowed with performance traditions which were deeply entrenched in the communities and performed for the wellbeing of the communities. wa Thiong'o, in a foreword to Byam's book on *Theatre for Development in Africa*, expresses the social significance of the pre-colonial performance practices as follows:

Pre-colonial Africa performances were communal. There were the more obviously communal activities like those festivals around planting and harvesting or around going to war and returning. There are others that have to do with the passage of power from one generation to another or from one set of rulers to others. [ . . . ] There was another sense in which these performances are communal—the audience—performer relationship. There was a constant exchange between those performing at the centre of the arena and those watching at edges or rather those watching at edges were often extensions of those in the arena (1999: iii).

Instead of harnessing these features in the traditional African performances for the good of the indigenous communities, the colonial administrators simply dismantled them by replacing them with performance practices from their home countries. Describing the misappropriation of the indigenous performance practices, Mlama writes that:

Indigenous theatre forms popular to the masses were either ignored or deliberately suppressed in the name of Christianity or civilization. Consequently, the European colonial rulers imposed European theatre on Africa. Their intention was not only to entertain the European community in the colonies but also to inculcate European values and attitudes among the colonized as part of the cultural domination crucial to the colonization process (1991: 57).

Kerr, the author of the prize winning *African Popular Theatre* (1995) observes that, the most concerted and ideologically articulate attack on Africa indigenous performing arts came from the proselytising zeal of European Christian missionaries. Presenting Christian missionaries as emissaries of imperialism and western capitalism, Kerr argues that:

The fundamental reason why Christians were so keen to suppress African performing arts was that they realised cultural forms held the symbolic key to the religious and moral base of the indigenous societies. The driving motor of imperialism was leading to the gradual incorporation of indigenous pre-capitalist African economies into a wide capitalist macro-economy directed from Europe and North America. For this to take place it was necessary not only to break down the pre-colonial political and micro-economic systems, but also the legal, religious and cultural apparatus which provided their ideological underpinning (1995: 18).

Writing about theatre and political repression, Mbowa articulates a deeper impression of the impact of colonial processes on the cultural arts arguing that, 'the colonial authorities stood by Her Royal Majesty's order to David Livingstone (a 19<sup>th</sup> century Christian missionary to Africa and explorer) to civilise the natives and introduce commerce with untold consequences' (1994: 124). Mbowa adds that 'in the schools, colleges and churches, the integrated traditional performance art form was put to pieces, compartmentalised into choral music classes and drama clubs, Scottish country dancing, the teaching of Shakespeare and other scripted British Drama' (Mbowa, 1994; see also Muhumuza, 2014: 17; Ntangaare & Breitinger, 2000: 224). In fact many of Uganda's missionary founded-schools were purposely facilitated with halls fitted with proscenium arch stages to promote the performance of the English classics, with the view that as students mastered the dialogue, they would in effect master the English language. (Macpherson, 2000, cited in Muhumuza 2014: 17).

The above colonial legacy on the arts and culture implies that TfD in the postcolonial world advanced in communities that had adopted the western and capitalist notion of theatre and developed a negative feeling toward their own art forms. This study analyses how this colonial history plays out in contemporary TfD practice in Uganda. A key question it seeks to ask is: Have the TfD practitioners made effort to reinvent the pre-colonial cultural experience where performance was participatory and fostered the wellbeing of the community in terms of its social, psychological and intellectual needs?

Furthermore, discussions about TfD as a postcolonial movement entail an analysis of how TfD has been deployed as a tool of decolonisation. Decolonisation here is defined as a process that 'not only involves the political transformation of nation-states but also the articulation and transformation of dominant ideologies at the level of communities and individual bodies' (Perry, 2012: 103).

In her 2012 article, Perry reflects on the possibility of deploying applied theatre as a tool of decolonisation. Writing about image theatre, a commonly used Boalian method in TfD processes in Africa, Perry argues that 'it is a holistic process which employs a counter-discursive, embodied language which invites participants to play in the space between aesthetic representation and social reality for the purpose of developing counter-hegemonic stories, identities and subjectivities' (2012: 103).

Within the context of decolonisation, TfD is seen as a cultural practice which highlights the primacy of embodied knowledge where intellectual, emotional and spiritual encounters occur physically between bodies, and the enactments and re-enactments of which are fodder for reflection, dialogue, the articulation of counter-discursive identities and rehearsal for social transformation (2012: 106).

Amkpa, another postcolonial studies scholar, discusses the postcolonial as a process which occurs not at some point after the emergence of political decolonisation but rather as a process that takes place simultaneously with moments of oppression. Amkpa describes the postcolonial process as one of people coming to terms with the reality of domination and consequently formulating strategies that limit oppressive forces, ultimately transforming themselves from the objects of social reality to subjects of social reality (2006). Amkpa highlights theatre's capacity to invoke what he coins

'postcolonial desire': an act of refusal to assume that passive, static essentialist identity of colonial domination which begins at the very moment in which the subordinated understand their subjugation and launch strategies of defiance and change (2006: 167). Consequently, the overarching question in the discussion of the link between colonialism and TfD in contemporary Ugandan practice is: how far has TfD in Uganda been used as a tool of decolonisation or a process that transforms a colonial/neo-colonial situation into a postcolonial one?

### **3.2.2 Exploring TfD in the context of Globalization**

The concept of postcolonialism discussed above has been closely linked to another socio-political, economic and cultural process: globalisation. The link between globalisation and postcolonialism is evidenced by Ashcroft *et al* who have argued that:

not only does globalisation seem to be a natural extension of the interests of post-colonial studies, but... globalisation discourse has been overwhelmingly influenced by post-colonial terminology over the last decade [. . .] we cannot understand globalisation without understanding the structure of global power relations that flourishes in the twenty first century as an economic, cultural and political legacy of Western imperialism (2006b: 6-7).

Also linking globalisation and postcolonialism together, Simon Gikandi argues that: 'Globalisation and postcoloniality are perhaps two of the most important terms in social and cultural theory today. Since the 1980s, they have functioned as two of the dominant paradigms for explaining the transformation of political and economic relationships [. . .]' (2006: 473).

In order to contextualise TfD in the context of globalisation, it is imperative to expound on the concept of globalisation by exploring its various facets. Manfred Steger (2003) reflects on a plethora of definitions of globalisation by various scholars. Among the many definitions is one offered by Anthony Giddens that, 'globalisation is the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (2003: 10). In his work on *Theatre and Globalisation*, Dan Rebellato defines globalisation as 'the rise of global capitalism under neoliberal policy conditions (2009:

12). Reflecting on Rebellato's definition of globalisation, Barry Freeman and Catherine Graham note that:

This is the globalisation of the multi-national capital, of the global outsourcing of labour and of increased inequalities of wealth. A complex phenomenon or set of phenomena, it has been led by the West and can be said to be having both positive and negative political, social and cultural consequences the world over (2014: 05).

Drawing from the probable impacts of globalisation as pointed out by Freeman and Graham above, one notes that globalisation is a multidimensional phenomenon; covering the economic, political and cultural perspectives. The discussion subsequently expounds on each of these facets, beginning with economic globalisation.

According to Steger, 'contemporary economic globalisation can be traced back to the gradual emergence of a new international economic order developed at Bretton Woods' (2003: 37). The key feature of the Bretton Woods economic conference was the commitment by the major economic powers of the global North—the United States and Great Britain to the expansion of international trade and establishing binding rules on international economic activities.

Grounded on the principle of 'controlled capitalism' (Steger, 2003: 38), the Bretton Woods system collapsed in the 1970s and was replaced by a neoliberal approach to economic and social policy which advocates the removal of controls on global financial flows. Neoliberalism is rooted in the classical liberal ideas of Adam Smith (1723-90) and David Ricardo (1772-1823). The duo viewed the market as a self-regulating mechanism tending toward equilibrium of supply and demand, thus securing the most efficient allocation of resources (2003). Neoliberalism has also been described as 'the neoliberal Washington consensus'(2009: 184) to denote 'an array of market principles designed by the government of the United States and the financial institutions which it largely dominates [ . . . ]' (2009: 184).

The hallmark of neoliberalism is the notion of 'international capitalism' which is characterised by internationalisation of trade and finance, the increasing power of transnational corporations and the enhanced role of economic institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The political dimension of globalisation relates to what Steger has described as ‘the intensification and expansion of political interrelation across the globe’ (2003: 56). As Steger has pointed out, political globalisation raises an important set of ‘political issues pertaining to the principle of state sovereignty, the growing impact of intergovernmental organisations and the future of regional and global governance’(2003: 56-6, see also Appandurai, 1996: 19). Commenting on the sovereignty of the state in directing political and social affairs, Steger articulates a view by apologists of globalisation—the hyper-globalisers who argue that the state is no longer relevant. Steger reveals that for this group of commentators, ‘political power is located in the global social formations and expressed through global networks rather than through territorially based states’ (2003: 61).

In the context of this study, if the state-global power relationship implied by the hyper-globalisers is narrowed down from the state to small communities which are normally the focus of TfD processes, it can be concluded that the communities are involved in a complex sovereign struggle to determine themselves. It means that there is a possibility that TfD processes in communities continue to be controlled by global networks through the global capital machinery. One of the key contradictions is that these global networks as suggested above are controlled by powerful nation-states such as USA and Britain.

Cultural globalisation refers to ‘the intensification and expansion of cultural flows across the global [. . .] It is concerned with the symbolic construction, articulation, and dissemination of meaning’ (2003: 69). With the looming cultural trends of globalisation, there has been increasing interest in understanding how the global relates with the local (see for example, Etherton & Prentki, 2006: 141; Prentki, 2007: 196). This has been expressed in globalisation terminologies such as ‘glocalisation’, a term formed by ‘telescoping *global* and *local* to make a blend’ (Robertson, 2006; Tulloch, 1991). According to Roland Robertson, ‘the local-global problematic hinge upon the view that contemporary conceptions of locality are largely produced in something like global terms [. . .] An important thing to recognise in this connection is that there is an increasingly global wide discourse of locality, community, home and the like’ (2006).

The cultural dimension of globalisation relates to the ongoing postcolonial processes of cultural interaction/intercultural communication and travelling cultures which need to be critically explored in a thesis on TfD at hand since they provoke questions that relate to performances of power. Kagoloby (2014) discovered that intercultural communication is laden with socio-economic and socio-political objectives which are entrenched in power operations. He argues that the development of intercultural communication as a field in the USA is strongly reminiscent of the discourse of colonial administration in Britain (2014: 36). To substantiate his claim, he avers that as the leader of the victors after the Second World War, the USA wanted to position itself politically and economically by using intercultural communication as a method of dealing with other nations which had different cultural underpinnings than its own in the 1950s (Kagoloby, 2014: 36-37). This also seems to imply that intercultural interactions and communication are closely linked with neo-colonial tendencies, an issue which needs to be considered when especially analysing TfD practices involving practitioners from abroad.

In the recent studies on intercultural communication and interaction, there is a growing interest in analysing the power dynamics involved in intercultural encounters. For example, Asante *et al* point to the need to examine the “impact of power on communication equality and mutuality” and “the nature and role of power in communication across cultures.” (2008: 3-4). Elaborating on the power dynamics in intercultural communication, Asante says:

I emphasize that intercultural communication at the international or national level is a matter of power. The proper discussion of intercultural communication seems to reside in the examination of power relationships between people. Societies where cultural differences exist and are the bases for misunderstandings, the central problem is an imbalance of power ... Power relationships dictate so much of what is right, correct, logical and reasonable. The limits are drawn by those who wield the economic, political and cultural power (2008:48).

The issue of the impact of power on communication equality and mutuality is fittingly relevant to analysing work involving TfD experts from abroad. As such, in analysing such practices, the study will subsequently ask: how far did the process foster a dialogical encounter with communities? To what extent were the international



practitioners able to diffuse their positions of power as persons considered superior because of their Global North connections and their perceived economic power to engender a balance in power?

Martin and Nakayama (2008: 77) concur with Asante (2008: 47) when they assert that, 'in recent culture and communication research, there is a new interest in analysing the context of intercultural communication, power, relevance and the destabilising aspects of culture in intercultural communication encounters.' So, in analysing processes involving practitioners from overseas I will seek to understand whether their work had a destabilising factor on the communities.

The notion of travelling cultures is quite related to the critical aspects of intercultural communication and interaction above. While this concept is mostly linked by Kagolobya (2014) to the US's cultural imperialism, I suggest it could be useful in understanding how developed countries of the North including Britain relate with the cultures of the developing South. The concept of "travelling cultures" is explored by Elteren, (2003) who explains that it hinges on 'how cultural languages travel to new areas and how they are appropriated by individuals of other cultures to tell their story' (2003: 172). At the same time Elteren (2003: 172) notes that "the idea of travelling cultures ignores the imposition of cultural behaviours on other peoples' cultures through "behavioural and structural forms of power". In analysing practice by global experts, I will investigate whether practitioners from overseas imposed their cultural behaviour on the community and the implication of this on the TfD process.

### **3.2.3 Considering TfD in the framework of Global Neoliberalism**

In the above discussion on globalisation, it has emerged that international capitalism is at the heart of global development processes. This begets the question: What are the implications of global capitalism engineered by the neoliberal culture for TfD practice in the developing world and Uganda in particular? Scholars in the field of TfD and empowerment discourse such as Chantal Mouffe (2009), Kerr (1991), Prentki (2009a) and Renato Constantino (2009), have reflected about the possibility of neoliberalism fostering balanced and equitable development and expressed profound levels of scepticism. For Mouffe, neoliberalism is a form of political hegemony which

claims that there is no alternative to the existing order (2009: 78). Responding to the economic manifestations of globalisation, Kerr suggests that:

[. . .] there are great dangers that the liberalization campaign will be used to impoverish Africa even more brutally than in the past. Reduced social services and frequent devaluations associated with Structural Adjustment Programs are part of the cost that is being exacted from the poor to pay for the profligacy of former and present elites as well as for the rashness and cupidity of Northern financial institutions (1991: 70).

Similarly, commenting about the place of applied theatre in the context of globalisation, Prentki asserts that:

The global imposition of the neoliberal economic agenda has resulted in more and more aspects of human life, such as health, education and even the function of a parent becoming reduced to business transactions. In the global 'free' market of buying and selling, people are defined by what they own, by the exercise of purchasing power. Those with nothing to sell and no means of buying are excluded not only from economic participation but, increasingly, from participation in the spheres of culture, education and health [. . .] (2009a: 364).

Writing about synthetic culture and development, Constantino (2009) is critical of the transnationalisation of communication which is an aspect of cultural globalisation. He argues that 'transnationalisation of communications has almost completely shattered the cultural defences of developing nations. The very existence of indigenous cultures is threatened with massive modifications as western culture is presented as a culture which every modernising state must emulate' (2009: 314). In Constantino's view, the culture being disseminated from the developed North to the South is one which colonises life experiences, a new form of colonialism—neo-colonialism. He notes that:

Reality is reordered and class conflicts and other political questions are glossed over. The ruling class colonises the life experiences of other classes in order to give its own values an appearance of universality. Thus, the culture disseminated is one that ignores class conflict, and is not part of the political struggle (2009: 315).

One very critical feature of globalisation which may have profound implications for the participatory practice of TfD is that cultural, economic and political ideological flow is unidirectional, culminating in what Prentki has described as 'a global monological

culture' (see Prentki, 2003: 39, 2006: 03, 2009: 20); a situation where the story of developing communities is told from one perspective—the perspective of the technologically advanced countries of the North, usually the United States and Great Britain. Insinuating the reality of a globalised monoculture, Constantino notes that 'cultural domination is facilitated by the fact that the third world audiences have become reduced to passive recipients of information from monopolies. Cultural experience is limited to seeing, hearing, and to a lesser extent reading pre-digested and packaged products...' (2009: 316). Commenting further on the dangers of the globalised monoculture, Constantino raises the issue of ideological dependence where 'popular culture as dispensed by television and video tapes is consumed in isolation and has produced a fragmented, escapist, pliable and largely unthinking audience' (2009: 317). Prentki expresses similar sentiments, arguing that 'most contemporary modes of communication reach us in private and isolated settings where it is much easier to appeal to our individualism and to create the illusion that we do not operate in social formations but only as selfish beings...' (2007: 195).

In light of the neoliberal culture discussed above, recent scholarship in performance theory—and TfD practice in particular—has made an effort to explore ways through which TfD can be applied in such a way that it facilitates the process of breaking the globalised monological culture and address the adverse effects of global capitalism/neoliberalism. To put it in another way, there has been a quest to transform TfD into a practice that seeks to circumvent neo-colonial tendencies, nourished by globalisation into a real postcolonial force that empowers communities to see the contradictions underpinning their oppression both in the local and in the global spheres leading to a dialogical culture. In modern performance theory, attempts to counter the power of neoliberalism have been made, by re-envisioning how local performance may relate with the global (see Freeman & Catherine, 2014 for a deeper understanding of this discourse). This has led to a new framework termed as alter-globalisation. Writing about alter-globalisation, Pleyers suggests that alter-globalisation is a call for those who want to become actors, rather than passive recipients of new visions of the global, to 'create autonomous spaces delivered from power relations where they experiment with horizontal networks, alternative consumption and participatory processes' (2010: 12).

At the forefront of re-envisioning TfD in the broader politics of global neoliberalism has been the research and practice of TfD scholar Tim Prentki (see Prentki, 1998, 2006a, 2007, 2009a). In Prentki's view:

Globalisation presents development agencies and hence TfD with new challenges on an almost daily basis. Former, at least partially stable notions of community have had to be revised in the wake of global and internal migration that locates the global in the local and the local in the global. What were once impassable distinctions between first world and third worlds and between the south and the north are now porous resulting in angry juxtapositions of wealth and poverty in all parts of the globe. TfD has to respond to these new geographies by recognising potential applications as they emerge next door as well as on the other side of the world ( 2006b: xvi).

In his article "From neo-colonial to the postcolonial", Prentki suggests that since TfD, like any grassroots activism is susceptible to both the economic and cultural impacts of globalisation, it is essential not only to focus on the details of local narratives and characters but also look at the global view through 'globalising contradiction' (Prentki, 2007: 198).

Prentki thus implies that the deployment of TfD as a tool of analysis needs to 'involve a practical exploration of the impact of the global in the local and of the local in the global' (2007: 198-199). He points out that the challenge of TfD is 'to become a form of cultural intervention that brings the local realities of poverty, privatised health care, school fees—abuse of human rights—into a contradictory relationship with the global constructs of neoliberalism ' (Prentki, 2008: 104).

Through globalising contradiction, the TfD process becomes an opportunity of empowering the communities to analyse how their prevailing predicament could be a result of larger forces in the local, national and global or international realms. Prentki notes that 'in the reigning globalised neoliberal world, theatre for development needs to be a site or a process where 'the formally (sic) colonised 'other' answers back from the colony at the centre, effectively transforming a neo-colonial situation to a postcolonial one' (Tim Prentki, 2007: 199).

To counter the emergence of a globalised monoculture Prentki suggests that 'TfD be constituted as a performance of global consciousness; a dialogical antidote to the monological operations of media imperialism' (2007: 200).

### **3. 2. 4 The Operations of Global Capitalism in TfD Practice**

This section attempts to provide evidence on how TfD may be shaped by global capitalism in order to analyse Ugandan practices. It is the influence of international capital which resulted in the dissatisfaction of TfD scholar Jamil Ahmed with his country Bangladesh and in effect, caused him to 'wish for a world without TfD' (see Ahmed & Hughes, 2015; Ahmed, 2002). In his 2002 article, Ahmed vividly articulates how NGOs, the major players in the practice of TfD in Bangladesh, served as accomplices of global capital instead of championing for the involvement of the communities in working out their development. In Ahmed's analysis, 'through subtle manipulation, the interests of multi-national capital determined the donor's agendas, which in turn determined the issues taken up by the NGOs in their plays—all in the name of the people' (2002: 207).

As Plastow (2014) has suggested, the power of international development funders in developing countries is normally immense given that they work in situations where people, operating in a hand-to-mouth style, are desperate for economic survival and therefore will abide by any proposals from such organisations with little or no objections. Owen Seda and Nehemiah Chivandikwa (2014) attest to the susceptibility of economically starving TfD facilitators in the developing Southern countries to the power excesses of the international sponsors. Writing about their experience as facilitators in a TfD project funded by Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) International in Zimbabwe, the duo report how they were powerless to protest being signatory to contracts whose terms were decided by one party—CARE. They note that:

The fact that neither the facilitators nor the group in Zvishavane made any attempt to contest this arrangement may however be viewed from the perspective of our (severely)jointly weakened economic position in the circumstances of the country's rapidly collapsing economy and a hyper-inflationary environment where any opportunity to make an extra income, particularly in the service of a reputable international organisation such as CARE Zimbabwe would have been embraced by any group with little or no hesitation (Seda & Chivandikwa, 2014: 148).

The link between TfD programmes and international capital has profound implications on how practitioners go about their work and on the potential of TfD as a

tool for conscientisation. It may produce two closely related problems namely, the failure to adhere to ethics of practice and the problem of unbalanced power dynamics.

In terms of the impact of multi-national capital on the ethics of TfD practice, there has been a tendency to venture into the practice of TfD to privilege personal economic gains at the expense of effective engagement of the communities involved in a participatory process. This is usually a consequence of the notion shared by practitioners that there is a reserve of money from donor agencies which can be easily tapped into.

This ethical dilemma is illustrated by Christopher Odhiambo's experience. In researching how the coming together of different stakeholders such as NGOs, artists, politicians and underprivileged communities relates to the ethics of practice in TfD, Christopher Odhiambo (2005) discovered that most of the budding TfD practitioners in Kenya were driven by personal survival rather than a commitment to transform the disadvantaged communities. One of the questions Odhiambo asked his informants— theatre practitioners in Kenya—related to the motivation behind their involvement in TfD work. His research revealed that about 90% of the practitioners entered the field of TfD because it was an avenue for employment and that they perceived an abundance of funding from donors for TfD projects dealing with 'burning issues' such as HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation (FGM), civic education, conflict resolution and peace building, wildlife conservation, and gender sensitisation among others (Odhiambo, 2005: 192).

It is worth mentioning, however, that, it is not a professional blunder to seek funding for TfD activities. It is apparent that every programme that is envisaged to have a lasting impact on the community needs funding to facilitate its logistical aspects. For example without funding, how would the theatre practitioner finance his or her transport to the community? An unethical aspect of the TfD-funding relationship emerges when the people enter it with economic survival as the overriding motivation, since it adversely impacts the goals of TfD practice—conscientisation and empowerment.

As Odhiambo has argued, 'when the artists go into TfD to elevate their economic status, they are used to impose the agendas of the donors and NGOs which may not be of significant value to the community' (2005: 192). Also, when the chief aim is economic survival, little care is given to the process of effective practice in TfD. In such scenarios,

the eventual output of importance is putting up a performance about a certain issue, followed by a report to funders outlining the quantitative values of the project such as how many people attended.

In Uganda, some scholars such as Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare and Dan Isiko Kisense have analysed the link between TfD practice and funding and like Odhiambo (2005), concluded that TfD practice in Uganda is largely motivated by the drive for economic survival. In a 2011 interview, when responding to the question about the relationship between contemporary TfD practice and funding Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare observed that:

In my opinion, TfD does not exist as a form in its own right in Uganda because it emerges out of the search for survival. Many of the practitioners of TfD are not trained artists or dramatists. It is just an opportunity for them to go out and conduct something and at the end earn. I am convinced that the motivation in TfD is not to have a genuine form but earning. I am also convinced that the reason why people go on coining new terms and labels in theatre is survival. When you exhaust the economic potential of one term you coin another to become more attractive and sellable. I say there is a big relationship between TfD and money because TfD in Uganda became popular when we had a lot of donors. These donors, because they wanted to pass on a message were looking for easiest means to do so. In Uganda, in the mid-1980 and early 1990s we had only one radio station —Radio Uganda, one television and newspapers were not circulating effectively. In that situation where there were no radios, no TVs, no newspapers, only theatre could be used that is why the donors noted that they could now use the arts of the people, namely drama, songs, dance, and games. But look at the time when the donors ended their programmes in that area and when they no longer commission projects and facilitators to take TfD to the people. Do we still have it? Don't we still need development? Are we so developed such that that we no longer need TfD. This is why I say TfD practice is largely motivated by the money factor (Mirembe Mercy Ntangaare, 2011, see appendix 12).

As Ntangaare has argued, there were many TfD projects implemented in the late 1980s and 1990s largely because of the proliferation of donor funding with the view of intervening in Uganda's dire socio-political situation, which had been broken down by decades of political turmoil. Many of these projects such as the Music Dance and Drama festivals of the early 1990s, the School Health Education Programme (SHEP), the theatre project involving the mobilisation of communities in the making of the new constitution were largely unidirectional and message oriented.

In an interview with Dan Isiko Kisense on the relationship between sponsorship and TfD practice and how this relationship impacts the theory and practice of TfD in Uganda, he responded that:

When you talk about TfD and the aspect of funding, it touches my own feeling. Can TfD exist without funding? My own thinking is that the people who have gone into this TfD practice have made it that, the two things—TfD and funding go hand in hand but it is the funding which comes first and the practice comes after. People who have rushed into TfD practice have done it because there is a funding factor or they smell some funding into it. To go into TfD because people are professionals and good hearted; that they know that they can be able to have an impact on the community; I would tell you that I do not know of that. Either there is a funding opportunity they smell or there is funding already on the table. Then they will go to justify the funding. So it is the funding factor that comes first and the practice follows. The money element has come in so that even people, who should be practicing purely conventional theatre, go into it. The money element has come in so much that the sustainability of TfD in Uganda here looks impossible without the funding. Even the theatre groups that have been saying that TfD is their business; groups such as IATM who have been saying that they are the leaders of the anti-corruption campaign, when there is money they make a play, but when the money is finished, they keep quiet and corruption goes on the rise (Kisense, 2011, see appendix 11).

The discussion in the subsequent chapter will demonstrate through case study analyses how contemporary TfD practice in Uganda is shaped by the above realities of funding.

Turning to the problem of power relations between the funding agencies and the practitioners, it has been noted that when theatre practitioners receive funding from a particular agency, it automatically creates power rifts relating to who controls the project. In most instances, it is the funding agency which wields the power to direct the trends of events while the theatre practitioner is expected to simply comply. This results into a tendency for 'most theatre groups/organisations to be preoccupied with meeting the requirements of donors resulting in interventions that are based on patronage, dependency and surveillance' (Chinyowa, 2011: 353).

Prentki and Preston, in their introduction to *The Applied Theatre Reader* have rightly argued that, 'it is often very subtle and politically complicated business to facilitate without becoming a prey to the agendas of the sponsors; agendas that may contradict those of the participants' (Prentki & Preston, 2009: 14). More often than not,



funding agencies have their own pre-defined goals and objectives with which the theatre practitioners have to abide. Theatre practitioners find themselves restricted to what the funding agencies consider to be important issues (for example women's empowerment, environment conservation, education of young girls, good governance) and having to fit in the geographical area of operation of the funding agency. In this vein, Prentki and Selman accurately argue that:

There is thus a tendency for the aims of the funders to act as the gate keepers of popular theatre. This may happen overtly in so far as each agency has its own agenda to which proposals must conform: as a response to declared priorities or in case of bodies that receive their fund from governments, according to the usually unstated but nevertheless understood ideological frameworks with which those governments operate. But equally it may happen as a consequence of self-censorship [. . .] (2003: 195).

Consequently, instead of facilitating a process of self-determination among the communities, the theatre process becomes a project of merely implementing exogenously determined agendas. Commenting on theatre programmes sponsored by the government, Musa expresses similar fears pointing out that:

Government intervention in subsidizing theatre groups and facilities does influence, howbeit in a restrained way, the kinds of plays the theatres produce. This also applies to forum theatre and community theatre when the government is seen as an active player on the scene [. . .] Certainly, when the government holds the purse, it also pulls the lever. And experience has shown that political regimes in non-democratic and less developed democracies are not committed to conscientizing or empowering the populace (1998: 148).

Musa's argument above implies that governments will in most cases control the programmes of theatre practices to ensure that these practices do not threaten the status quo. Boon and Plastow comment on the prevailing politics of funding in TfD and argue that, 'the desire to ring-fence certain areas of concern and to fund only immediately and obvious related arts activities are to do with "domestication": the desire to control people rather than liberate communities and individuals' (2004: 07).

Second, the relationship between TfD and global capital has often produced another crucial issue which is the continuity or sustainability of TfD projects. This issue is quite critical given that most TfD projects supported by international development funding are normally one-off experiences. While the practitioners may be aware of the

benefits of a sustained process of community engagement by proposing a series of follow-up activities for the projects, they normally find themselves unable to take the projects to the next level.

Asif Munier and Michael Etherton argue that this failure to sustain the projects is usually caused by the international NGO that funded the initial training workshop when they fail to fund the planned follow-up (Munier & Etherton, 2006: 179). Reporting their experience of a child rights TfD project in rural Bangladesh, which was just a one-off workshop experience, Munier and Etherton expound on the question pertaining to 'the sustainability of TfD within the structure of international aid and development' (2006: 175). They reveal that while the TfD workshop experience conducted five years earlier had produced a positive impact in the community such as raising parents' consciousness on the value of education and improving the confidence of the children involved, the members of the community, particularly the children who participated, felt that the process should have been sustained to help them continue being agents of their own change.

### **3.3 Conclusion: Towards a Critical Framework for analysing TfD practice in Uganda**

In conclusion, this chapter has been significant in developing a conceptual and critical framework for this study. The relevance of this critical framework in analysing contemporary TfD practice in Uganda in the subsequent chapters needs to be deciphered at two levels. There are some aspects of the framework which could be applied to an analysis of practices by local practitioners, international practitioners and my own practice. In this instance, I set out to interrogate the extent to which the work of both local and international practitioners adheres to the core principles of effective TfD practice. These principles of effective practice have been examined under the core principles of TfD in the opening sections of this chapter. To answer the question about the kind of TfD being practiced in Uganda, one of the research questions of this study, I seek to examine the nature and extent of community participation through participatory research and collective performance, the amount of time allocated to the process and issues of balance of power in the development communication equation. I ask: whose

voices are being privileged in the TfD process—the members of the community who take the central roles in the process, or is it the theatre facilitators who think for the people and impose their exogenously designed programme on the people? To what extent does the process emerge from Prentki's notions of “story” and “passions” of the community (2003: 41-42). In all cases attempt is made to investigate whether the practitioners involved transformed into what Gramsci describes as an ‘organic intellectual’ (see Chinyowa, 2007: 11); persons who learn together with the community.

Issues related to funding and sponsorship already explored in this chapter cut across both the practice by local and foreign practitioners. In this case I query: who holds the power in the TfD process: is it the funder or the practitioner and how does this impact the dynamics and quality of the process?

Conversely, there are some aspects of the framework which only apply to analysing work by international practitioners who have played a vital part in Uganda's TfD practice. TfD practice by foreign or international practitioners such as Plastow brings in dimensions of postcolonialism and international and/or global interactions which effectively require this study to consider notions of globalisation and all its manifestations—cultural, economic and political. These issues have already been explored in this chapter under postcolonialism and globalisation. In the discussion on postcolonialism and neo-colonialism, it was noted that there continues to be an imbalance in the power relationship between the developing formerly colonised states in the Global South and the developed countries of the North. It was noted that there continues to be a centre to periphery relationship where cultural, economic and political power moves in one direction—from the North to the South. This is what Prentki describes as a ‘globalised monological culture’ (2003: 39, 2006: 03, 2009: 20). In analysing the practice by international practitioners, these notions will be brought into play.

**Chapter Four**  
**Contemporary Ugandan TfD Practices,**  
**Global Capitalism & Neo-Colonialism**  
**(2000-2012)**

**4.0 Introduction**

In chapter two, I examined the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings of TfD through a literature review. The chapter was significant in providing the framework through which to analyse the contemporary Ugandan TfD practices. In this chapter, I focus on the case studies of contemporary TfD practice in Uganda to answer the questions: what is the nature of the practice in Uganda? To what extent have the practitioners adhered to the basic tenets underpinning TfD practice such as giving voice, participation, and balancing the dynamics of power? How far are the dynamics of sponsorship and global capitalism shaping TfD practice in Uganda? By presenting data obtained through interviews with the local TfD practitioners, analysis of available archival evidence and field notes, I demonstrate that the colonial agitprop or top-down practice as highlighted in chapter one of this study still persists in contemporary Ugandan TfD practice and that the practice by indigenous practitioners has not developed into the desired practice of theatre for conscientisation.

As postulated at the beginning of this study, the discussion in this chapter shows that the major force playing against the development of theatre for conscientisation, is the framework of international capital in which the practice takes place. The power of international capital results in the TfD process shifting from being one where communities are given the opportunity to express their heartfelt needs, to one which promotes exogenously determined programmes of the international funders.

Whereas the goals and objectives of international development bodies may not always be neoliberal and neocolonial, the discussion on postcolonialism and TfD in Chapter Three has revealed a lot about North-South development partnerships. Munyaradzi & Low's (2015) argument indicates that, while development entities from the North come to the South under the guise of development, they are normally emissaries of neocolonialism. This is because their aid comes with strings attached. This is evident in Uganda's experience of international aid. Development aid from the

World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to finance post-war development in Uganda in the 1990s came with conditions such as downsizing the civil service and the armed forces, privatisation of parastatals, and introduction of cost sharing in the provision of public services such as health and education. Uganda had to implement these conditions without question, or forego the aid. Where there is an intention of mutual partnership in North-South interactions, the partners in the South are normally constrained by their disadvantaged economic status. As a result, they fail to make equal financial and material contribution toward the implementation of the project, leaving the partners from the North to take substantial financial responsibility of the project. Kagolobya's (2014) study of North-South collaborations discovered that when much of the funding for projects in the South comes from the North, Northern partners find a leverage position to control the projects and determine the direction of the work.

The case studies explored in this chapter are the International Anti-corruption Theatre Movement (IATM), the German Agency for International Development and Cooperation (GIZ) projects in Karamoja and work done by RafikiTheatre Company.

## **4.1 Analysing IATM's TfD Practice**

### **4.1.1 A Brief History of IATM's Practice and Activities**

IATM is one of the few theatre companies in Uganda that professes to facilitate Theatre for Development using Augusto Boal's forum theatre techniques. According to Fred Musisi, the programme officer of IATM, IATM was founded in 1997 at a meeting in Arusha in Tanzania as a regional organisation covering the Eastern, Southern and Central African regions. The initial idea was to use theatre in those regions to contribute to the fight against corruption. Since the organisation had a regional scope, representatives from different countries had to found national chapters in their respective countries. Upon returning to Uganda from Arusha, the participants from Uganda networked and founded the IATM-Uganda Chapter.

Musisi revealed that IATM's initial projects and programmes in the early 2000s involved running the anti-corruption week in conjunction with other organizations such as Transparency International-Uganda and Uganda Debt Network; organisations that

were at the fore-front in the fight against corruption in Uganda. According to Fred Musisi, IATM's initial input as a theatre oriented organization was to promote theatre training by working with upcountry theatre groups to mobilise and sensitise the communities about corruption. However, in 2005, IATM got involved in a continuous programme of using the forum theatre approach as a tool to build and deepen local democracy.

In Fred Musisi's view, one of the challenges in Uganda is that there are so many good legislations, policies and government programmes but either deliberately or because of meagre resources, the government does very little to encourage its citizens to know and appreciate these programmes. For this reason, IATM focused on mobilising people through theatre so that they could participate in these programmes and change their attitude towards governance (Musisi, 2011).

In 2005, IATM used forum theatre to elicit discussion among communities so that they could participate in Uganda's political transition. This was a period when Uganda was moving from the broad based movement political system or no party system, to a multiparty political system. To facilitate this programme, they (IATM) wrote the play *Kiira's Family* and performed it in various parts of the country. The play was mainly performed after the referendum on political systems in 2006; a time when Uganda was organising its first multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections after 20 years of a ban on the activities of political parties. The objective of *Kiira's Family* was to highlight the critical issues that were associated with evolving from a broad based no party political system to multi-party politics and how best the country could address them. Musisi argued that looking at the political landscape in Uganda many people still had issues with political pluralism (Musisi 2011).

In a continued attempt to deepen local democracy, IATM devised a play titled *People's Power* aimed at sensitising people in the wake of the February 2011 elections. They toured the country performing the play. *People's Power* basically highlighted the role of a member of parliament because, according to Kakaire (one of the practitioners at IATM), IATM had through a survey realized that both the electorate and the candidates did not discuss such issues during election campaigns (Kakaire, 2011). Whereas members of parliament are supposed to represent the views of their

constituents in the legislature, parliamentary candidates would promise the constituents physical infrastructural developments such as roads, schools and hospitals. This was tantamount to lying to the electorate since such physical infrastructures in Uganda are usually provided by the local government and the central government through capitation grants for the decentralisation programme. Kakaire noted that IATM's research had revealed that the politicians knew that people were ignorant; that they were only interested in small bribes. Politicians would therefore bribe the voters using small items such as a kilogram of sugar, a bar of soap and salt. Accordingly, through the play *People's Power*, IATM was highlighting the fact that if people accept bribes for their votes, they would not only be selling their vote but also selling their conscience. The play pointed out the fact that by accepting a bribe in order to vote, the electorate would never be able to get respect from the politicians because they would know that their votes were worth little money, either 1000 or 5000 Ugandan shillings. For that matter, the politicians would not need to consult the voters on anything that goes on in parliament; they would simply make their own decisions.

This particular play was taken to several districts in Uganda such as Koboko, Nakapiripirit, Iganga, Hoima, Buliisa, Masindi and Kibaale in an expedition IATM named 'democracy caravan.' In the next section, I analyse the nature of IATM's practice to demonstrate the extent to which their work meets the basic criteria of theatre for conscientisation.

#### **4.1.2 The Nature of IATM's Tfd Practice**

To understand the nature of IATM's practice, I begin by looking at the procedure of their work at the time of the fieldwork in 2011 and 2014. Commenting on the process of executing their forum theatre programme in a 2011 interview, Musisi explained that:

Before we reach a stage of developing a play, we do a number of things. We consult the national policies and national development programme documents. For example right now the major document we repeatedly refer to is the National Development Plan of 2010. Then we decide that we are going to work in particular districts. We visit the districts and in each of these districts we develop partnerships with entities such as district local government, NGOs and community based groups. We tell our partners, this is what we want to address. There is this national legislation or policy document but it could have some

gaps. What is the situation on the ground? Because developing a forum theatre play is not as easy as writing any other play we first do research and understand what is on the ground. We even go to the level of getting names of characters that can capture people so that we localize the issue. So, during performance, people are not only able to identify with the issues in the play but also the characters and situations. They appreciate that this is their situation. During the deepening local democracy project we would work with community based groups. We would not travel with our own actors to the communities. We would go and work with community based groups, train them, introduce the play and if they felt that there were any local issues to include in that play we would adjust the play accordingly. Then we would take the group on a vehicle with our public address system to various centres and perform there (Musisi, 2011).

Considering the above explanation of IATM's procedure, it is apparent that one of the shortfalls of IATM's practice at the time of my fieldwork related to lack of community participation in the process of identifying the issues addressed by the theatre and the creative process. Musisi's account of the work of IATM revealed reliance on traditional research approaches as opposed to participatory research techniques espoused in TfD processes. Instead of researching the problems affecting the communities by closely working with the communities using participatory research techniques such as storytelling, games and exercises, creating images, drawing pictures among others, IATM consulted government documents as research into people's problems. They then used the information acquired to write what they described as forum theatre plays which were later performed in the communities. That way, IATM's approach to TfD research at the time of my field work was what Ledwith describes as 'research on people's problems' and not the desired, empowering 'research with people on their needs' (2005: 73).

In its creative process, IATM adopted a conventional approach to playwriting which digressed from the ideal TfD process of collective devising in which the community was meant to participate spontaneously in creating the performance pieces. In fact, IATM envisioned the creative process in terms of expert-led" playwriting which as Musisi in the narrative of their procedure above has noted is 'even more demanding than writing any other play' (Musisi, 2011). Envisioning their work in terms of such playwriting denied the people of the value inherent in collective creation and devising; that is, deeper analysis and interpretation of issues that underpin their lives. Collective creation is an



ideal which builds on people's passions and it means that the TfD process is a result of the combined effort of people in the target community in such a way that the people themselves decide on its subject matter, create the storyline and volunteer as actors. IATM's approach to TfD work deprived the communities of an opportunity to engage in a spontaneous process of not only telling stories relating to their needs or problems but also the process of collectively unveiling the contradictions underpinning their oppression.

Generally, because of adopting the traditional research paradigm and the expert-led playwriting approach, IATM employed a top-down approach to addressing the problems faced by the communities as opposed to the bottom-up approach desired in participatory TfD practice. Its model of applying theatre was largely product-oriented and not process-based as desired in the application of TfD. Okagbu offers a scathing critique of the product model arguing that:

the main danger with the product oriented approach or programme of Theatre for Development is the inherent adhocism which it brings about [. . .] an adhocism born out of a consumerist and capitalist ethics—an ethics in which there is always the necessity to differentiate between the producer and the consumer, the haves and the have-nots and by extension in TfD, the performer and the spectator. [. . .] the problem and temptation then for these theatre workers in a product—driven Theatre for Development work is that very often they fall into the seductive trap of the savior syndrome in which they begin to see themselves as outside experts or redeemers who are bringing development to the oppressed through their messages of innovation and salvation (1998: 38).

Contrary to the savior syndrome highlighted by Okagbu in the citation above, effective practice of participation in TfD, works on the grand ethical principle that the relationship between practitioner and community members should be one of subject-to-subject or learner working with learner. This leads to a practice where the practitioner and the community work together on issues affecting the community through problem posing education. However, the reverse was true with IATM's practice.

Furthermore, through the evidence provided by practitioners at IATM, it could be noted that the practitioners at IATM looked down upon the potential of the communities in unveiling their world. IATM's practice was marked by imbalances in power relations between the practitioners and the communities involved in which case IATM

practitioners perceived themselves as a wealth of wisdom needed to change or transform the communities with whom they worked. This problematic matrix of power dynamics which worked at the expense of the communities involved can be supported by the following examples. In a narrative about their work in the fight against corruption, a member at IATM (identity withheld on ethical grounds) explained that:

Before we begun working with the communities, very few people had knowledge about issues relating to corruption. The only thing people knew was that corruption was all about bribery, yet corruption is a huge thing involving so many things. It is something which begins with dishonesty in families and also includes actions by civil and political officers such as negligence on duty by arriving late at work and leaving office before time among others. Consequently, our initial projects were all about using theatre to raise awareness among the people so that they may understand the evil of corruption.

In a tone revealing excitement about IATM's work, the same person noted that:

While it is very difficult to sensitise the people about corruption when they actually do not know what it is, through theatre we reached a success story because the people would sit, listen and react. You could hear them comment: Oh! That is also corruption? You mean if I did this or that, it would be corruption?

In 2014, IATM articulated similar sentiments which revealed lack of trust and confidence in the potential of the communities to handle issues that affected their lives. At that time, IATM was preparing a play to sensitise communities in the Northern Ugandan district of Kitgum on the problem of epilepsy. I asked one of the practitioners whether they were considering placing communities at the centre by having them devise and perform the play. He replied, 'People in the communities are amateurs. Performing a play on an intricate issue such as epilepsy requires well trained actors.' (see my field notes, appendix 20)

When a TfD practitioner goes to the communities with an attitude of "people do not know" as expressed in the citations above, it is a clear indication that a clear plan of learning with the community in a problem posing strategy is absent. The above examples reveal that IATM hold a view that the people do not have the required knowledge and capacity to work out their own development and thus needed to be developed by people equipped with development knowledge. In this way, a dichotomy

of two unequal entities—the knowledgeable theatre practitioners, and the community which is deemed not to have enough knowledge about the issues to be addressed—was created which distorted the tenet of equal distribution of power in TfD.

As a result of IATM's outlook on the process of TfD as discussed above, it is apparent that their work adopted the modernisation paradigm of development, together with its associated diffusion of innovations approach in solving community problems. Evidently IATM's practice involved the dissemination of information to the communities in order to influence and change behavior instead of employing theatre as a collective learning process. They articulated a view that the issues IATM was addressing, namely, democracy and corruption, were too intricate to be understood by the ordinary members of the community. However, in the framework of appropriate thinking in TfD practice, the intricacy of the issues was the greater reason to facilitate the communities in analysing these complex issues through telling and retelling of their own stories.

Related to the notion of top-down practice is the fact that IATM focused on large geographical areas for their operations. As cited from Melkote & Steeves, 2001: 72 in Chapter Two, section 2.1, focusing on expansive geographical areas is a major characteristic of the modernisation approach to development since modernisation operates at the macro level (2001: 72). In IATM's practice, this was evidenced by Musisi's account that a play is written and then its performance toured in various districts. The play *Kiira's Family*, as mentioned earlier, was toured in ten districts while *People's Power* was performed in nine districts.

As a result of operating in large geographical expanses, IATM did not offer enough time to engage the communities in a sustained process of analysing issues that affect their lives. This is because their engagement with the communities involved one-off performances in their haste to move to the next community. Their approach was quantitative rather than qualitative, because success was measured by the number of districts they were able to tour and influence, and not by how the process had been critically engaging and sustainable.

As discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.1.5, however, the process of conscientisation—which is the desired outcome of TfD—is a process which matures or unveils with the passage of time. In one-off performance programmes such as those

offered by IATM, the community may be excited during the performance and post-performance discussion but this excitement will, in most cases, wither after the departure of the catalyst if the process is not sustained. In addition, the post-performance discussion is usually ephemeral in that it is not sufficient to allow effective engagement with the issues affecting the community.

The above discrepancies in IATM's practice also implied that there were some significant gaps in their application of the forum theatre approach, a form of TfD that IATM purport to be practicing. A close look at IATM's work compels me to ask: what makes it forum theatre? In 2006, I attended as a participant observer at some forum theatre sessions implemented by IATM in Hoima district in Western Uganda. In the live theatre sessions I attended, I noticed that what IATM and its partner groups described as forum theatre was not actually forum theatre but something else. To me, it was a pseudo form of forum theatre practice in which the theatre practitioners replaced the ideal practice of forum theatre with what Patrick Mangeni calls 'sensitisation theatre' (Mangeni, 2007) or agitprop theatre (Mda, 1993).

In sensitisation theatre, a pre-packaged play is performed before a community and at the end of the performance; members of the community are invited to discuss the issues raised by the performance. But in a true forum theatre session as Boal puts it, 'the participants (the members of the community) have to intervene decisively in the dramatic action and change it' (1979:139). Echoing Boal, Adrian Jackson observes that, 'the play is devised in consultation with the people themselves and ideally will be performed by them'(Jackson, 1997: 48). Boal elaborates the process of forum theatre noting that:

The participants are asked to tell a story containing a political or social problem of a difficult solution. Then a ten or fifteen minute skit portraying that problem and the solution intended for discussion is improvised or rehearsed and subsequently presented. When the skit is over, the participants are asked if they agree with the solution presented, at least some will say no. At this point it is explained that the scene will be performed once more, exactly as it was the first time. But now any participant in the audience has the right to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate. The displaced actor steps aside, but remains ready to resume action the moment the participant considers his own intervention to be terminated [. . .] Any one may propose any solution, but it must be done on the stage, working, acting, doing things and not from the comfort of his seat (1979: 139).

These essential traits of good forum theatre were lacking in IATM's practice which I observed in Hoima. In the Hoima performance, instead of creating a play revolving around a social or political problem identified and prioritised by the members of the community, the theatre practitioners decided upon the issues to be presented in the play beforehand from their headquarters in Kampala. This deprived the members of the community an opportunity to participate in the theatrical process by deciding what the play should touch upon. Instead of improvising and performing short plays of about 15 minutes as proposed by Boal, a full-length play titled *Kiira's Family* was written and commissioned by IATM and MS Uganda to be performed before passively spectating communities in various districts in Uganda. In Hoima, I observed that the performance of the play ran for two hours. This adversely impacted on the application of the forum theatre approach as the members of the community were made to take on a passive role for a long period of time. Thus, the performance took on the characteristics of the conventional Aristotelian theatre, which Boal castigates.

Additionally, the facilitators/jokers did not facilitate the members of the community to decisively intervene in the dramatic action by enacting their solutions on stage, a process that is crucial in the procedure of forum theatre. Instead of facilitating this process, the jokers led the members of the community to discuss the issues presented in the performance in form of a post-performance discussion. It became practically impossible to facilitate the members of the community to intervene in the dramatic action because the performance had run on for so long. Thus, repeating it so that the members of the community could replace the protagonists and perform their solutions on stage would make the forum theatre session even longer and more tiring.

In general, the thinking underpinning IATM's practice was not one which privileged active participation of the communities and effective ownership of the issues handled. The issues did not emerge from the passionate stories of the communities. Instead of effective participation that is required of the theatre for conscientisation model, IATM's work could be described as facilitating 'a tyranny of participation' or 'participation as repressive myths' as discussed in the critiques of participation in Chapter Two (see also Cooke & Kothari, 2004: 3; Ellsworth, 1989).

The hegemonic power relations created by the failure to transfer the means of production to the people caused IATM's work to perpetuate the oppressive structures that effective TfD aims to smash. This hampered the process of unveiling the contradictions impinging the community.

The problem of lack of effective participation and ownership of the process in IATM's work can be illustrated by the following scenario reported by Musisi:

At a place called Dwoli in Hoima, we had a performance of the play *Kiira's Family* and there was this one woman who got so angry with the actors. She came on stage and stopped the performance. She was arguing: You people we do not want your multi-party politics why do you take us back. The actors could not continue. So I had to step in. I asked her what her problem was and she said 'you are confusing the people by bringing back multi-party politics. For us we are in the National Resistance Movement. That is what we want. The lady did not understand that in the referendum people had voted to return to multi-party politics (Musisi, 2011).

I am convinced that if this particular community had been facilitated through a process of problem identification and analysis, the woman in the above scenario would have come to understand the contradictions highlighted through the performance. She would have come to own and move with the process. She only reacted the way she did because the issues in the play were simply imposed on the community and she did not know what was going on. As part of the central ethics of TfD practice, TfD facilitators have to privilege dialogue such that the issues handled in the process emerge from the community's needs. Drawing from Alain Badiou's notion of 'truth process' (Badiou, 2002: 43), Amanda Stuart notes that 'rather than delivering a preconceived intervention or 'message', the applied theatre practitioner should engage in a process of critique and draw out the emerging truths of the community' (2005: 251). In pursuit of the truth, Stuart adds that:

rather than simply following the 'truth' as it appears to a community, the applied theatre practitioner should perhaps become involved in an excavation of the truth as a process, becoming a provocateur who works with the client group towards developing a critical awareness of their own situation (2005: 251).

This is the 'moral imperative' (Bishop, 2014: 72) that the practitioners at IATM should have taken.

In order to fill the gaps left by the performances, IATM organised what may be termed as non-theatre techniques to engage the communities in the political empowerment programmes. These included public dialogues and the use of placards and banners. In the public dialogues, IATM mobilised communities and other stakeholders such as politicians, civil servants, local councilors and religious leaders and brought them together to discuss issues of major concern such as corruption and accountability among politicians and civil servants in Uganda. Such public dialogues were organised in various districts in Uganda, including Hoima, Koboko, Mbarara and Kampala districts. I attended one of these public dialogues organised in Hoima at the Hoima Kolping Hall.

The occasion was attended by the local population and leadership figures including local councilors (LCs), the *Katikiro* (Prime Minister) of Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, the Minister in Charge of Culture in Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom, the Iman of Hoima Town Mosque, the Regional Inspector of Government, and the Assistant Mayor of Hoima Town.

The debate on the subject of corruption and accountability was characterised by paper presentations from the Regional Inspector of Government, Hoima office, and a discussion from the community. What is crucial to note about this public dialogue is that it had no relationship with forum theatre yet the organisers of the occasion—the leaders of IATM—emphasised that the public dialogue was part of the drive to use Forum Theatre to fight corruption. Placards, banners and posters with inscriptions of messages about the dangers of corruption and human rights were prepared and put in strategic places in the Conference Hall where public dialogue was being conducted. The use of non-theatre processes in conjunction with theatre processes seems to have resulted from the challenges of practicing Boal's theatre in Uganda. Such challenges include the lack of knowledge of the application of the forum theatre processes and the difficulty involved in facilitating the members of the community to intervene in the action on stage.

### **4.1.3 Why agitprop theatre? The impact of sponsorship and global capital on IATM's work**

As argued in Chapter Three, section 3.2.4, the aims of the development funders in most cases tend to act as the starting point of TfD practice as each funding agency will normally have its own agenda to which partner organisations have to conform. This seems to have occurred precisely in the relationship between IATM and its funder. IATM has, for a period of more than ten years (2000 to 2010), been funded by MS Uganda, a Danish organisation for international development and cooperation. In 2010, MS Uganda rebranded by merging with Actionaid to give rise to a new international body named Actionaid Denmark (Actionaid Denmark, 2011: 09).

A critical look at the relationship between IATM and its key funder, MS Uganda and subsequently Actionaid Denmark, appears to be no different from the politics of development funding discussed earlier (see section 3.2.4). IATM worked in a framework where the issues addressed by the theatre process were decided upon by their funder MS Uganda. Effectively, the work was greatly shaped by the development ideology of MS Uganda/Actionaid Denmark.

IATM's programmes have since 2006 been designed based on the Country Programme Strategies (CPS) of MS Uganda, which have been characterised by a quantitative increase in political empowerment indicators in communities. MS Uganda's strategic outcomes were measured in terms of percentages and numerical values or quantitative terms and not in terms of the quality of the process undertaken to attain the outcome. Where no statistical values were envisaged, there was some kind of a pointer toward quantitative increase in the desired outcome. To effectively illustrate the link between IATM's work and MS Uganda's programme, table 1 below illustrates the country programme strategy of MS Uganda in 2011 while table 2 illustrates IATM's forum theatre activities and programmes for the year 2011.



**Table 1 Showing MS Uganda's 2011 Country Programme Strategy**

<b>Programme component</b>	<b>sub</b>	<b>Expected programme outcome indicators</b>
Building Democracy	Local	<p>10% of citizens, in particular youth and women, knowledgeable about democratic principles and able to increasingly participate in, and influence, local democratic processes in six districts by end of 2011. Local government more transparent in the delivery of equitable and locally determined services in six districts by end 2011.</p> <p>Equal opportunities and gender equality reflected in Local Government (LG) plans and budgets and institutional practices in six districts by end of 2011.</p>
Anti-corruption		<p>Increased exposure of corruption cases by civil society and responsiveness by LGs in four sub-regions by end of 2011.</p> <p>5% of recommendations from civil society (based on CSOs own research, Inspector General of Government (IGG), Office of Auditor General (OAG), Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and special inquiry reports) implemented in education and health sectors at national level and four sub-regions annually.</p> <p>Women have increased influence in the anti-corruption work of civil society in four regions by end of 2011</p>
Trade Empowerment		<p>Consumers particularly youth and female empowered to demand for their rights, get value for money and make ethical choices in four districts by 2011.</p>

	<p>Trade policies that better reflect the needs and choices of the people of Uganda and Eastern Africa specifically the poor and marginalised male and female to be promoted by the end of 2011.</p> <p>Increased profitability of maize, sesame and handicraft production for smaller producers especially women and youth in four districts through linkages to viable and equitable markets.</p>
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MS Uganda's 2011 Country Programme Strategy adopted from Actionaid Denmark, 2011(Actionaid Denmark, 2011: 10).

**Table 2. Showing IATM's forum theatre and programme activities in 2011**

Activities	Male beneficiari es	Female Beneficiari es	Output	Districts
1. Mobilising women and men to advocate for improved service delivery in health and Universal Primary Education-(UPE)	5792	8688	5792 men and 8688 women were mobilised and equipped with advocacy skills to carry out community actions focusing on getting their priorities included in local government plans.	Amuru, Pallisa, Nebbi, Bukedea, Namutumba, Kapchorwa, Zombo and Budaka
2. To reach 300 households, make them	360	540	900 people within 300 Households sensitised about their	Amuru, Pallisa, Nebbi, Bukedea,

conscious of injustices and inefficiencies within social service delivery			rights and duties as citizens as stipulated in the national constitution	Namutumba, Kapchorwa, Zombo and Budaka
3. To hold forum theatre sessions on quality of Universal Primary Education (UPE), health services and democracy at family level.	5040	7560	41 forum theatre sessions that sensitised citizens on quality of service delivery in health care, UPE and democracy at family level were held.	Amuru, Pallisa, Nebbi, Bukedea, Namutumba, Kapchorwa, Zombo and Budaka
To equip 60 community facilitators and 60 forum theatre actors with knowledge and skills to articulate their civic rights, roles and responsibilities.	48	72	60 community facilitators and 60 theatre actors got equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to raise their issues in local government plans and budget	Amuru, Pallisa, Nebbi, Bukedea, Namutumba, Kapchorwa, Zombo, Budaka and Kampala

IATM's forum theatre programme and activities adopted from IATM annual report 2012 (IATM, 2012: 6-7).

Tables 1 and 2 reveal a close relationship between IATM's work and the programme strategy of MS Uganda. It is noticeable that because of the need to be relevant to the donors, IATM found itself indebted to fit in the framework of MS

Uganda's country programme which impacts greatly on its Tfd practice. Looking at table 1 above, one reads that MS Uganda had specific programmes that it set out to focus on; which may be categorised under the general theme of political empowerment. The programmes focused on building local democracy, fighting against corruption, and trade empowerment. MS Uganda's programme outcome indicators were indicated in terms of percentage—a quantitative indicator. For example on the building local democracy component, MS Uganda targeted that 10% of citizens, in particular youth and women should be knowledgeable about democratic principles and able to increasingly participate in, and influence, local democratic processes in six districts by end of 2011. For the anti-corruption component, MS Uganda envisaged that 5% of recommendations from civil society be implemented in education and health sectors at national level and four sub-regions annually.

A close look at IATM's purported forum theatre activities presented in table 2 indicates that IATM's programme closely resembles MS Uganda's programme in several respects. First, in order to comply with MS Uganda's quantitative or statistical targets, IATM envisaged its programme targets and outcomes in terms of figures and statistical indicators. For example, in one of its activities, IATM aimed to equip 60 community facilitators and 60 forum theatre actors with knowledge and skills to articulate their civic rights, roles and responsibilities and at the end of their programme, 60 community facilitators and 60 theatre actors were equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to raise their issues in local government plans and budget. Second, IATM replicated the large geographical focus in which MS Uganda operated. A close look at MS Uganda's programme as indicated in table 1 shows that this international body focused its programmes on regions in Uganda and sometimes the whole nation. This large geographical focus was also seen in IATM's programme as presented in table 2. For example, reading from table 2 above, one observes that the theatre organisation focused on regions and multiple districts.

Third, IATM tended to focus on sections of the community that are targeted by MS Uganda such as women and youths. In table 2 above, IATM was keen to indicate how many women—compared to men—were reached through their theatre programmes. This should by no means be a problem, but the point being articulated here is that IATM

followed its funder's programme as closely as possible, perhaps, in order to justify why MS Uganda should continue funding them.

As a result, IATM found itself unable to adhere to the basic principles of effective practice in TfD. As noted earlier in Chapter Three, effective practice in TfD entails that the practitioners are guided by the notion that members of the community involved should be given space to identify and analyse the oppressive elements of reality impinging on their lives in a dialogical encounter with one another. The evidence availed by the analysis of the information in the tables above indicates that IATM pursued a programme already put in place by MS Uganda. It focussed on deepening local democracy, fighting corruption, and promoting local accountability. While it could be true that these are some of the problems affecting the communities where IATM performs its plays, they may not be the most pressing problems. I sought an opportunity to probe whether these were actually the most pressing problems of the communities by interviewing participants but was unfortunately unsuccessful. Since IATM's work had long taken place before my fieldwork, the participants had dispersed to various places. My failure to find participants could also be explained by the ephemerality of message oriented-theatre processes. In TfD processes where there has been a sustained engagement, key participants are known in the community and can easily be located.

Mobilising communities and engaging them in a process of collective empowerment would have been ideal, where the people, through collective dialogue, would have analysed their problems and opportunities and explored the relationship between them. This was not the case with IATM because it was the ideology of MS Uganda which was implemented by IATM and not the voices and thought of the communities involved. The work of IATM with the communities was not shaped by the drive to engage communities in the process of naming their world in a problem posing process.

Further, the influence of international capital influenced the nature and aims of impact assessment of the theatre programmes by IATM. Table 2 above and the large document - the 2012 IATM annual report from which it is adopted was (to me) some kind of an impact assessment report and it reveals how MS Uganda influenced IATM's process of impact assessment.

In the recent history of research in TfD and applied theatre studies, the objectives of impact assessment have tended to focus on the 'why' and the 'how' (Etherton & Prentki, 2006: 139). In terms of why impact assessment is conducted, the main objective has been to find ways of improving the practice of applied theatre to foster the empowerment of communities. To this end, Österlind advises that if the purpose of the evaluation is to improve the work:

[. . .] it directs the evaluation process towards looking for things to improve, not being satisfied with what is done no matter how successful it might be. If this perspective is missing, the evaluation is probably made only to meet formal criteria and its value can be questioned (2013: 101-102).

The issue of the 'how' of impact assessment in TfD projects relates to the methods and process of ascertaining that the desired change has taken place. Concerning the process of doing impact assessment, Smith highlights pertinent issues to consider. Commenting on Global Impact Monitoring, or GIM of Save the Children UK, she reveals that:

It is not only change that is examined, but also the processes that lead to change, thus allowing us to identify 'good' practice. Moreover, we are not only interested in positive changes, but also in negative changes that may have resulted from our work, and in unintended changes that we had not anticipated (Smith, 2006: 158).

For TfD, where the aim is to engage the members of the community in the process, the issue of 'process' as highlighted by Smith and the quality of this process needs to be taken into consideration when undertaking impact assessment. Smith's revelation also raises the important issue of the ethics of practice—TfD practitioners need to face reality by not only focusing on the positive aspects of the practice but also on the negative ones. It is by doing so that the practitioners can reflect on their work and take their practice to another level.

The impact assessment aspect of the 2012 IATM annual report only spells out the positive outcomes of IATM's work. The list of these positive outcomes as spelt out in the report is long but to cite a few examples, IATM reports that collective community action and demand for accountability for improved service delivery emerged in Namutumba district, Kibaale sub-county where 151 community members petitioned the district local

government administration over a poorly constructed road, demanded an explanation and proper fixing of the road (IATM, 2012: 08).

The report further reveals that the forum theatre sessions triggered action from Otici community in Amuru district to demand for the immediate functioning of their health centre which had been constructed but remained non-functional for two years (IATM, 2012: 08). In the process of impact assessment, IATM does not devote any space and effort to reflect on the process of their forum theatre work. Their report is filled with tales of how their work led to some kind of action—their view of the positive impact of their work but the reader is not edified on how the action needed to be a result of the process of collective participation and engagement in the process of performance. Yet in TfD practice, the quality of the process in which the community should be collectively engaged is more important than the product.

In addition, IATM as an organisation did not consider impact assessment to be an important aspect of their work until the 2012 annual report. It was only after a complaint from Actionaid—their funders in 2011 that they were compelled to write a report of their activities in 2012. In the 2011 summative report, Actionaid Denmark (formerly MS Uganda) observed thus:

The use of forum theatre by IATM was also considered by partners to have contributed to increased awareness. However, by the time of the evaluation, the actual impact of forum theatre had not yet been established. In fact IATM has been in operation for over 10 years, but no thorough evaluation has been carried out to assess its effectiveness and actual impact (Actionaid Denmark, 2011: 15).

It can therefore be argued that, when IATM made a report of their work in 2012, it was meant to meet a formal requirement by MS Uganda. The idea that the 2012 annual report was meant to meet a formal requirement of MS Uganda is evidenced by the fact that IATM's report is loaded with statistical figures concerning their planned input and expected outcome or actual output which are of particular interest to MS Uganda. The Report was not born out of the desire to honestly reflect on their work and chart out ways to take their practice to another level.

In general, it can be inferred from the above discussion that the ideology shaping IATMs work was largely that of MS Uganda and not an ideology born out of the drive to

engage members of the community in discussing issues that impede their progress as human beings. This implies that IATM's work was not driven by the need to foster effective practice in TfD. Rather, it is shaped by a colonial paradigm; colonial in the sense of being driven by external or dominant forces—the international funders.

Alfonso Dragon's analysis of the impact of global capital on participatory development processes such as TfD aptly summarizes the observations made about IATM's practice. He argues that:

One very important obstacle for including participatory communication components in development projects is the donors' need for "scale," which either paralyzes cooperation or leads to gigantic and artificial projects that result in equally resounding failures [. . .] The issue of scale is often related to the donor's political agenda and internal administrative regulations rather than to development needs. The requirements of proving "success" in the short-term (the "annual report syndrome") or measuring a project in numbers of beneficiaries (the higher the better), while excluding qualitative aspects and long-term benefits, have led to projects that are only "successful" while funding is available (Dragon, 2001: 10).

Having correlated the information presented in the above two tables (table1 and 2), one notes that IATM was to a large extent driven by the need to meet the formal administrative requirements of MS Uganda and to meet the donor's political agenda of reaching as many people as possible and focusing on the very development issues in which the donor (MS Uganda) was interested.

#### **4.1.4 IATM and the Essential TfD Facilitation Skills**

Besides the influence of the politics of funding, one other factor which seems to have worked against IATM's vision to practice a theatre for conscientisation model of TfD that was, lack of the necessary skills or appropriate theoretical orientation of the practitioners. Plastow has on various occasions made connections between the practice of TfD as a tool of domestication and the level of skills and training possessed by a TfD practitioner (see for example Plastow, 2010: 183, Plastow, 2014). Indeed the practice of forum theatre by IATM had shaky beginnings. Before IATM ventured into TfD, their perception of theatre was the western consumerist approach where the audience watches a finished product. IATM got inspired to practice participatory theatre



processes at an anti-corruption festival in Kampala held in 1998. Expressing his marvel at the new field of participatory theatre for development, Fred Musisi recounted:

In this festival, it was apparent that different groups from different countries were using different theatre approaches in the fight against corruption. One of the groups called Kamoto Community Arts from Zambia was using what they called community theatre to engage communities in debates about corruption'. According to them, they were not performing in theatre halls. All they said was that they wanted to work with communities, something which IATM participants from Uganda admired. IATM started picking interest in that kind of interactive theatre and finally registered IATM as an NGO (Musisi, 2011).

It was after the festival that IATM started working out the means of how they would begin using Theatre for Development approaches, especially using forum theatre. Fred Musisi intimates that their starting point was inviting one of the professionals, Jessica Kaahwa from Makerere University to come and train them in the use of the forum theatre approach. Since she was quite busy with work at the University she was not able to give them enough time. Finally through MS Uganda which was their development partner, they got an expert from Denmark to come and work with them for a minimum of six months and that helped them to start using the forum theatre approach.

The fact that the "expert" who trained the practitioners at IATM came from Denmark, a developed country in the North, brings in a postcolonial perspective to their work. One is compelled to query whether the only option available was for MS Uganda to hire an expert from Europe and not from the expertise available in African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and South Africa. To me, this has connections with the reality produced by the growing global neoliberalism where African countries continue to be dependent on the countries of the North for their development solutions which puts them in a compliant situation.

When countries in the North give the countries in the South development aid, they prefer the aid to be accompanied by human resources from the North. This scenario is reminiscent of the colonial times where nothing developmental including the arts and culture was expected to come from Africa; the western world believed that until the introduction of the western concept of theatre at the onset of colonialism, Africa did not have a tradition of theatre and performance (see for example Mbowe, 2000: 204). As

such, the idea of bringing in a western expert may be interpreted as neo-colonialism. It also re-echoes Prentki's notion of a 'globalised monological culture' (see Prentki, 2006: 03) where cultural and economic products continue to be unidirectional—from the developed world to the developing world.

Employing an expert from abroad also has implications for the notion of development culturalism (Breitinger 1994: 157) or the cultural dimension of development (UNESCO, 1995, 1998) which is the bedrock of participatory theatre for development. As earlier argued in Chapter Two, the cultural dimension of development as envisaged in TfD entails that the process of development puts in consideration the cultural beliefs and practices of the community involved in the process of development. It is likely that the expert hired from Denmark to train IATM staff arrived with capitalistic and modernising perspectives of development as understood in the western developed world. It is therefore unsurprising to note that the theatre approach adopted by IATM as examined above was mainly prescriptive, promoting a view of working to develop people instead of a process which aimed at enrolling the communities to work out their own development. It was reminiscent of the colonial paradigm where theatre was used to disseminate messages about modern techniques of development.

#### **4.2 The Impact of Global Capital on TfD Practice in Karamoja**

Another example where TfD practice has been shaped by the politics of funding and international capital is in the work done under the auspices of an international development cooperation programme funded by the German Organisation for International Development and Cooperation (GIZ) in Karamoja, Eastern Uganda. In 2010, GIZ introduced a TfD component to enhance its post-conflict development projects in Karamoja. Officials from GIZ saw the impact of theatre in peace building programmes by Rafiki Theatre Company in Northern Uganda and decided to recruit a person to introduce the theatre component in their programmes. Bazaale, a long-standing theatre personality and former lecturer at Makerere University's Department of Performing Arts and Film was the person recruited to lead the TfD programme. He has over the years been working with a team of other TfD practitioners recently graduated from Makerere University.

In order to understand how TfD in the framework of GIZ was adversely influenced by international capital, it is important to understand GIZ's institutional set up. GIZ has a grand political underlying agenda in its development cooperation programme. Its political programme is imposing in that it builds on the claim of extensive expertise in global issues in their work in what they describe as emerging economies (GIZ, n.d.-a). GIZ draws from its expertise to provide a full range of international development services such as advising commissioning parties, bringing together stakeholders, organising forums and designing training programmes. GIZ's grand political programme is summarised in its statement of its global agenda:

The growing power of emerging economies is giving rise to new alliances and networks that are already having a significant influence on global processes. This shift in power means that global challenges such as combating climate change, structuring international trade and achieving international development goals can only be tackled successfully in partnership with these countries (GIZ, n.d.-a).

Following this global agenda, GIZ has put in place a South-South cooperation programme which plays a pivotal role in driving economic development and know-how transfer in developing countries.

The danger likely to ensue from GIZ's self-acclamation as an organisation of extensive expertise in international development work is the likelihood of displaying a superior and condescending attitude in their relationship with development partners and the intended beneficiaries of development (the local communities). This would go against TfD's Freirian inspired philosophy of problem-posing education or co-intentional education.

In fact, the authoritarian outlook in its approach to development played out from the onset in terms of how it (GIZ) viewed the services of TfD. In a 2014 interview, one of the practitioners at GIZ (name withheld on ethical grounds) explained his experience relating to TfD practice in the framework of this international organisation:

The greatest problem facing the application of theatre in development programmes is the pain it takes to convince our international funding agencies that theatre has anything to offer beyond its value of entertainment. It is hard for them to believe that theatre can cause desirable social change. When I was contracted at GIZ to facilitate with other colleagues the theatre component of the programme, I was employed for a term of 3 months renewable contract. But

the sense in which I understood my terms of employment was that I would be laid off as soon as GIZ got a feeling that my work was not needed. Indeed finishing the first three months of my contract was itself a struggle. We had to prove that I was so innovative and I was compelled to as much as possible align my theatre work with the organisation's programme.

The complexity of practicing TfD in the framework of GIZ was further demonstrated by what may be described as their inward looking approach to issues or a self-isolation policy. GIZ conducts its business like an organisation that has come to Uganda to simply implement its country development programme to its completion without engaging in anything that may seem politically antagonising. They have put in place formal procedures of keeping themselves in isolation.

As a researcher, I personally suffered the effects of this strategy. In 2014, I approached one of the practitioners at GIZ (name withheld on sensitive grounds) to allow me to go in to the field with their team so that I could observe their practice and engagement with the communities in Karamoja. This was part of my intended design—to deploy an ethnographic approach through participant observation in order to analyse the TfD process. I was told that the practitioner did not have the authority to allow me in as the process was strongly controlled by GIZ. He gave me the email address and advised me to write to the programme manager of GIZ who would allow me to participate in their programmes. I wrote to the programme manager three times requesting permission to allow me participate in their TfD programme and to use my findings to write my thesis but on no occasion did I receive a reply. When I asked the practitioner why the programme manager did not respond to my request, he replied, 'Most likely the German office in Kampala advised him not to. Field office practices in GIZ are controlled by the German head office in Kampala. Before they make any major decisions, they have to consult by writing to Kampala' (see my field notes, appendix 20).

The above framework of international capital in which TfD is practised has greatly influenced the expected nature of the work. The TfD process in GIZ's programme in Karamoja is closely aligned to the goals and objectives of the funding agency. As part of aligning the theatre programme, Bazaale's team and GIZ staff agreed on a working programme codenamed 'Building Bridges participatory theatre'. This programme involves all the stakeholders engaged in GIZ's development programme, namely the

politicians, the cultural leaders and the civil servants. Explaining the concept of building bridges participatory theatre, Bazaale the lead practitioner at GIZ noted that:

We use theatre as a starting point. We have coined a word that is now common at GIZ—the ‘software of the entire project’. We call it the software of the project because we aim at changing the attitude and behavior of the community and adjusting them so that when the physical inputs of the project come in, they are able to utilize them effectively and optimally. At the initial stage, we go out and consult four stakeholders and from these we draw experiences and situations as it is on the ground. We register these experiences from the elders for cultural aspects, from the community looking for the issues that are affecting them, and from the politicians especially the local councils (LC) namely LCII, LC III, and LCV. At the district level we normally consult the chief administrative officer (CAO) and line offices. If our focus is about livelihood and nutrition, we usually go to the agriculture department. If it is about security we consult the district security officer (DISO) and the Resident District Commissioner (RDC). After this process, we come home and discuss it with the GIZ. We usually pick the priority issues to work on in our plays from GIZ (Bazaale, 2011, see appendix 13).

Bazaale adds that:

Ideally the priority (as the practice is in TfD) should come from the community but we depart from that. After our consultations we go down to write a script, which we then preview with the major stakeholders, the elders, the district people / leaders and GIZ, to test the appropriateness of the communication strategy. We ask ourselves: Is the approach effective? Is it representing the voice of the district? Is the dialogue appropriate? Sometimes we have found out that some words are not appropriate. So, that semantic part of the process is also attended to (Bazaale, 2011, see appendix 13) (Emphasis in brackets is mine).

By aligning the TfD work in Karamoja with GIZ’s project goals and objectives, the process is not controlled by the members of the community who are supposed to be facilitated to direct the process of their own empowerment. Bazaale, the lead facilitator of TfD in Karamoja, indicated that GIZ is the final decision making entity in the process of theatre making. The theatre practitioners discuss their findings of a consultative process of research with GIZ – it is not the community which analyses its issues. Ideally, it should be the community’s priorities which should be of prime concern but in this case of the practice in Karamoja, it is GIZ’s priorities. This manipulative approach is further revealed by Bazaale’s disclosure that:

We differ from conventional TfD in terms of the aspects of improvisation, and the idea that the community should perform the drama. Whereas conventional TfD relies on improvisation, for us we use prepackaged scripts. We started with using improvisation but later changed to scripted drama because improvisation would yield so many different words with different shades of meaning which yielded different reactions. So we discovered that reactions would shift from one to another, making our performances to lack focus. This would also make it difficult to measure the outcome of the process (Bazaale, 2011, see appendix 13).

In terms of appropriate thought underpinning TfD practice, the TfD process is never guided by the reactions that the theatre catalysts want to elicit from the community, as the work is sponsored by GIZ. Rather, the TfD process is about centring the people in the process so that they work out in a democratic dialogue with one another what is good for them. If the practice is informed by the 'control agenda' as revealed above, then the process becomes influence-oriented, resembling the diffusion of innovations and the top-down approaches common in many of the development communication practices in Africa.

For GIZ projects, the intention to influence is further explained by the need to monitor and measure the outcome which is mostly measured in quantitative terms such as the number of latrines constructed. In an interview held in 2014, Bazaale revealed that 'after performing for communities, a team is sent to assess the impact of the intervention in the community' (Bazaale, 2014). While it is true that every intervention requires monitoring and evaluation, it needs to be pointed out that TfD and indeed all applied theatre practices do not work on the assumption of causing sweeping tangible changes in the communities in a short period of time. Rather, it is based on the principle of human transformation which ensues when members of the community are engaged in a sustained process of using the medium of performance to explore their issues. So, the guiding principle in effective TfD practice is implementing a sustained process of community engagement where participants analyse their issues; a process which ultimately leads to greater awareness and change.

Reiterating the different concepts of participation delineated in Chapter Three, section 3.1.1, namely passive participation, participation in information gathering, participation by consultation, participation for material incentives, functional

participation, interactive participation and self-mobilisation it can be noticed that participation in GIZ's TfD projects was by the time of my fieldwork largely a consultative process. The practitioners consulted the leadership of the communities such as the LCs and the civil servants. It was not the interactive or the empowerment participation where 'the members of the target community were viewed as capable of initiating the process and taking part in analysis of development goals which would lead to joint decision-making [ . . . ]' (Tufte, & Mefalopulos, 2009: 07).

Commenting on his experience with the Maratholi Travelling Theatre in Lesotho Zakes Mda describes the above consultative process as the 'official eye technique' (1993: 102). The danger ensuing from GIZ's model was that they normally engaged the cream of the communities—the already empowered sections of the community and little did they engage the marginalised sections of the society. That way, their work continued to be an imposition from above or the top-down diffusion process of development innovation.

As in IATM's case, the impact assessment of TfD in the Karamoja experience was, by the time of fieldwork, shaped by the donor's (GIZ's) paradigm of practice. GIZ and its partner implementing organisations had put in place approaches it could apply up front to assess the social implications of policy reforms and other interventions. The approaches include the Poverty and Social Impact Assessment (PSIA) and Poverty Social Impact Analysis (PIA). The results obtained through such impact assessment approaches were expected to provide tangible information on the impacts that the people, and especially poor people can expect (GIZ, n.d.-b).

GIZ's demands to apply strict procedures on how impact assessment needs to be done seem to have been inspired by the broad neoliberal culture in development programmes. For instance, GIZ observes that, 'expectations regarding the effectiveness of policies and development measures have risen substantially in recent years: donors and development partners no longer focus on negotiating services and conditions, but on the results their joint efforts should achieve'(GIZ, n.d.-b). As a result impact assessment of the theatre input in GIZ projects was fused with GIZ's goals and objectives. In an interview with Mr Bazaale the architect of TfD in GIZ's programmes, he

explained that GIZ demands him to show in tangible terms the expected results of the theatrical intervention. He said:

The team leader asked me: When you and your team stage those performances, people cry and others laugh, but what happens next. What is there to show that the performances have made an impact? What will I present to my country office or my Germany office to argue that the theatre component we have introduced in the programme is yielding results? Following this inquiry, we introduced in the practice a component of monitoring and evaluation, focusing on results—the results oriented approach. So we decided to align our performance programme with GIZ's programme components. So we came up with the building bridges approach. We called our approach building bridges in order to align ourselves with GIZ's programme so that it is result oriented and be able to monitor our input and register output or outcome and at the end we should show that there is impact caused by the theatre programme (Bazaale, 2014, see appendix 13).

Again, as it is within IATM, impact assessment of TfD in Karamoja was informed by the need to meet formal institutional requirements. It was not shaped by the need to reflect on the quality of their work and be able to take their work to the next level. In the interview citation above, it is evident that the aim of the impact assessment is largely to ascertain that GIZ's objectives have been met.

Evidently, contemporary TfD practitioners in Uganda need to consider Österlind's idea of 'looking for things to improve' and avoid the idea of merely meeting funders' whims and ideologies in order to improve their TfD practice. They need to learn from good examples in the history of TfD practice in Africa, where some kind of impact assessment led to improvement in subsequent TfD processes and a corresponding increased level of community empowerment. One of these instances was the Maratholi Travelling Theatre programme where the experience of self-criticism by the practitioners and impact assessment of their work compelled them to consider a paradigm shift from top-down practice to a bottom-up practice or what they termed as theatre for conscientisation (see Mda, 1990, 1993).

In recent times, the South African applied theatre company—DramAiDE could be viewed as a good example which demonstrates that evaluating the impact of various approaches to TfD can help unearth the weaknesses in the existing practice and hence compel the practitioner to explore other more worthwhile models of practice. For many years, DramAiDE employed behaviour change theories in their approach to HIV/AIDS



education. These included Knowledge, Attitude and Practice/Behaviour change models (KAPB studies) and the theories of self-efficacy and diffusion of innovation (Chinyowa, 2011: 340; Dalrymple, 2006: 206).

Interestingly, as in the case of IATM and GIZ above which followed the whims of its funders, DramAiDE adopted these approaches because they were part of the paradigm adopted by their funders—the KwaZulu Department of Health (KZDoH). Dalrymple intimates that the KwaZulu Department of Health (KZDoH) approach to AIDS education was underpinned by psychological theories of behaviour change (2006: 205). Adopting a combination of these approaches meant that plays were designed to ensure that correct information was imparted to participants, thereby increasing knowledge and addressing beliefs that influence attitudes. DramAiDE was intrigued by the fact that in spite of the efforts, the rates of HIV/AIDS continued to increase.

After a series of impact assessments, 'it became apparent that while information is recognised as vital, as are appropriate attitudes, there are other determinants of healthy behaviour change, one of the most important being life skills.' (Dalrymple, 2006: 208). The realisation of the weaknesses inherent in the behaviour change model led to a paradigm shift. There was a shift from 'thinking about target groups as individual members to thinking about social groups and to projects rooted in an understanding of social context and based on dialogue and participation rather than on persuasive messages targeted at individuals.' (Dalrymple, 2006: 209).

One of the positive outcomes of the change in paradigm was a new project that focused much on enabling young people to choose and sustain new attitudes and behaviours as well as promoting the behaviours themselves and 'social mobilisation that would result in long-term change in personal, social, and cultural views of appropriate behaviour supported by a healthy school environment' (Dalrymple, 2006: 209).

### **4.3 Analysing the nature of Rafiki Theatre's TfD Practice**

#### **4.3.1 The origins of Rafiki Theatre Company**

According to the 2010 Rafiki Theatre Company annual report, Rafiki Theatre was born as a result of a five-day seminar organised by the East African Institute of Governance and Conflict Management (EAIGCM) at Makerere University in January

2010. The seminar attracted 11 graduating students from the Department of Performing Arts, as well as one student from Mass Communication. The aim of the seminar was to explore ways of integrating the arts in peace building and conflict resolution programmes. At the seminar, different approaches to theatre as a tool for social transformation were shared. Participants explored how theatre could encourage and promote dialogue as the central area of focus. At the end of the seminar the participants and EAIGCM representatives decided to form a forum theatre troupe to explore the use of participatory theatre for nonviolence and development. Consequently, most of the members of Rafiki Theatre company were graduates of Drama and Theatre from the then Makerere University's Music Dance and Drama Department now called the Department of Performing Arts and Film. These graduates had been trained in the effective process of TfD practice under Patrick Mangeni who completed his doctoral research on *Negotiating Gender through TfD* at Griffith University in Australia. It was thus expected that the graduates would help streamline the direction of TfD practice in Uganda by trying out their knowledge of theories of effective practice in TfD.

The main person behind the technical aspects of TfD at Rafiki Theatre was Claus Schrowange, a German expatriate attached to EAIGCM. The fact that Schrowange came from Germany to implement a concept of forum theatre in Africa brings in issues of neo-colonialism and global cultural interaction. Schrowange confessed that he learnt about and was inspired to use forum theatre at a Boalian theatre conference in Graz, Austria. It therefore follows that the concept of forum theatre which Schrowange trained at the Rafiki Theatre Company is one developed in Europe. I am aware that forum theatre in all its presentation focuses on transforming the spectator from a passive being in the theatrical phenomena into an active participant capable of using the dramatic action to discuss issues affecting their life. It is a process where the spectator is expected to take on a protagonist's role in the theatrical phenomena and in effect get enrolled in what Boal (1979) describes as a 'rehearsal for a revolution'

But it is also true that the prevailing conditions in the community—the nature of issues being explored—has often shaped the practice. For example, the forum theatre theorised by Boal in Latin America is different from the form which he introduced to Europe while in exile, having fled political witch hunt in Latin America. In Europe, Boal

was quick to realise the problems faced by the people there were quite different from those in Latin America. While the key problems affecting the people in Latin America were poverty, illiteracy and disease, he noted that Europe's problems were largely psychological, requiring him to adapt his method. It appears that the concept of forum theatre which Schrowange trained at Rafiki Theatre is one influenced by the need to address the emotional and psychological aspects of the participants as is the practice in Europe. Commenting on his experience at the conference in Graz, Austria, he says:

I saw touching performances, scenes that will not get easily out of my mind. . . I saw audience members moved into tears, touched. But I also saw theatre troupes failing to carry the audience along, because they were not able to touch hearts, only focussing on the intellect. The lessons I've learnt in Graz: Forum theatre can be a strong tool if the actors are able to create an emotional link with their audience. And this link is only built through an authentic way of acting. If an actor is feeling and not just pretending to do so, the audience can identify with him or her more easily, and will become emotional itself: empathetic, angry, sad. . . (Schrowange, 2010: 08)

It is the concept of theatre outlined in the citation above which Schrowange trained at Rafiki; a concept built on a product-oriented aspect of theatre. This is evidenced by the working processes of Rafiki Theatre Company elaborated below.

#### **4.3.2 Rafiki Theatre's working Processes: Emphasis in Aesthetics instead of Participation**

From the very beginnings of Rafiki theatre, the company seemed to promote a philosophy held in effective TfD practice. For example, they highlighted some of their objectives as, 'helping communities to identify their problems and assisting them to find sustainable solutions to them and to promote a bottom-up approach to problem solving' (Rafiki Theatre Company, 2010: 02). It is expected that in line with this avowed philosophy, their working processes would aim at engaging the communities and facilitating them to take a central role in the theatre making process revolving around their problems. However, a close analysis of their work indicates that their practice digressed from the bottom-up practice envisaged in their statement of objectives. Instead of facilitating the communities in making theatre through effective participation, Rafiki theatre adopts a product-oriented and consumerist model of practice. I describe it

as product-oriented and consumerist because the practitioners aim at developing a good play informed by conventional theatre aesthetics in order to meet the desires of the funders on one hand and the consumption needs of the spectators on the other. Their consumerist model focuses on the use of well-trained actors hailing outside the community who identify the issues, develop a script and tour performances of a well-made play in the communities. Commenting about this consumerist approach to theatre, Schrowange points out that:

We open the floor for our members to develop their artistic creativity. Our philosophy of art is simple: even if you play with the oppressed and/or for the oppressed, it remains art. Doing theatre for social change does not mean that the beauty of art must be neglected: stage scenery, human energy, voice, the actor moving in the space, the beauty of poems, music, dance, drawings...all this can be part. Forum theatre and art do not contradict. (2010: 9).

Elsewhere he emphasises the idea of conventional theatre aesthetics in their work noting that:

Our plays are usually very authentic, believable, touching and provoking. We create an emotional link with our audiences, and give them food for thought. We involve our audience in a vivid and touching experience. Active engagement means that the emotions of the spectators, and not just intellectual or cognitive skills, are affected. It is this ability to touch the heart that allows theatre to influence attitudes and behaviours in a way that conventional didactic tools cannot. And this is the basis to transform conflicts and to bring about change (Schrowange, 2011: 6).

The inclination to aesthetics in Rafiki theatre's work is further articulated by the testimonies of the professional actors the company employs. One of the actors narrated how he has grown as an actor:

Often, the exercises we do at Rafiki are intense, and with purpose. It helps me a lot to enter my role. In Moroto, I did not imagine the impact the exercise would have on me until I was on stage. Just moments into my role as a suffering woman, a victim of domestic violence, I started to cry. It felt so natural that I did, but the tears increased with each passing minute and word. I was seeing my mother in the face of everyone in the audience. I was talking to her while acting my role; as if life had given her and me a second chance to make things right. I had never cried or thought that a mere performance would make me that emotional. It was quite demanding, but I managed to go through the whole play, more tears coming, the audience touched (Katushabe, 2010: 26).

Another actor, a graduate of Makerere University, confessed that:

As an actor, Rafiki has not left me the same as before. I have gained the ability to control the space on stage, and to enter in an individual distinctive character. Furthermore, I have experienced my body and know how to use it better than before. We work with improvised plays. Improvising has sharpened my mind, and it discourages cramming which may lead to disappointment on stage in case of forgotten lines. I have learnt to express feelings on stage, and I saw the change of facial expressions in the audience, and people were in tears (Atwine, 2010: 26).

Stefanie Rejzek, a German theatre practitioner who spent three years working with Rafiki theatre, commented on Rafiki's approach to work by remarking: 'Powerful actors, in an impressive performance. Moving. And while you are enjoying the play, you reflect about the content. It is a beautiful way to get information' (Rejzek, 2012).

Emphasis on aesthetics by Rafiki Theatre Company need not be viewed as entirely negative since a well-developed play is always more engaging and communicates the intended message effectively. However, it is against the ethics of the TfD process if the performance lacks the participation of the people in the community. The participants in the TfD project need always to be empowered to own the process which *may lead* to the production of a good play (the play does not necessarily need to be very good or aesthetically rich) by participating in the analysis of issues, developing the story and sketching the characters. As already noted, the consumerist approach adopted by Rafiki theatre resulted from the thinking of Schrowange who adopted it from Europe.

By adopting the above consumerist approach to theatre, Rafiki theatre was at the time of the fieldwork failing to implement a practice of TfD which was aimed at engaging the communities in analysing, and dialoguing about the problems that affect their lives. It is apparent that Rafiki theatre's approach was top-down with a vision of diffusing information to influence attitudes and change behaviour. The communities were not given the opportunity to participate in a collective process of theatre making which would enable them to understand the deep-seated contradictions underpinning their lives.

One of the plays which was packaged in 2010 and toured in many communities in Central and Eastern Uganda is *Nyumbani* which means home. The play addresses gender based violence from the family point of view and the society's perspective on gender related issues:

It looks at two families. In one family the husband inflicts physical violence. The man is a drunkard, quarrelsome, oppressive and hostile. His wife laments over the appalling state of affair. In another family it is more of psychological violence. The wife is not allowed by her husband to make decisions on her own. The man justifies his “ownership of the family” through the high bride price he paid. He also insists on sexual intercourse whenever he feels like. The sensitive issue of “marital rape” comes in here. Other issues like multiple sexual partners are also included in the play. The victims are not having the courage to talk about this violence, or report it to the authorities. By-passers are remaining silent and friends and family members are playing the problem down. The larger society supports the husbands, putting the blame on the women (Rafiki 2010:11).

The performance of this play among Karamoja communities spurred discussion and debate among the people. Rafiki Theatre Company outlines some example of submissions by the members of community in post-performance discussion. For instance, Isaac, a spectator at Karita Trading Centre, Amudat District stated that:

The issue of marital rape or any other type of rape should be fought by our community elders. Here in Karamoja specifically, rape does not exist in our vocabulary. Our culture glorifies rape as an engagement sign. Our people therefore grew up not knowing that rape exists or is a crime. I strongly believe that the elders who started and supported this kind of culture should be the ones to fight it(Rafiki Annual Report 2011:10).

Dennis, one of the spectators at Nakapiripirit Army Barracks noted that ‘not only does culture deny women their rights, religion too does. Religion only encourages women to pray, be patient and be submissive. The play clearly depicts religion and women in our society. As we are trying to change the cultural elements that oppress women, we should look at religion too’ (ibid., p.10).

The above submissions by people in communities upon watching the play *Nyumbani* certainly indicate the beginning of an awakening of a critical thought (conscientisation) among the communities the very foundation of TfD. Nevertheless, one wonders whether this process was sustained to maturation. Being a pre-packaged performance, it is apt to assert that it was a one-off engagement with the communities where it was performed. As already noted, the shortcoming of one-off theatre sessions is that the enthusiasm triggered during the post-performance discussions normally declines in intensity after the departure of the performance team. When this happens,

the envisaged level of conscientisation and empowerment through theatre, which is characterised by the passion of the community to take action, is never achieved.

Looking at the testimonies about Rafiki theatre's method of work, it can be deduced that it was the actors from Kampala who benefited from the empowering effects of theatre making. Indeed, Rafiki theatre brought together the professional actors in the confines of their head offices at Tilapia House in Kansanga, Kampala and began creating plays funded by various NGO programmes. They dubbed their practice forum theatre but instead of facilitating the visited communities in the process of intervening in the dramatic action and evolving a discussion of issues through performance, Rafiki theatre engaged them in short-lived intra-performance discussions or post-performance discussions.

As earlier noted in Chapter Three, section 3.2.2, the processes of cultural interaction and intercultural communication are power laden and affect the equality and mutuality of the process of communication. In Africa, and Uganda in particular, anything coming from Europe led by a white person is considered the best. An African will drop something he previously considered precious in favour of anything from Europe. This is exactly what happened when Schrowange started working with graduates who had received TfD training from Makerere University. They were quick to drop the theatre as a process/workshop concept of TfD they had received in training at Makerere University in preference to the emphasis of European conventional theatre aesthetics.

#### **4.3.3 The forces of Funding and Rafiki Theatre's Nature of Practice**

Besides being influenced by an ideology borrowed from Europe through Schrowange, Rafiki Theatre Company's avowed goal to engage communities in analysing their own problems seems to have been jeopardised by the dictates of funding. At the time of fieldwork, Rafiki theatre had for the five years of its existence been funded by various international organisations such as World Vision, UK Aid and the Irish Aid whose main objective is to reach as many people as possible with the intention of influencing people. It needs to be pointed out that the motivation by NGOs of adopting an interventionist and instrumentalist approach in order to reach as many people as possible with the relevant information may be commended in urgent

situations such as averting an epidemic. In effective TfD practice, however, the process has to engage the communities and the relevant stakeholders in working out how a development problem could be transformed.

In an interview, Hussein, one of the practitioners attached to Rafiki Theatre explained the power wielded by their sponsors in their projects:

There are some assignments given to us by funding bodies such as World Vision which require that we adapt our TfD methodology to disseminating information to as many people as possible. In 2012, World Vision contracted us to tour plays about child health and promoting infant immunisation. We had to work on our plays so that they are catchy and interesting. Such funding bodies will even vet the script and have it previewed before it is taken to communities. We had to devise means by which we would attract large audiences. This is because the success or failure of this programme would be measured by how many people attended the shows (Muhereza, 2015).

In writing scripts to showcase the message they aimed to disseminate to the population, Rafiki found itself excluding the communities from the process of collectively identifying their problem. The people who attended the performances were engaged as consumers of finished products of theatre. In effect, they were denied the opportunity to analyse their issues through collective creation and performance.

The close link between Rafiki's work and the broader framework of funding was further explained by the process they take to obtain funding for their practice. In a 2015 interview with Muhereza, he revealed that:

Before we go to communities to implement our work, we first showcase our approach by performing a prospective play on a burning issue such as gender based violence before an audience of prospective funders. This increases our chances of obtaining funding for our programmes (Muhereza, 2015).

This revelation by Muhereza already raises suspicion on the influence of funding on TfD activities in Uganda. It implies that funders are more inclined to funding theatre programmes with an already packaged theatre message. It is also apparent Rafiki Theatre Company was quick to respond to the dictates of their funders and go to the communities with pre-devised plays.

Generally, Rafiki theatre envisioned its approach to TfD in terms of the consumerist and conventional theatre aesthetics because of the need to meet the funder's objectives. This made them rely on the use of well-trained actors many of whom were



graduates of Makerere University's Department of Performing Arts and Film, and a well-structured script.

The result of the above approach was a skewed concept of participation whereby instead of fostering empowerment, their work ends up re-enforcing the existing oppressive power relations as the following example illustrates.

#### **4.3.4 The impact of a Consumerist Approach: An example of You Just a Woman workshop**

I was privileged to observe a video recording of Rafiki theatre's 2011 production *You are Just a Woman*, which was a forum theatre workshop conducted in Kapchorwa district in Eastern Uganda. The performance for the workshop was designed by Rafiki theatre company actors in Kampala and then toured in the district. The play featured a young woman who got married after dropping out of school as a result of a teenage pregnancy. In the video recording, the woman approached her husband and requested him to allow her go back to school. The husband simply shouted at her saying, 'Listen, you are just a woman. I give you everything you need. What do you want? I control this home. I am a man in this house.' In the performance, it was bewildering to note that the men treated their wives like toys. The male actors blindfolded their wives and performed a mime depicting women like playthings objectified by patriarchy. The woman further explained her ordeal:

I want to go back to school, get skills and be able to do something good for myself. My husband does not give me enough support. He does not listen to me. All he does is shout at me all the time and slap me whenever he wishes [ . . . ] Can't a woman work and bring something home? Isn't a woman entitled to make a decision on the number of children she wants to bear? My husband does not understand all this. Whenever I raise them he silences me by shouting at me and slapping me. I am tired of living like this.

One of the male actors asked the woman:

You want to go to school, is school better than a man? No it is not. You are copying bad cultures. You are copying cultures from the western countries (sic). In our culture, women are supposed to produce children. A woman cannot talk when the man is talking. She is supposed to kneel down in submission.

In the play's dialogue, women actors joined in to affirm the oppressive status quo. One of the women reprimands the married woman saying:

Look, you are putting on trousers and yet you are a married woman... You can never be a man. You will never change your status of being woman. It is going to happen forever that you are a woman and you are not going to change that. For me I have many problems: my husband is a drunkard, he comes home late in the night, and he beats me whenever he wishes, but you will never hear me complain. I never even tell my neighbours.

Evidently, while the play aimed to bring out the oppressive cultural and patriarchal structures in which some Ugandan women live, the action in the play was extremely denigrating and domesticating. The play aimed to appeal to the emotions of the audience about the plight of the women but ended up presenting the women as a people who are not capable of remedying their situation. It failed to represent or engage with the complex political agency of the women and their potential to improve their lives, which is the chief aim of TfD.

At the end of the performance, the facilitator asked the people to comment upon the performance as part of a post-performance discussion. The contributions from the community took the denigrating nature of the performance a step further by presenting women as helpless people who have to patiently bear with oppression. One of the male community members said:

I can go anywhere I feel like but a woman cannot choose where she wants to go. Like chicken which have to be inside the house by 6:00 pm, the women too should be in the house by 6:00pm ... We have no equal rights in that matter.

When the facilitator asked the community whether it was true that the women do not have equal rights with the men, the responses from the community including the women served to affirm the existing power structures. One woman noted, 'We are not equal. This is because the man brought us from our parent's homes. So my husband has a great impact on me.' Another man chimed in, 'We are the same except, women should maintain a certain lower level.' Another man—a soldier said— 'A woman is a helper. At all costs a woman is just a helper.' Another woman replied, 'That is our culture. We have to be submissive to our men since they brought us from our homes to their homes.'

Evidently, many of the above responses only served to maintain the status quo by legitimising the existing oppressive power structures. The performance had not succeeded in confronting oppression, or helping the participants to analyse the contradictions that underlie their lives. I attribute this domesticating experience to lack of effective participation and ownership of the process, which should have been enabled through participatory research and collective devising, performance and analysis.

Experiences elsewhere indicate TfD projects shaped by the politics of local NGO and international funding tend to deviate markedly from the participatory principles of TfD practice. Jule Koch describes an experience similar to the ones in IATM, GIZ and Rafiki theatre above, in Tanzania in which two local NGOs were involved in sponsoring the TfD process. In this experience two NGOs namely, the Centre for Human Rights Promotion (CHRP) and the Dodoma Inter Africa Committee on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children (Dodoma IAC) were involved in a project against the ritual circumcision of women. Like the contemporary Ugandan approaches described above, the project aimed to reach as many people as possible in order to create awareness through theatre of the dangers of female circumcision and encourage cessation from this practice (Koch, 2008).

Adopting the product-based approach, the two NGOs contracted two experts from the University of Dares Salaam and wrote a play titled *Sona* which they toured throughout the Dodoma region in Tanzania. Their approach was to stage two performances a day, six days a week, for four months. Like IATM, GIZ and Rafiki theatre, the organisers of the project attached a lot of importance to the aesthetic aspects of the performance. Reporting about the process of making *Sona* Koch observes that:

Through a casting process, 15 participants were chosen from the fifty interested people. The choice was made on the basis of artistic skills and particularly character portrayal [ . . . ]. The project's main focus was on the result, i.e. the exact and best possible rehearsing for the developed plot [ . . . ]. After 20 days of rehearsal, the results were performed in front of a committee of political, religious and NGO representatives so as to be able to incorporate possible proposals for changes that were expected due to the sensitivity of the topic (2008: 61-62).

Effectively, the approach adopted in the project described by Koch lacked the participation of the communities involved. Elaborating on this deficiency, Koch observes that:

With the tight schedule of the play at each stop, there was relatively little time put aside for the discussions: five, then ten minutes within an overall running time of 90 minutes. This meant that questions were kept rather basic and rhetorical. The expected answer was already implied in the question and kept to a basic yes-or-no pattern. The play was transposed to actual reality by directly involving and addressing the audience but instead of open exchange of opinions, the discussions remained limited to a basic question and answer exercise due to the obvious nature of the scenes. The main emphasis of the performance was the finished product, i.e. the play with its clearly defined messages, not the resulting exchange of opinions [. . .] (2008: 68).

From this citation, one deciphers an experience similar to IATM's deepening local democracy programme where very long plays were prescriptively written and performed before several communities, only engaging participants in short-lived post performance discussions which would be ten minutes out of a two hour session.

#### **4. 4 Conclusion**

When I reflect on the nature of TfD practice in contemporary Uganda, it is clear that the practices at the time of fieldwork largely promoted a neo-colonial paradigm or the centre-to-periphery approach. Instead of becoming a decolonisation process which transforms the participants from being objects of their oppression to subjects who are ready to work together and transform their situation, the TfD process in the above examples is one which validates the existing forces of oppression. The process is rather domesticating than liberating.

In my view, contemporary TfD practices are processes that promote what Prentki as cited in Chapter Two describes as the 'globalised monological culture' (2003: 39, 2006: 03, 2009: 20). In the above examples, it is evident that the view of development through TfD is one conceived by the western developed countries. A lack of effective participation results in little or no space for the local communities to engage in dialogue

with the centre, or as Prentki would put, the process denies the participants the opportunity to speak back to the colonisers (2007: 199).

From the analysis of the above case studies, one observes that because of the economic and political milieu shaped by global capital, the nature of participation in contemporary TfD practices seems re-echoes the critiques on participation in modern participatory development discourses discussed in Chapter Three.

In my view, the nature of participation in contemporary TfD practices in Uganda echoes Chambers (1997) criticism that participation has been 'disembedded' from its sociocultural roots and perceived as a 'thing', 'object' or 'resource' for keeping the market economy alive. The idea of 'keeping the market economy alive' (Chambers 1997, cited in Chinyowa 2015:14), relates to the money element associated with current development practices. Many development practitioners are aware that projects which claim to foster participation in modern times attract a lot of funding from the neoliberal world. Consequently, players in the field of development, including TfD practitioners in most cases articulate an aspect of participation in their funding proposals, aimed at empowerment to appear plausible to the development funders but they do not put into practice the idea of participation as envisaged. For example, in the case of IATM, the practitioners continued being faithful to their funder's programme to ensure the latter's continued favour of sponsorship. In the GIZ's projects, practitioners had to align their work to the funder's programme even when this did not guarantee effective participation. This is in line with Chinyowa's view in his article on participation in applied theatre in South Africa, where he observes that:

The strategies being deployed in the name of participation such as dialogue, giving voice, conscientisation and empowerment are deemed to create the illusion of liberation while they reinforce prevailing oppressive structures (Chinyowa, 2015: 12).

The practices by both IATM, Rafiki theatre and GIZ clearly articulate Rahnema's view on the abuse of participation that 'when A considers it essential for B to be empowered, A assumes not only that B has no power—or does not have the right kind of power—but also that A has the secret formula of power in which A has to be initiated' (Rahnema, 2009: 143). In the general, the discussion in this chapter has demonstrated that TfD practice in Uganda has not transformed to the level of theatre for

conscientisation where the community is facilitated to be at the centre of working out their own development.

Whereas this chapter has unearthed the power normally wielded by international capital in TfD projects in the developing South, it should be acknowledged that funding remains a crucial aspect in TfD practice. There will always be need for funding to facilitate the implementation of projects. What is also necessary is a mutually independent relationship between the funders and practitioners. The relationship between funders and practitioners needs to be one where the funders respect the intentions of the practitioners to implement a people-centred TfD process. To achieve this, the practitioners need to negotiate with the funders and clearly present their plans and working processes. Negotiation is possible when the funders' goals and objectives are not entirely power laden and neoliberal. Where the development funder comes with an already determined programme, as the case is with IATM, GIZ and Rafiki Theatre, it becomes difficult to implement a people-centred programme.

This chapter has also indicated that sponsorship of TfD practice normally involves power-related imbalances, and time is needed for a TfD project to yield a lasting impact. Because of the need to be faithful to the funders' prescriptions, practitioners in Uganda find themselves inclined to impose their knowledge and power on the community by taking a central place in the process. In the subsequent chapters (Chapters Five and Six), I make a further exploration of the centrality of funding in TfD using my practical experiences.

## **Chapter Five**

### **My initial Strategies of Constituting a TfD Project**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

In the previous chapters, this thesis has examined the nature of TfD practice in Uganda looking at the practice of other people: local and foreign practitioners. In the chapters that follow (Five and Six), I discuss the dynamics of TfD practice using experiences from my own efforts at TfD practice. I further reflect and analyse what it takes to execute an effective TfD process by looking at the strategies and processes I deployed and the forces which shaped my work.

The previous chapter has indicated that implementing an effective TfD process requires effective planning and dedication on the part of the practitioners and an awareness of the need to place the participants at the centre of the process. For example, in IATM's practice, when the practitioners were oblivious of the need to place the participants at the centre of the process, the work turned out to be rather unidirectional and top-down. The power excesses of the facilitators were seen to disenfranchise communities from active participation in the TfD process while focusing on large geographical areas led to a scenario where the practitioners spent very little time with the communities. This pushed them into adopting a model which focuses on information dissemination through exogenously designed performances.

My goal in the ensuing chapters is to augment the foregoing discussion on nature of TfD practice in Uganda and the impact of funding, the power dynamics and the time factor on the TfD process, focusing on my own experience with TfD work. I focus my discussion on my efforts with TfD practice which started with the desire to work with young people in a communitywide project but ended up in a Child Rights TfD project with school children in Gganda village, Wakiso district in Central Uganda in 2014 (I have explained the shift in focus in section 5.1.2 of this chapter.

In the child rights project, I was making my first ever individual effort at TfD facilitation—I had previously worked with colleagues at Makerere University such as Patrick Mangeni, Richard Kagoloby and Lillian Mbabazi facilitating TfD workshops in

Mbarara district, Western Uganda in 2009. Generally, in terms of my level of proficiency in TfD facilitation, I honestly need to point out that by the time I embarked on the practice examined in the next chapters, I was still developing with just few exposures to TfD facilitation. The work discussed here was aimed at providing me with experiences I could use to further reflect on the nature of TfD practice and the challenges that practitioners need to be aware of in an effort to execute TfD processes as part of my PhD research. In succeeding chapters, (Five and Six), I will argue that each of the issues so far discussed in Chapter Four —funding, power and the time factor played a role in shaping the quality of my practice in the child rights project.

Thinking about funding, my project did not have any financial backing. I considered the option of looking for funding from potential sources such as local and international NGOs in Uganda like Actionaid International, Oxfam and World Vision. This option did not work out mainly because Wakiso district, the location of my project is not endowed with financially stable local NGOs and that most of the aforementioned international NGOs exclude Wakiso from their area of operation. The only support I could depend on was the willingness of the people to participate and in-kind support in form of a venue for the TfD workshops. Previously (see sections 4.1.3 and 7.1.3 respectively), this study has demonstrated that funding, if not properly envisaged in a TfD project may work against the aims of TfD to engage communities as veritable partners by privileging the aims of funders. In the ensuing chapters I look at the other side of funding and argue that having funding for a TfD project is essential for successful community engagement. I discuss the challenges of facilitating a TfD project without funding. This reiterates my earlier point in Chapter Three section 3.5.4 that seeking for funding for TfD is not a professional blunder as money is needed to fund the logistical aspects of the project, but money should not be the overriding factor. As it will become apparent, lack of financial support for my work adversely impacted on my mobilisation and community building strategies.

Considering the question of power, I will look at myself as a man, well known in the community as someone highly educated and formerly a lecturer at Makerere University interacting with the school administration and the children. I will ask: how far did I go in dissolving the power lines between myself and the participants with whom I worked.



Isn't it possible that the children took on my proposals unquestioningly because of my position as a visitor to the school, a man and someone in whom they would see the usual despotic character of their teachers? Similarly, considering the authoritarian relationship between the teachers and the children I will query: to what extent did I succeed in diffusing the power dynamics in the community and facilitating a bottom-up or endogenous TfD process as I had envisaged?

In view of the aspect of time, I will think about the amount of time which was needed to enter the school community and implement a participatory, bottom up approach of TfD. I will argue that the limited period of time available for me worked against my envisaged approach by influencing the choices I made.

The critical methodological framework for my practice was first and foremost the core principles of TfD practice as discussed in first sections of Chapter Two of this thesis. As such, the success of my work was measured based on the extent to which it had fostered an integral process of participation and giving voice to the participants. Second, in the course of the project, I was observant and monitoring how the work was developing, taking note of the level of enthusiasm and vitality of the participants. In this way I would know whether group activity was leading to cohesion and the need to analyse issues and develop something together. At the end my project (in Chapter Six), I interrogated my work in some kind of an impact assessment. I asked myself: how effective were my strategies? What else should I have done to be more effective? What challenges played against my practice?

I worked with another person—Grace Mary Mbabazi whom I would rather loosely describe as a co-facilitator. I say loosely because Grace, though interested in community development work was not proficient in the TfD process. She is a business professional whose interest is to work with people especially women in order to educate them about financial literacy skills. She picked interest in my work because in our pre-project preparations, I was talking of a process which would bring people together so that through performance they can analyse issues that affect their lives, something she desired to do in her community development practice. I did not engage Grace in the technical facilitation aspects of the process. Rather, she supported me in other important aspects of the process such as taking photographs, recording videos of the

process and recording stories from the participants, things which I could not do myself alongside facilitation.

Engaging her at the level of real co-facilitation would require me to give her detailed training in TfD facilitation as Plastow did for anthropologist McQuaid in the Walukuba project. I did not do this because of the time available for me to complete my research. However, before each session we would discuss the process so that all of us would have a clear picture of what would be done.

The decision to work almost as a lone facilitator required me to be aware of the disadvantages associated with it such as the 'sheer pressure of taking up the responsibility all the time, which can feel lonely and stressful' (Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 22). I needed to think about how I would support myself in issues such as controlling anger. I invited Grace to closely monitor my engagement of the participants and we had frequent meetings to talk through the process.

In this chapter, I discuss my own attempt to establish a TfD project, the St Kizito School Children Rights TfD Project. I examine the first things which normally come with this process such as choosing the community, community mobilization, entering the community context, group building and problem identification and prioritisation. The aim of this chapter is to continue reflecting on the nature of TfD practice in Uganda considering more specifically what it may require to implement an effective TfD process. I begin by giving background to my practice, profiling my identified community and explaining the initial plans of my work and how these changed because of failure in my mobilisation strategies.

## **5.1 Background to the Gganda community and the School Child Rights TfD Project**

### **5.1.1 The Gganda community**

Gganda is a village on a hilltop in Wakiso district, Central Uganda, just a few kilometres from the Kampala city centre. It is a uniquely large village composed of several would be separate villages such as Kamu-Kamu, Nsumbi and Nasere. I became interested in the Gganda community because it is the place of my residence. I have

lived in the local area since 2006. As an insider, sharing the same culture with the people, I thought that the power rift between the community and I would be to a large extent bridged. It would lessen the problem of imbalance in power caused by cultural differences, similar to the one experienced by Plastow and McQuaid in the Walukuba project.

Having been resident in the community for almost a decade, I was motivated to intervene in the awful conditions in which the people live. As a resident, I had experienced the socio-cultural, political and economic complications of living in the area, including lack of health care facilities, lack of garbage disposal modalities, poor roads and transport infrastructure, and lack of effective social services. These issues are compounded by the spiritual beliefs and practices of the Indigenous settlers of the area. The many 'witch doctor' shrines located there indicate practices connected to the human sacrifice and trafficking of children in the area.

The demographic set up of Gganda changed significantly between 2006 and 2008. The growth of the city of Kampala led to the outer migration of city dwellers into sparsely populated, predominantly indigenous-settled rural areas, such as Gganda. However, this urban expropriation of land by people needing a home near their place of work occurred without formal urban planning processes leading to persistent poor living conditions. Land sales were unregulated meaning that plot size depended on the amount of money a buyer had. This resulted in uneven development with the smaller (inexpensive) plots lacking space and/or proper access ways in and out. The area continues to lack properly demarcated roads, piped water networks, sufficient electricity transmission lines and government health facilities. The nearest government health facility for the people of Gganda is located four kilometres away in Nansana municipality, a neighbouring local administrative area. This distance seems small, but bad road network makes the place difficult to access. For a now densely populated area such as Gganda, the lack of a public health facility is problematic, especially in terms of maternal and infant health. Unregulated privately-owned health providers have moved in to fill the gap. This often leads to poor diagnosis of diseases and high death rates. Apart from a few emerging primary and secondary private schools, there was not a single government school.

My own preliminary research in the area identified several living conditions such as traditional beliefs and superstitions, poor sanitation, lack of basic facilities such as water, schools, health centres, poor drainage of roads which become impassable during rainy season, youth unemployment, high rates of school drop outs, teenage pregnancies, child neglect and trafficking and child human sacrifice.

### **5.1.2 The Young People's TfD Project**

The St Kizito Gganda School Child Rights TfD Project was not the original idea of my planned practice. Initially, based on the above preliminary research, I had planned to do a young people's TfD project in the Gganda peri-urban area. I planned to work with young people aged between 15 and 24 years because most of the problems I had identified in the area, such as teenage pregnancy, high rates of school drop outs, unemployment and lack school facilities, directly affected them. I envisioned engaging them in a forum where they could discuss their needs in dialogue with one another and attempt to work out a way forward.

With this plan, I started the process of community mobilisation in Gganda by making attempts to enter the community on 15 June 2014. From the onset of the process, I was faced with the problem of community mobilisation. I had mapped out the area and discovered that because of its lack of proper physical planning, there were no physical places such as community centres where the youths and other social groups could meet. The only available spaces were a private primary and secondary schools, which shared a playground owned by the Buganda Kingdom land board. Perhaps because of lack of the relevant social amenities, the area also lacked youth associations I could approach as a starting point for further mobilisation. The challenge of youth mobilisation was also compounded by a lack of project funds. If funding had been available, I had the option of employing a youth group from another area whose performances would have attracted the local youths. Though this would lead to reliance on exogenous efforts, it would have helped ignite local efforts.

Having found it difficult to effectively mobilise the young people, my co-facilitator and I started going into people's homes explaining my intentions and plans and calling upon the young people to come and work with me. In their homes, I would also ask

parents to allow their children to join me in this collective learning process. This mobilisation strategy seemed fruitless. The major setback encountered in this process was that the young people with the support of their parents would promise their attendance but would not turn up. While previous TfD workshops in Africa such as the one at Benue in Nigeria in 1983 (Frances Harding, 1999) and at Lubombo in Uganda in 1994 (Mbowa, 1998) used the house to house mobilisation with considerable success, our effort at using the method seemed rather intrusive. My co-facilitator and I were strangers in the homes and it appeared to me that few parents were willing to let their young people go with a stranger. Consequently, in the first session only four young people turned up. The photo below shows the low turn up at our first meeting.



*Photo by Grace Mary Mbabazi*

In this session, I decided to engage the four youth present in order to strengthen the process of community building and further mobilization. One of the participants proposed that we broaden the scope of the project to include not only young people but also the adults—the mothers and the fathers. She argued that the problems affecting the young people also concerned the parents and that these problems could not be solved unless the parents were involved. The participant proposed that we engage an already organised group of women, the Catholic Women's Group. This group was well known in the Catholic community and met regularly to discuss issues related to initiating income generating activities and the welfare of their families. To me as facilitator of the project, the proposal to build the TfD project on an existing group was welcome but I

was afraid of biasing the project toward a religious entity, which might disenfranchise other sections of the community. I explained the dangers implicit in the proposal to the participants and we decided instead to opt for further house-to-house mobilization.

As Sarah Thornton comments about the difficulties involved in engendering local participation, 'there is always a challenge of overcoming the barriers of scepticism and entrenched suspicion' (2009: 164). For example, during the house-to-house mobilization, we talked to a lady and introduced to her our idea of a collective community project. In response, the woman expressed fear concerning anything related to community action. She retorted that:

We are tired of such community efforts which do not materialize into any tangible gains. Just recently officials claiming to be from the State House (official home of the President of Uganda) came and mobilized us to form a Savings Credit and Cooperative Organization (SACCO). They registered us at a membership fee of Ush 35000, approximately 7 pound sterling. We were in addition supposed to save 20% of any amount a member wished to borrow. At the end of it all, the SACCO unceremoniously closed down resulting into heavy losses for the members (see my field notes, appendix 20).

The lady in the citation above expected material gains. One of the greatest challenges which I encountered and which TfD facilitators face is that usually the practice does not always promise tangible or material gains to the people for their participation in the project beyond individual and collective human transformation. There may always be hope for tangible outcomes depending on the strategic actions agreed upon and implemented by the community, but this normally depends on the amount of time invested in the project and the level of commitment of the community. To allay her fear, I informed her of the immediate benefits of her participation by explaining that the aim of our planned community effort was to dialogue and discuss issues similar to the one she had pointed out and that she was welcome to share them in our community forum. Finally, she said 'go and begin, we shall join you later' (see my field notes, appendix 20)

From the house-to-house mobilization, we were able to add to our team two boys, Tim and Christopher, but our desire to mobilize at least twenty members of the community for our project was proving difficult. I say at least twenty members because this seems to be a standard number of participants for initiating a sustainable TfD

project. Normally facilitators do not wait for huge crowds to begin but the number of participants normally grows as the project is sustained and as participants attract more people by word of mouth.

### **5.1.3 Siting the TfD Project in a School**

After three days of negotiating entry into the community, I approached the head teacher of St Kizito Primary School, a community school in the area. My aim of meeting her was to make a formal request so that she would allow us to hold our community workshop meetings in the school yard. Before I could make the request, I shared with her my intent to work with young people in the community so that together we would analyze issues that affect them and find appropriate solutions. I explained to her that the young people would create a play or plays revolving around the issues identified which would finally be performed to the whole community culminating in further community dialogue and action.

The head teacher welcomed the idea observing that this provided an opportunity for the school to demonstrate its relevancy to the community. She went on to explain how the Ministry of Education measures the performance of schools observing that, “when the education office is rating school performance, they look at the school’s performance in national examinations and also at the impact the school has made in its immediate community” (see my field notes, appendix 20).

In order to create a tangible partnership between the school and the community, I proposed to the head teacher that we involve some young people of the school in the project. She welcomed the idea and allowed us to work with pupils in year six, many of whom were aged 13-14years. As facilitator I had achieved access into the community and the ball was in my hands to initiate and develop the TfD project. We agreed with the head teacher that the young people who were not part of the school but willing to participate would be allowed to come into the school and take part in the project. But as it will become apparent, the four young boys who did not belong to the school dropped out of the project. They only attended two initial workshops. It seemed to me that they felt out of place participating with the majority of children within the school.

Based on the programme of the school, we would work for fourteen days at 4:30pm to 6:30 each day after class work. Since children from year one to five went home at 4pm, the school premises would be quiet and conducive for our creative work. It was the custom of the school to have year six pupils remain in the school for extra lessons between 4:30pm to 6:30pm. Given that the parents already knew about this extra arrangement, we did not have to explain to them why the children remained at school beyond 4pm. In the discussion with the head teacher, we agreed on the idea to have the children perform their plays at an expected parents meeting in the school which would help them articulate their concerns. To me, this was a good opportunity to involve the power base of the community.

In summary, I dropped my initial idea of a young people's TfD project in Gganda in preference for a project in a school because my efforts at community mobilisation had yielded little effect (six participants). It was possible for me to continue with the six young people since some participatory theatre efforts may start with even a fewer number of people (see Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 22). I did not make this choice because I was afraid that it would be difficult to retain the commitment of the six young people. I did not have money to provide even the basic incentives such as refreshments and transport re-imbursments. I easily opted for the school participants because they would come to school with or without my incentives. It would be nice for me to give the children some refreshments, but this did not seem obligatory. This may imply that refreshments and transport refunds are used to buy the participants into TfD projects, but the point I am making here is that small enticements aid in the process of mobilisation and group building. I am certain that if Plastow and McQuaid in the Walukuba project ) had not given refreshments to participants (1000 Ushs to the young people and 2000 Ushs to the elders), they would have lacked participants and found it difficult to build a core group, which later expanded into a community wide engagement. Against this backdrop, it seems apparent that one of the greatest theoretical and practical contradictions of TfD continues to be the idea of facilitating people financially to participate in a project when, actually, it is their development that is being sought.



## **5.2 Envisioning the Project: Defining my Paradigm of Practice**

In line with my critical methodological framework highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, and in order to avoid exogenous, deterministic and prescriptive approaches of TfD practice, I was keen to implement an endogenous process privileging the active participation of the community. I planned a participatory theatre process where participation would be both integral and transformational as opposed to being extrinsic and instrumental. This means that the children would become a central entity in the TfD process, participating in all the stages instead of being consumers of an already finished product as seen in the IATM practices in Chapter Four.

As participatory development expert, Guy Bessette, has put it, 'we cannot refer to a participatory approach when researchers and development practitioners use participatory techniques in contexts where they have already decided on the issue' (2004:14). I planned a participatory research process where the issues to be explored by the community would be determined by them through a process of collective research and analysis.

In order to implement the envisaged endogenous, bottom-up TfD process, I planned to adopt different dramatic frames. These included the story telling frame and the Augusto Boal participatory theatre frame. From the experience of successful TfD practitioners such as Tim Prentki (2003), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) and Patrick Mangeni (2007), these approaches ensure that the participants are brought to the centre of the process. I was aware that the Augusto Boal participatory theatre frame and the story telling frame may be abused especially if the issues and the stories used are externally determined. I had discovered this potential abuse of the participatory frames in IATM's work (see Chapter Four) and partly in Jane Plastow's work (see Chapter Eight).

The use of the storytelling frame would be twofold. First, it would involve the use of traditional story such as a folktale or a fairy tale as a springboard for community analysis and research; a process which may be described as the cultural performance model (see Mangeni 2007). The transformative way of using this approach would be to have the participants choose a well-known traditional story from their community, narrate it to each other and then move to adapting the characters and situations in the

story to the issues being explored. In this way, the participants would be involved in the process of collective analysis from the onset. This would be different from an instrumental model (see Nelson & Wright (1995) on models of participation, also cited in Chapter Three) in which case I would choose the story for them and invite them to use the story to analyse their issues.

Second, storytelling involves facilitating members of the target community in the process of telling stories revolving around problems that affect their lives. After Prentki (2003) and Moclair (2009), the application of storytelling as a paradigm for participatory research in my TfD process would involve facilitating the communities in telling stories that explore their problems and in effect unveil the contradictions underlying their suffering. These stories would then be used as raw material for community dialogue and improvisation. As Prentki observes about his work in Southern India, 'the choice of which stories to use in devising would be left to the participants. The facilitator's main function during this phase would be to help to expose the contradictions within the stories and how these might contribute to the structure of the devising' (Prentki, 2003). In doing so, my practice would circumvent the idea of imposing my own stories and problems on the participants.

The application of dramatic techniques borrowed from Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, namely image theatre and simultaneous dramaturgy, aims to enable communities collectively to realize their problems. A similar process of community research, reflection and analysis has been experimented with by Michael Etherton (2009) in child rights Theatre for Development workshops in South Asia and Africa.

Using his model, my process of community research and analysis would involve some of the following processes: Imaging in order to explore community problems; Devising incomplete dramas in small groups; Criticizing the incomplete dramas by the whole group in order to check the quality of characters and situations; Revising the scenes to develop them further and make the characters more paradoxical; and, Re-analysis and revision of the dramas until everyone feels that the plays are communicating precisely the contradictory complexity of the problems in the community or echo the truth in the lives of community members (see Etherton, 2009 for details of his approach).

### **5.3 First Steps: The First Workshop**

The first workshop took place shortly after permissions to work with young people in the school on school premises had been obtained. It included a number of activities: an introduction from the project facilitator (myself); identification and prioritisation of the issues to be explored; and group building exercises. The aim of this first workshop was to interest the participants in the project and provide them with information to enable them to make an informed choice about their participation. It is true that at their age, the children did not have the capacity to give informed consent, but the point I am making here is the children had the choice whether to participate or not. I explained to the school authorities about the freedom of choice the children had.

From the onset of the project, I was aware of the prevailing power relationships and dynamics. The atmosphere in this school community was one informed by a long standing tradition of despotism common in Ugandan schools where the teacher is an all powerful person with the duty of forcing learners to cram the material studied and always inclined to forcing the learners into submission. This kind of power relationship was easily seen in the school as the teachers were always holding sticks/canes to threaten and punish any child who would not comply with the school rules.

On the day of the first workshop, when I approached the space in which I would meet the participants, I realized that the children were still with two teachers. Fearing that I would disrupt the class, I went back to the office and informed the head teacher that the class was still busy with two teachers. She told me that she had requested the teachers to remain in the class and help me to control the children so that their behaviour does not present a problem to the programme. This seemed a courteous gesture but served to further exemplify the fact that the atmosphere in the school was one where the teachers excessively controlled and suppressed the voices of the children. Of the two teachers, one of the teachers quietly opted out after the initial session. I continued working with the remaining class teacher who supported us with organisational issues. This teacher understood the ethos of our work. Never did she threaten children with punishment.

The atmosphere of threat of punishment in the school may sound terrifying for a western developed world readership, but it is a common practice in Uganda and Africa in general. In Uganda, with the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme in 1996, corporal punishments were outlawed in schools, but teachers continue to administer them as a way of instilling discipline in the children. Such an environment of threat of punishment raises myriad questions: how possible would it be to execute a participatory democratic TfD processes in such circumstances? How would I ensure that people/children were not pretending with expressing themselves when actually they are afraid of doing so? It also raised the question of how much time was needed to negotiate a way through such a history of oppression of young people. I have reflected more on these questions in the critical reflections on my practice at the end of Chapter Six.

The operations of power in the school confirmed that I had to democratise the space/process and enable the participants to exercise their often-suppressed voices. It is true that democratising the space/process in a milieu of deeply entrenched historical oppression is not always smooth in the short term, but I had to lead the participants to understand that no one would be punished for expressing her/himself.

In introducing the project to the participants, I explained that it was going to be a forum in which the participants would exercise their voice on the issues in the community which affect their lives as children. I emphasised, in a language that would be understood by the children, that, unlike in the normal learning situations where the teacher is the only esteemed source of knowledge, in our project the teachers and the participants would learn from one another. I explained further that our work was a space where everyone would be free to express themselves on issues they felt were important and promised them that there would be no “kiboko”. The word kiboko in Ugandan schools is used to refer to corporal punishment through caning, an institutionalised correctional practice. Freedom of expression by the participants would be deciphered from the enthusiasm with which they shared stories and engaged group activities.

To balance the power relations between the children and I, I took on the dual role of facilitator-participant. The ever-present teacher was not required to directly participate. Her role was to provide moral support. She moved around watching the groups work,

this time without a stick in her hands. As facilitator, I stood with participants in the circle modelling participation in various activities. At the same time, I inspired, led, guided, corrected and demonstrated during the session when these duties seemed necessary. I explained to the children that together as a group we would try to understand the issues identified in our work and in the process make plays which we would perform to our parents during a parents' meeting. I made it explicit that the children would be the ones to make these plays focusing on issues of their own choice. At this point, I observed that the children were very excited at the prospect of making their own plays and compared themselves to some of the local TV stars such as Kato Lubwama, Amooti Mubaranguzi and Charles James Ssenkubuge. While I knew that the aim of the TfD project was not to form/train stars, the enthusiasm shown by the children at this stage would be crucial in sustaining the energy needed in the impending participatory TfD process.

Being an already organised group, guided by formal rules and regulations, the school obliged all the learners in year six to attend. Effectively, I was establishing the project with a group of participants who could well be described as 'captive'. As a TfD practitioner, I had to foreground the idea of democracy via free choice. I explained to the teachers and the participants that one was free to keep out of the project. I knew that this feeling of choice would yield a greater sense of ownership, greater investment in the project's success and eventually greater commitment, energy and enthusiasm. Some children especially those who did not belong to the school exercised this freedom of choice and opted out as early as the end of the second workshop.

One could argue that since the children who did not belong to the school left and I was now working with participants from the school, the process had evolved into a Theatre in Education (TIE) project. This argument would be correct if my practice had involved performing a pre-packaged play in the school, offering an extrinsic process of participation. This has been the practice of theatre companies involved in Theatre in Education in Uganda such as the Ebonies and Bakayimbira Dramactors. They make a play on a theme of educational value such as teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, malaria prevention and child nutrition and then tour it in schools. After the performance, they engage the children in short-lived post-performance discussion. The focus of my work in the school was to engage the children in a participatory creative process through which

they would collectively analyse through the creative process the problems affecting their lives. The school setting is an appropriate setting for TfD practice. In fact TfD projects have previously been done in schools (see Mangeni1998). Prentki (2006) has attempted to establish a dialectical relationship between TfD and TIE suggesting that TfD can occur in school settings especially if the practitioners extend the possibilities of existing TIE practices to foreground participation. He argues that:

Where the participants—usually children—have no choice about whether or not they engage in the process, it is straining definitions to label such a practice TfD. However, the roles of children in setting the agendas for the work—in deciding, in short, what it is to be about—can be significantly enhanced by application of Freirean principles (Prentki, 2006: 08).

In this citation Prentki suggests that for one to talk of TfD in a school context, the children should be given the opportunity to choose whether to participate in the session or not and that the participants should be afforded the opportunity of deciding what they want the work to be about through the Freirean principles of dialogue and participation. This is what my work at the school set out to achieve.

Immediately after introducing the project I told the children that I did not have the issues which we would explore in the project, instead the issues would be identified by them. I asked them to identify what issues they thought were urgent and needed attention from the community. The children responded with answers. The first said, “I want us to study about children”. Another said “I want us to study about children rights”. When I made further effort to elicit more issues from the children, it seemed apparent that all the children wanted us to explore issues related to child welfare. Finally, we concluded that our TfD project would focus on the broad theme of child rights. This issue was apparently important to the young people—either the participants themselves had been victim of rights violation or they had witnessed fellow children being abused. Child rights violation had been in issue in both the print and electronic media in Uganda and abroad for a long time. There had been widespread stories of child sacrifice and torture. One of the stories is one reported by Sadab Kitata which involved Kato Kajubi who on October 27<sup>th</sup> 2008 sacrificed Joseph Kasirye, a twelve years boy to win favours from the gods to complete a huge building project. Kasirye’s head and private parts were cut off and never found. After a long trial, Kajubi was found guilty and handed a life

sentence (see Sadab Kitata, 2012). The other story was recorded by (Akbar Jay, 2015) in the Daily Mail, a UK based newspaper, reporting the horrifying rise of child human sacrifice in Uganda at the hands of witch doctors. It is still a regular occurrence to watch television news stories where dead bodies of children allegedly sacrificed are discovered with missing body parts. Concerning child torture in Uganda, there was a widespread story of a maid who was filmed battering a one year old girl in the absence of her parents (see [www. Youtube.com/watch?v=4mg6cpOhTX8](http://www.Youtube.com/watch?v=4mg6cpOhTX8)). This maid pleaded guilty in court and was sentenced to a four years prison term. The idea of working around issues related to child rights and welfare as mutually agreed upon with the children was useful in light of the Convention on the Rights of the Child promulgated in 1989. It was hoped that the TfD project would give the children an opportunity to exercise some of the rights enshrined in the convention. By participating in sharing stories and analyzing issues together, they would exercise the freedom of expression outlined in article 13 of the convention. Freedom of expression as enshrined in the article includes freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kind, regardless of frontier, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art or through any media of the child's choice. The participants would also put into effect the provisions in article 14 on the freedom of thought, which in my view upholds the child's right to express an opinion and be heard; and article 15, which guarantees the right to freedom of association and assembly and relates closely to children working and sharing ideas in groups.

While the participants in the group knew each other by virtue of having studied together and lived in the same neighbourhoods, I knew that they had not worked together on any collective creative process. I gathered from my inquiry from teachers that they had previously participated in performing arts competitions in which external trainers employed by the school coerced them to perform. I therefore knew that the starting point for this TfD process would be devoted to group building and creating a sense of collective ownership of the process evident in the extent of group vitality in collective activities such as games, storytelling and improvisation.

#### 5.4 Fostering Group Building and Ownership

As Clifford and Hermann have advised, 'for the identity of the group to be one of power, the group needs to have control over the decision making process and experience the responsibility which exists with this role' (1999: 39). Consequently, our process of group building engaged the participants in activities that would help them to begin to learn to work together with the goal of making something together. It involved fostering a sense of a group where social barriers would be broken bringing about a situation where participants would have shared ideas, concerns and goals. It involved creating an 'emotionally safe space' (Prendergast & Saxton, 2013: 33) so that the participants would become more prepared to express their opinions and feelings. As pointed out above, an emotionally safe space in practice would involve having an environment devoid of fear to express oneself.

The key activities I deployed in the course of building the group and fostering safe ownership included engaging in a collective activity of making ground rules, games and exercises, and other elements of participatory research. Making ground rules served two purposes, namely; creating a sense of unity of purpose and 'handing over power and the responsibility of the decision making process to the group' (Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 62). The ground rules were proposed and endorsed by the participants and they included "being serious and committed to the process, avoiding shyness, being active, speaking loudly, respecting the opinions of others and observing a good level of discipline." The group further reiterated the earlier agreed rule that there would be no corporal punishment for offenders (the no kiboko rule). In order to avoid exposing the project to potential disruption from stubborn participants who would take advantage of the absence of punishment, the group collectively agreed that if anyone broke the rules of good conduct, more than three times, he/she would be asked to leave.

In terms of games and exercises, I made use of the wealth of existing drama games provided by authors such as Clifford & Hermann's *Theatre of Empowerment* (1999), Jessica Swale's *Drama Games* (2009) and Chris Johnston's *Drama Games For Those Who Like To Say No* (2010). Games and exercises were chosen depending on their complexity and their ability to increase the vitality of the participants. In this way, I was putting into practice Warren Linds' *et al* experience that:



As games are structured to develop from simple actions to more complex forms of inter- and intrapersonal interactions, the real value of the games lies in helping youth to express ideas and feelings in physical exercises that simultaneously develop group cohesion and trust. (2013: 40).

With this in mind, at the start of the project I chose three games that were simple and engaging enough to give the participants a taste of what the process would be. These included the *name on paper* game, the *name balls* game and *tug of war*. In the *name on paper* game, participants maintained their position in a circle. A large sheet of manila paper and marker pens were put in the centre of the circle. Participants were invited to volunteer in turns to write down their own name on the manila paper and then speak to the group about it based on points such as what it means, if they have a nickname and a story connected to it.

As facilitator-participant, I volunteered to write my name first and talk about it. I said, “my name is Keneth; it was given to me by my parents when I was a baby. My parents named me after St Keneth, a man who evangelised in Northern Ireland and Scotland.” The participants continued after my example and this was continued until all the participants had shared their name.

In the *name balls* game, the participants kept their position in the circle. They were invited to throw the ball to each other as they called out their own names. In these games, my role involved demonstrating and then falling back immediately into a participant role. As Chinyowa puts it, ‘in TfD, games are posited to enable and foster empowerment through development of positive attitude and group work’ (Chinyowa, 2005). In line with this point, I observed that the games and exercises aimed at group building engaged the children and increased their energy. The *tug of war* game (see appendix 18) made the children work together. Looking at the participants playing games, one would get a feeling of how the group would work together on tasks calling for interpersonal and intergroup communication. I remember the name and paper game provided the children with the opportunity to speak about themselves at length, perhaps for the first time. The participants never wanted to stop playing the game, which signified the good level of engagement it had elicited.

Commenting on our work involving games from one of the sessions, the head teacher who had been observing us from afar said, “I saw one of my daughters who is

HIV positive participating. She looked happy and that is very good. It is good that she is participating happily. I also saw another girl who had been previously shy now participating enthusiastically". The photos below shows participants engaged in the *name and paper* game.



Above: a manila paper and marker pens are the centre of focus for the whole group. Below: participants are taking turns to write their names and explain themselves to the group. Photo by Grace Mary Mbabazi

The group building process was not something needed just for opening sessions of the TfD project. Rather it was an ideal that would be rolling, each day requiring efforts to get the participants to work together. For this reason, each session would begin with appropriate games and exercises led by both myself and the participants. Consequently, as the project progressed, we had built a repertoire of games and exercise from which we would draw.

I was aware that in addition to developing a sense of group and getting participants to begin working together, they needed to learn to trust each other and advance in the

world of role-play and make believe. Thus, some games and exercises were tailored to cater for these needs. Our repertoire as a result developed to include such games as Act the Fact, Small Group Trust, Bomb and Shield, and Blind Leading (see appendix 18 for detailed description of the games).

After each game, participants were invited to give feedback to the group about their experience. This would usher in moments of reflection. For example, when the participants were invited to tell their experience after the blind leading game, they variously responded, “I felt so good, I felt as if I was flying in the air, I felt I was being trusted, it was full of fun . . .” The photos below show participants engaged in trust games.



*Photo by Grace Mary Mbabazi*

Before each session, the participants were facilitated to reflect on the previous activities/sessions. The aim of facilitating these moments of reflection was to find out what the participants liked about the process so that we would maintain these in order

to retain their enthusiasm. I further wanted to know whether the programme had caused them to think about new things they wanted to introduce into it. This would help me ascertain whether the group was growing towards greater ownership of the process.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the initial processes undertaken in an effort to constitute a TfD project and the challenges influencing the siting and execution of the process in its early phase. The chapter has been significant in demonstrating the complexity involved in initiating a TfD project without financial resource. Inadequate financing impacted on the development of the project. My experience in this chapter has indicated that financial resources in TfD practice are vital in the implementation of the projects. As evidenced by Plastow's experience in Chapters 7 to 9, TfD facilitators will always need money to facilitate not only the process of mobilisation and group building but also sustaining the group. From my own experience discussed in this chapter, I changed my initial plans of working in the community and opted to work with an existing group because I lacked the resource to effectively mobilise and incentivise participants through, for example, providing refreshments or reimbursing transport costs. Working in a school situation the process concentrated on establishing a safe space, a space free of overt discipline and corporeal punishment, in which young people might begin to voice relevant issues and engage in a collective creative process of performance-making.

**Chapter Six:**  
**The Child Rights Project:**  
**Executing the Creative Process**

**6.0 Introduction**

In Chapter Five, I have shown how I made an effort to create a sense of group by making ground rules and facilitating participants in appropriate games and exercises. I have also revealed how together as a group we identified a theme for our project and how the participants chose an issue they felt was pressing and important to them. This chapter develops from the foregoing processes and discusses how I deployed my creative strategies. It examines how the group and I explored the collectively chosen theme using participatory research techniques such as storytelling and the tree exercise. The chapter also shows how my realisation of the need for essential creative/dramatic skills compelled us to build our resource kit by developing these skills. Developing from these strategies, the chapter discusses our collective play making process. At the end of this chapter, I reflect on the successes and shortcomings of my work, thinking about questions such as: why did things turn out the way they did? What else should I have done to yield better results?

**6.1 Exploring the Identified TfD Theme**

After three sessions concentrating on group building, I determined that the group was now ready to work together and I introduced the participants to a process of exploring the theme through participatory research techniques. I ascertained readiness to work together from their level of involvement in group activities (see Chapter Five) such as initiating and leading games, the desire by participant to continue working on certain activities and the observable level of enthusiasm and fun. One could argue that the participants actually enjoyed doing something different from class work, not something concerning the issues affecting their lives. Though this was likely, I argue that group enthusiasm, enjoyment and vitality were the foundation of our project. In theory and practice, the fun involved in a TfD process has been posited as the beginning of individual and collective transformation (see for example Chinyowa, 2007,

2009; Mangeni, 2007). Reflecting on the mood of fun and enthusiasm enabled by the play elements of African traditional forms in TfD, Chinyowa argues that:

In development communication terms, it is the intense absorption arising from the fun or joy that seems to wield the power to move the players to another state of being. Thus, in popular theatre, the essence of play as fun, enjoyment or celebration provides the players with unusual access to a fundamental component of their lives, something which they might have lost in the struggle for survival (Chinyowa, 2009b: 24-5).

Elsewhere, analysing the significance of play in TfD processes, Chinyowa observes that it created a transformative encounter:

It creates new frames of existence or 'restored behaviours' that act as rehearsals for action. The whole playing process is experienced as a metaxis of seemingly irreconcilable opposites—the real and the fictional. Yet it is this metaxic encounter facilitated through play that appears to create possibilities for a real encounter with development. The transformation may occur either simultaneously within play itself or subsequent to it (Chinyowa, 2007b: 14).

Observing the atmosphere of fun in the workshops, I became aware that our work had thus far created a liminal space (Chinyowa, 2011: 343), where participants were beginning to belong to two worlds the presentational and real, a condition which would foster effective exploration of the theme at hand.

As earlier noted (see section 5.2 on envisioning the project), I had planned to use two strands of storytelling: the cultural performance model of story involving a folktale and the model where the participants would be led to tell stories revolving around their needs and problems. In attempting to explore the theme using the cultural performance model, I started off by getting the participants interested in telling folktales especially those which are well known in the community. The participants explicated some of these stories to include Mundu and Sera, Gipir and Labong, Ruhanga and his two sons and the Kintu and Nambi story. I tried to encourage some volunteers to narrate these stories but I did not succeed in having any narrated with proficiency.

Those who volunteered to narrate the stories would only do it in few lines without details. My plan had been to choose a story out of those narrated which could provide avenues or areas to trigger discussion on human attributes such as revenge, forgiveness, cooperation, kindness and punishment among others. I knew that the Gipir and Labong story and the Kintu and Nambi Story have these areas, but I wanted the

process to begin with the participants narrating the stories well. This would help me further instil ownership of the process and to begin transferring the means of production to the participants and distributing the dynamics of power among the participants.

If I was to continue with the cultural performance model of storytelling as a tool for investigating the theme, I needed to give the participants time to go and do independent research and learn the stories. Also, I needed to involve the participants in activities that would enable them to become proficient traditional storytellers. I did not make these choices because of time limitation and decided to abandon the cultural approach to story and adopt the model where the participants would tell stories related to experiences of child rights. As already noted the time limitation was brought about by the fact my practice was time bound by having to complete my thesis. My failure to devote enough time to facilitate the choices I had to make further emphasises the significance of the time factor in fostering a sustainable TfD process.

Additionally, I made this choice at this point in time because I needed to engage the participants in activities that would sustain their passions and interest in the process. The participants did not seem interested in narrating the folktales. I believe that good facilitation in TfD requires the facilitator to have quick decision-making and judgement skills. I trust that in a TfD process involving young people or children, it can be prudent to creatively abandon an activity that does not seem to engage and sustain the enthusiasm of the participants.

With the necessary choice made, I commenced the process of exploring the theme. Because of the need to ensure variety and ease management of the process, I divided the participants into two equal groups. The process of creating the two groups was in itself participatory and ensured that the groups had equal distribution in terms of gender. This was enabled by having boys stand next to girls in the circle. Standing in a circle in an open space, participants mentioned numbers 1 and 2 aloud until each member had either of the numbers. Those with number 1 belonged to 1 group and those with number 2 belonged to another. The same technique was used in circumstances where we needed more than two groups.

With the two groups created, group 1 was invited to stand around a microphone connected to an audio recorder and tell stories of experiences where they have seen

the rights of children being abused. In the process participants narrated some of the following stories:

Story 1: In our village I know of a family where a mother died and left a child. The dad of this child married another woman. The child was put in a government school. Each time he came from school, he was denied food and made to overwork. Finally out of envy, the step mother burnt the child in the eyes and the child ended up dying.

Story 2: There is child in our village who lost all his two parents. He started staying with three relatives. The older relative loved him while the other two did not. As a result, these two relatives mistreated the child. Time came the older relative went away for sometime leaving the child with the two relatives. The two relatives mistreated this child to the extent that by the time the elder relative arrived the child's health had deteriorated.

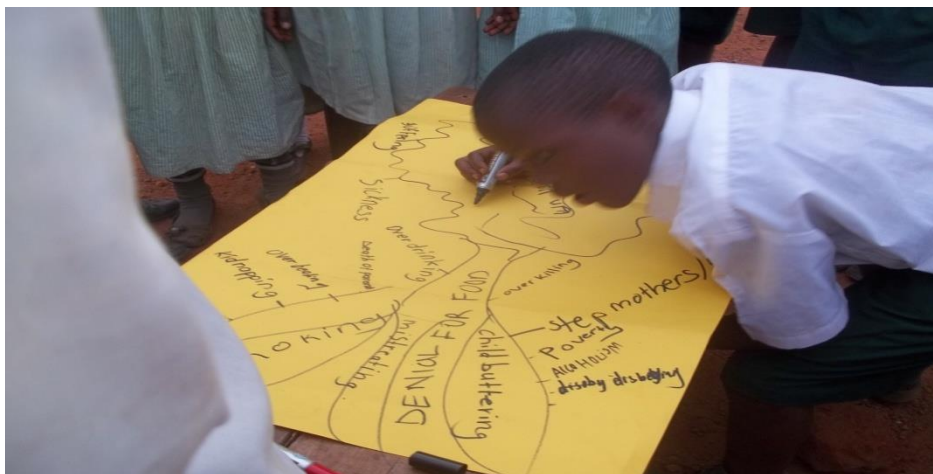
Story 3: There is a child in our place, who lost her mother. The dad married another wife who hated and mistreated the girl. One day, this woman injected the child in the foot causing disability. On another day, the woman cooked food for the child and mixed it with broken glass. The glass in the food was, however, identified by a friend of the child and the woman was taken to the police.

Group 2 was facilitated to explore the theme of children rights using the 'tree exercise' (Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 84). In this exercise, a picture of a tree was drawn on a large sheet of paper and placed on a table. The participants were facilitated to stand around the table in an organised circle with their hands joined to those of other participants. They were then invited to volunteer one by one to come to the table and write what they considered a cause of child abuse on the roots part of the tree and what they considered to be the consequences of child abuse on the branches part of the tree. I observed that the level of engagement in this activity was remarkable. All volunteered to identify a cause or a consequence by marking on the tree picture.

After the participants had identified the causes and consequences of child abuse, they were requested once again, to come to the table one by one and link a cause of child abuse to a consequence. They would do this by identifying a cause and then explain in a sentence or two how this cause leads to a particular consequence. So, this time the participants engaged their actions and speech. Consequently, the tree exercise provided the participants with a great opportunity to engage in collective identification of



needs and analysis, a key feature of effective TfD practice. The photo below shows the participants analysing the theme of children rights using the tree exercise.



The children have identified the some striking causes of child abuse such as step mothers, poverty and alcoholism. *Photo by Grace Mary Mbabazi.*

The process of participatory action research in these groups was continued in the next session with the group switching roles such that group 2 got involved in story telling while the group 1 got involved in the tree activity. This was done to ensure equal distribution of opportunity for collective participation and analysis.

Having gone thus far, my plan was to take the exploration of the theme of children's rights to another level by engaging them in more creative and dramatic processes. I planned to facilitate the participants by dividing them into groups and engaging each group in a particular creative activity. For example, one group would be invited to choose a cause and a consequence from the tree exercise and then make a frozen picture to represent them. Another group would be requested to choose a cause and consequence of child abuse from the tree exercise and then create a dramatic narrative. Other groups would be requested to turn the stories narrated into small dramas. These would then be shown to the whole group for collective reflection and analysis.

The challenge to this plan however was that, since the participants had not previously engaged in these activities, they needed more practical exposure to creative dramatic processes such as improvisation, storytelling and making of frozen images. I therefore decided to anchor the exploration of the theme at hand, by exposing the

participants to these essential skills. We codenamed this process, “building the resource kit.”

## **6. 2 Building the Resource Kit: Learning to Collectively Create Theatre**

We started the process of building our resource kit by learning improvisation skills. I began by explaining to the participants the meaning of the term improvisation, as a process of spontaneously creating dialogue, speech and action without using a written script. The beginning point of our learning to improvise was to engage in improvisation games and exercises. The choice of games and exercises was symbolic in that they pointed to the very activity of theatrical improvisation in which the participants were soon to get engaged—in these improvisation activities the participants would get involved in make believe and role play.

The first improvisation game in which the participants were facilitated to engage was the persuasion game (Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 101). In the persuasion game, the participants were asked to get into pairs and label each other as A and B. A was asked to play the parent role while B was asked to play the child role. B would persuade A for a favour such as being allowed out and to have a friend to stay over for two minutes. With the pairs and the roles of A and B determined, the pairs entered into a rehearsal period of about 15 minutes and finally volunteered to come to the middle of the circle and show their improvisation. The improvisations were spectacular, as participants appeared to be absorbed in their roles and creative speech.

The aim of this game was to give the participants a feel of what it means to improvise. To give the participants an opportunity for further practice in improvisation, participants were invited to get into pairs and improvise the action of quarrelling co-wives. Three pairs of female participants came into the middle of the circle and performed their improvisation and it was good. The only weakness of their work related to character emotions—the girls were visibly smiling yet their action involved quarrelling and a physical conflict. At first I was afraid that the participants given their tender age (12-14), could not practically grasp this concept. Underscoring the significance of the Freirian notion of not underestimating the potential of any target community, I was surprised that the children could actually improvise.

The improvisation was taken to another level—of improvising situations around the theme at hand, children rights. Participants were facilitated to form pairs and groups of three, choose an example of violation of children rights narrated either in the stories or analysed in the tree activity and improvise a scene. The pairs and groups were given eight minutes to devise their improvisations. They used the large outdoor space to do their work. In presenting these scenes, the outdoor space in which we were working was divided into two spaces—the stage and the auditorium and a theatre performance experience was immediately created. I noted that instead of merely being an activity for developing improvisation skills, it emerged as an opportunity for further participatory research.

The participants in the process identified the various violations of children rights in their immediate community. The scenes which were well presented articulated a host of issues such as child torture, denying the children food, denying the children love, and denying girls school fees. To devolve power from myself as facilitator, I empowered one of the participants to call out the pairs and groups of the participants to present their work. For me as facilitator, this session completely changed my patronising attitude. Before this session, my thinking was neo-colonial in the sense that I did not think that the children given their tender age (12-14 years) could present any convincing action on stage. To my surprise, the participants were very innovative, in the process presenting highly revealing scenes.

One thing I noted with keen interest in the presentation of scenes was that the participants seemed to receive the message in the scenes uncritically. When asked by the participant who was inviting the groups to perform what they liked about the performances, the participants would reply by giving the moral lesson learnt. The answers were not critical of the oppressive realities presented. They were answers which preserved the status quo. For example, in response to a scene where a child's hands were burnt for stealing 1000 Ushs, one participant said, "If you steal money, you will be burnt."

For me as facilitator, I was aware that the state of critical consciousness envisaged in TfD is much more than a moral lesson learnt. While particular awareness of the world around them in form of a moral lesson was important for the children, I was aware that

TfD goes beyond this to foreground critical thinking. After the performance, I probed the young people's feelings about the actions in the scenes. For example I asked them, "Do you think children who do not perform well at school should be tortured?" They replied in a chorus, "no." We did not explore further the issues in the scenes, but the session gave a good indication about the direction the TfD programme would take: facilitating the participants into doing deeper analysis of situations, instead of taking them at face value.

### **6.3 The Collective Play Making Process: Simultaneous Dramaturgy at work**

Having worked on student's improvisation skills, I had planned to devote the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2014 to facilitating the participants in developing the story telling skill. The session on this day began on a low note as participants did not want to participate in storytelling activities. As facilitator, I became aware that the low level of motivation to participate had been caused by two probable factors. First, it seemed clear that the session lacked effective games and exercises that could help enliven the participants. At the beginning of the session, we had participated in only one improvisational game; hunting a lion (Johnston, 2010: 47, see also appendix 18) and immediately launched into story telling activities. Second, it appeared to me that the participants wanted to continue with improvisation of situations involving violation of children rights, which they had done in the previous session. As already noted, in the previous sessions, the participants had participated in role play situations which proved quite interesting and compelling for them.

To enliven the session, I led the participants into participatory warm-up games involving shaking different parts of the body successively until the whole body is warmed up. Thereafter, I began facilitating the participants into a higher level of improvisation. While in the previous day they had improvised in pairs, this time, they were facilitated to form groups of ten participants and instructed to improvise a play about the violation of any child right of their choice. The emerging four groups were given locations in the large outdoor space in which they would group and devise their improvisations. I moved from group to group observing their work, listening to them and

giving them advice, but desisted from any attempts to dictate the theme of their chosen story and the characters involved.

When the groups had finished rehearsing their improvisations, the participants transformed themselves into an audience and each group presented its scene. In attendance, there were other members of the community who had been attracted to the school premises by the creative process and performance. After every group presentation, the participants were facilitated to critically review the performances by spelling out their views on the quality of characters, the quality of the plot and how the performances could be improved. In this exercise, the ability of the participants to look at the issues critically was evident. The participants were able to point out the weak points of the characters and situations. One of the participants observed that, "I did not understand how the wife decided to advise the husband to seek solutions for a childless marriage from a witchdoctor." Another participant noted that he did not understand how the police got to know that a child was being sacrificed. Participants raised further issues concerning audibility, organisation of the plot and staging. I noted that the incomplete scenes were not presenting the issues in a manner that would provoke discussion and intervention in the post-performance phase. My role in the subsequent sessions would be to encourage the groups to introduce characters and situations that articulated the complex realities and contradictions in which the characters found themselves. In this way, my work with the workshop participants had begun to emulate Etherton's (2009) model earlier explained of simultaneously presenting, critiquing and sharpening scenes.

The session on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 was a continuation of the previous one. It began with a warm up activity in which the participants ran around the space without the intention to win the race. Thereafter, participants continued working in their groups to consider the feedback they had received from their peers in the previous session. I particularly advised the participants to think about the characters in the scenes inviting them to answer questions such as: who are the central characters? What are their names? How old are they? Where do they live? How do they relate to the rest of the characters in the story? In their groups, the participants were given 15 minutes to discuss their viewpoints and 15 minutes to rehearse the developments.

All the four groups made plays but the following two plays were performed in the session. Play 1 picked on the rampant crime of child sacrifice. It featured a wife who had failed to have a child for nine years. She went to a female neighbour who had experienced infertility before having a child to get some advice. The neighbour advised her to go to a witchdoctor for a solution. With her husband, the woman went to a witchdoctor who advised them to bring the head of a child to the shrine so that he could give them favours for childbirth. The next day, news of a headless body of a child which had been found on the roadside spread through the village—the couple had killed a child for sacrifice. Play 2 focused on the issue of discriminating against girl children. The play featured a polygamous man who considers boys to be more valuable than girls. He blamed his wives for giving birth to girls all the time and subjected them and their daughters to suffering. He was seen burning the hands of the girls, making them lame and sending away his wives. This story was particularly interesting and captivating in terms of the issues it unearthed.

After each performance, the performers were asked to remain on the stage to receive further feedback from the rest of the group. Using the hot seating technique, the participants asked the performers questions and advised them how to improve the pieces. It was exciting to see the young people receive advice from their peers and use it to improve on their pieces. It was also fascinating to imagine how observant and alert the participants had been based on the comments they gave to the performers.

One key observation I need to make relates to language. In order to encourage the learners to master the English language, the language of instruction in Uganda's formal education system, children had been forbidden to speak in their local language or vernacular as it is called while at school. But when it came to play making and performance, the children could not express themselves effectively in English. I requested that the school administration give participants leave to rehearse and perform in Luganda; their native language.

It was enthralling to see how expressive the children became when they were allowed to perform in the local language. The children used the power embedded in using a language they understood most to unearth the oppressive realities children experience. This development strongly echoed bell hook's words that, 'language is also

a place of struggle. The oppressed struggle in a language to recover themselves, to reconcile, to reunite, to renew. Our words are not without meaning, they are an action, a resistance' (2009: 81). An important point to make here is that my work was happening in a neo-colonial environment where English remains a medium of instruction in the Ugandan education system. I had to negotiate through this neo-colonial reality to engender a process through which the participants could creatively explore their issues with freedom.

In the following session on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014, we started with some trust exercises aimed at group building and cohesion. We then went on to reflect on the previous session. In the previous session we had noted with great concern the key problems in our theatre making process namely, staging—having the performers become aware of the extent of the stage and stay within the sight line, and making the characters in the story come alive in performance. On this day, we also tried to emphasize the importance of a well-made story, which can be divided in scenes. We also emphasised the importance of having the performers use their imagination and experience to create dialogue.

Considering our strategies, one could argue that our work was aiming at ensuring polished performances. But the truth of the matter is that I was mindful of using the performance devising process to provide avenues for the participants to explore issues affecting their lives. The important thing to note here, which is crucial for an effective Tfd process, is that it was the participants who were in the driving seat, choosing the stories, the characters and situations and creating the dialogue. I was a motivator and an inspirer working in partnership with them.

Participants were after the trust games and a moment of reflection, sent into their groups to continue developing their plays. It was exciting to see the children give each other instructions. One child would say, "Why don't you do it this way?" And the other child would follow the advice. In one of the groups, one of the children taking a particular part was absent. The children were able to improvise how the performance would move on without the absent character. In conferring with each other, I heard the participants say, "We shall indicate Jaja Ntalo's absence by saying that he died of HIV/AIDS." The photo below shows participants absorbed by the creative process.



In this picture, three groups of participants are creating their plays. One is in the forefront of the picture, another in the middle and the other in the extreme background. *Photo by Grace Mary Mbabazi.*

I observed that the level of group activity in each group showed that the participants were engaged in doing something together. To me, this indicated that some sort of process of transformation and empowerment was taking shape as the children learnt to express themselves and listen to one another. At the end of the session, each group were invited to present one scene from their play. The performance of these scenes was quite good with improved speech and action. The performers were passionate about what they were doing.

Thus far, the two weeks long creative process had given rise to four plays devised through collective effort. The synopses of these plays are given in appendix 19.

Our plan had been to stage the performances at a parents meeting and thereafter engage them in a post-performance discussion. This, however, did not happen as the school postponed the parents meeting to the end of the year. With this creative process, the children had participated in the process of analysing the issues affecting their lives and the society in general. I had made an effort to place them at the centre of the process, by engaging them in collective activities such as games and exercises, participatory research through storytelling, collective analysis through the tree exercise,



rehearsal cycles and within-process performances. By 'within-process performances' I mean children's performances before each other and their analysis and critique of each other's work.

## **6.4 Reflecting on the successes and shortcomings of my practice**

### **6.4.1 Attempts at empowerment and/or transformation**

The strategies and the process discussed above fostered what was identified in Chapter Three as integral participation (see also O' Toole, 1976) and interactive or empowerment participation (see also Preston, 2009; Tufte, & Mefalopulos, 2009). Making an effort to foster an integral process of participation, I ensured that the children participated in all the stages of the process and they were invited to engage both verbally and physically with the creative process. The participants were viewed as capable of initiating the process and taking part in analysis of issues which led to joint decision-making. For example, the participants chose the theme of the project and the stories of the performances and participated in devising the dramas.

I made effort to ensure that dialogue was deployed as a tool to identify and analyse critical issues and that an exchange of knowledge and experiences drove the process. Through dialogue, the participants were able to advise each other on how they could make their work better to articulate issues of collective concern. For example, during the creative process, I saw participants express their points of view: "why don't we do it this way? Let us introduce such and such a character, let us indicate the absence of Jaja by . . ." I am certain that such a process provided transformative/and empowerment encounters. I assessed this through my personal observation of the participants' engagement with the process and through post-project interviews and discussions.

As already discussed elsewhere in Chapter Three and more particularly in Jane Plastow's work in chapters 7 to 9, transformation and/or empowerment in TfD is normally a function of participants' engagement through performance with the issues affecting their lives. Generally, I observed that the strategies and processes I put in place such as fostering participation in storytelling, collective analysis of the theme of

children rights using the tree exercise, theatre making and performance helped the participants come to grips with issues relating to children rights. They were able to observe and question through performance the major issues affecting their lives such as the children's right to education, child torture and discrimination and child sacrifice. From the children's performances, I observed that the children were able to unveil a number of underlying contradictions. For example, the children were able to searchingly question, "Aren't children supposed to be loved? How come they become victims of torture? Should a child lose hands because of stealing money as little as 1000 Ushs (equivalent of 20 pence)?" The participants were able to explore the issue of irresponsible parenthood. They, for example, questioned how one can be a good and responsible parent if he does not want to work. In the play on discrimination against the girl child, the disgruntled father asks, "we don't have a boy. Who then will inherit all this wealth?" The mother answers, "What about those girls. Aren't they children. Aren't they human beings?"

Though not on a large scale, the participants were not only able to critically reflect on issues in their local environment but also at national and the global levels. One of the examples to illustrate this can be drawn from the playlet on the right to education. In this play, one of the characters, the grandfather asked the granddaughter, "What do you want to become after your education?" The granddaughter responded, "A pilot." The grandfather rebuked her arguing that, "in Uganda there are only two aircrafts and you want to become a pilot? You must be crazy. Will you go to Europe where there are many planes to practice your career?" So in this scenario, the local is related to the global. The dialogue indicated that the participants were becoming aware that for one to make informed decisions s/he has to look at what is happening in the immediate environment and relate it to the large world. What the TfD process had achieved here albeit on a small scale is what Prentki describes as globalising contradiction (2007: 198).

On the 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014, I engaged the participants in a post-project focus group interview. As I have already noted in Chapter Five, this was part of the critical methodological approach to my practiced-based approach. The aim was to ascertain

what the participants thought and how they felt having participated in the programme. I asked the participants a number of questions, “How did you feel during and after participating in the programme? Are you happy that you participated and why? What situations/ characters did you hate or like in the performance? What choices are you likely to make after participating in the programme?”

One of the participants said, “I hated the stepmother in the first performance. She is typical of the many stepmothers we have in our village. They mistreat children, deny them food and jeopardise their opportunities of going to school.” This particular participant had seen children being mistreated by their stepmothers in her neighbourhood. When asked about what needs to be done to stop violence against children, she replied:

We need to start reporting them to police. But police is not reliable because they receive bribes and drop cases reported to them. I think we need to report them to organisations promoting the rights of children such as Nature Africa. Nature Africa visited this community and left their telephone number.

This participant demonstrated a growing level of critical consciousness. She was able to analyse the extent of the problem and also propose a course of action to be taken to solve it. She was quick to see loopholes in the normal procedure of handling crimes against children—the corruption of the police and proposed a more plausible action. Participants noted that they were passionate about the issues presented because they had seen them happen in their community. One of the participants revealed that:

Not long before this programme, a headless body of a child had been found at a school gate of one of the schools in Gganda. This child was allegedly killed and sacrificed by the school owners to boost their school business. Authorities closed down the school, but not thorough investigation had been done.

Most of the participants reported their inner transformation arguing that they felt happy to know that they were able to act on stage. Since empowerment and development in TfD is largely conceived as human transformation and a feeling of self-worth, the feelings of fulfilment among the participants was a sign of remarkable empowerment.

In Chapter Five, I noted that the TfD project would help the participants exercise their rights as provided for in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To some extent, this was achieved as the children participated in sharing experiences through storytelling and analyzing issues through the tree exercise. This TfD project provided the participants with a rare opportunity of working together and building something together. In doing so, they expressed their thoughts and packaged them in a form they thought was appropriate. I observed that in the process of working and creating dramas together, the children exchanged opinions with each other, discarding bad ideas and retaining the good ones. Such a process helped them to exercise their freedom of expression, of thought and of association. As earlier noted, prior to this project, the participants had mostly been subjected to an authoritarian school, characterized by threat of punishment. Subjected to an education system where the teacher is assumed to be the source of all knowledge, the children had never been given such an opportunity to create something original expressing their thoughts.

The teachers in the school were also amazed at the transformation taking place among the children. One of the teachers, teacher Nakazibwe who closely worked with us, identified participants who had shown outstanding change and commented thus:

“Olaba ne Abdullah naye azanya” which translates, “if you see Abdullah participate, it means the programme is good. You always found her seated just quiet, but she is there arguing with others. She is also actively participating.”

Kalungi Michael has been a stubborn and abusive boy who used to come from home to school and stop on the way. By the time the programme started he was absent. He joined later and started participating. He became regular in school attendance.

Mbiru has been very stubborn, a boy who does not want anything. He cried when the group decided to ask him to leave the play.

Musawo Muganda, not real name, the boy who plays the role of witchdoctor has surprised us. He used to be disorganised. The children teach each other what to do and they follow.

My son who happens to be part of the group was intrigued by the name and paper game. He came home and asked me, “What is the meaning of my

name? Who is supposed to give names and why?" The children have developed this skill of critical inquiry and questioning...

On another occasion, teacher Nakazibwe commented:

This morning I asked one of the groups, "how come you have made another different play?" The children replied, "The other one was not interesting. We decided to make another play." You see some groups have made three different formats of their plays. This is a very important development of the children. Nabukalu and Alice came from another school. They were very raw; we do not know how they graduated to primary six. It is a great surprise that they can work with the group. To see that the children are creating plays on issues from their environment is very great. It means that the children are observant. They know what is good and bad. They can find solutions to problems.

Another teacher, Richard Ziwa who had been observing the programme from a distance (he did not work with us) commented on the changes it had brought in the participants:

The attitude of the children on the performing arts has changed fundamentally. Previously, it has been very difficult to mobilise and organise the children to perform during programmes such as education week, drama festivals and parents days. During such programmes, we usually hire trainers. These trainers coerce the children to perform by canning them. To see that the children are performing without any threat of punishment is a great thing. I believe if this programme continued it would reduce the rate of child drop out. Very true. You see some of these boys have been absenting themselves but since you began this programme, they are regular.

These tales of empowerment and change exemplify the significance of having communities participate in a collective process of analysing and reflecting on their issues. The tales are a testimony that participatory processes lead to greater understanding and change.

#### **6.4.2 The issue of the absence of the power base in my practice**

As already noted by Prentki (2003), and as demonstrated through Jane Plastow's practice (see Chapter Nine ), TfD normally evolves into an effectively liberating process when it mobilises the power brokers or those who wield the power to change things in the community. Looking at my practice, I became aware that while the project had engaged children in a transformative process of analysing issues affecting their lives,

they did not have the actual power and the means to change the historically and traditionally entrenched oppressions they were articulating through the process. But I need to note that it was a good thing that the children participated in analysing issues that underpin their lives, especially that they found them pertinent to them. It is they who identified and prioritised these issues and certainly it was worthwhile to express themselves about them. The process, however, needed to expand and engage the power base of the community including teachers, parents and key social institutions in society such as churches, NGOs, Civil Society Organisations (CBOs) and government departments, such as the probation services and child protection unit of the police. In short, the larger society involved in protecting and supporting child rights needed to be mobilised to critically look at itself and participate in strategising for action to transform the oppressive cultural structures.

I found myself in the dilemma of failing to achieve this community-wide process because of the nature of sponsorship I received for and the time framework of the project. As earlier noted, I did not receive monetary support for this project which would enable me to make a communitywide mobilisation of people and engage them in a project on issues effecting young people. I ended up counting on in-kind support working within the limits of a school framework, which had two key impacts. First, the school timetable framework in which my project was set had to accommodate various activities such as teaching and end of term assessments and, thus, could only afford me a time space of two weeks. Second, my plans concerning the project were also time bound—I had to complete a project as quickly as possible in order to fit in the timeframe for completing my thesis.

### **6.5.3 More on the issue of time and its impact on the creative process**

In Chapter Three, section 3.1.5, this thesis cited Prentki (1998, 2003) and Aitken (2009) on the issue of time in TfD and demonstrated that time is an essential element of any TfD process which aims to foster transformation of participants. This was also practically illustrated through Plastow's experience in the Walukuba project (see Chapter Nine) where she attributed her successes to a protracted process of community engagement.

Looking at the strategies of participation I set up which had been theoretically and practically tried elsewhere (Etherton, 2009; Mangeni, 2007; Prentki, 2003), I believe I had good intentions of implementing a collectively engaging TfD process. But while I tried to achieve this, I became aware that the strategies were quite ambitious in a space of two weeks. As revealed from the example of Jane Plastow's experience in Chapters Seven to Nine, implementing a participatory programme involving various strategies is best achievable in a space of ample time. As discussed in Chapter Seven, Plastow and McQuaid achieved an effective participatory research process using image theatre, letter writing, drawing, storytelling and performance in a space of five months—from the beginning of February 2015 to end of May 2015. Here, I was determined to implement a participatory process involving the cultural performance model of storytelling, the Prentki and Etherton storytelling model and the Boal participatory theatre paradigm in a space of just two weeks.

Along the way, because of the time factor, I made new choices. For example, I dropped plans to use the cultural performance approach to storytelling because this required the participants to have enough time to research and learn new essential skills. Also, while the Augusto Boal paradigm had multiple opportunities to offer to the process, such as using imaging to explore issues, I found myself using it only in part. I only used the simultaneous dramaturgy aspects in the creative process by having the groups simultaneously present and critique their dramas living out techniques such as using frozen images to raise issues. Participants needed time to learn more of the essential skills such as improvisation, storytelling and acting and have their passions stirred; something which would have gone a long way in devolving power to them and having them control the process.

#### **6.4.4 Reflecting on the power dynamics of the process**

Well aware of the Freirian principle of equal distribution of power in the learning process which TfD espouses, I planned to dissolve the unequal power lines between the participants, and myself and between the participants and general school environment. The children had been groomed through a historical system of

authoritarianism where the teacher is viewed as all-knowing and all-powerful. I knew that this rendered the learners objects who had to comply with strict rules. I tried to change this system by assuring the participants that our process was one where they were free to express themselves. Together with them we set up ground rules governing our collective process. One of these rules, the 'no kiboko' rule abolished corporal punishments, such as caning. However, as the experience of even highly experienced facilitators such as Plastow has shown (see discussion in Chapter Nine), it is not usually possible to completely dissolve the power lines in the process, especially if one is a visitor to the community. There was tendency by the participants to display good conduct and order to project a good image of the school. The girls always knelt to greet me even when I encouraged them not to.

One of the factors, which threatened my intentions to dissolve power, was time. As already noted, I found myself having to implement an impressive participatory process within a short time of two weeks. As a result, much as the creative energies of the participants throughout the process were outstanding, I felt that at some points I spent a lot of effort trying to have the participants create good plots and have the performers become more believable on stage. This, to some extent, turned me into some sort of a dispenser of knowledge and skills; reminiscent of the banking concept of education which TfD rejects. At some points, I became a power wielding practitioner who had to ensure that the participants devised and staged plays in a space of fourteen days. I say 'stage plays' because the head teacher and I had planned to have the children perform at a parents' meeting. From this work, I learnt that dissolving the unequal distribution of power and devolving more power to participants required a more sustained participatory process of learning theatre skills such as image theatre, dramatic storytelling, improvisation, and vocal skills among others. Having attained a considerable mastery of these skills, the participants would naturally deploy them in their play making process. This would have transformed my role as facilitator into that of a collaborating partner, as expected in an ideal TfD process.



### **6.5.5 Some Observation on Ethics and Safety**

A searching reader could argue that it was horrifying and traumatising to have the children engage in analysing issues such as child sacrifice and child torture. However, as I have already noted, it was good that the children participated in analysing issues that they thought were important to them. It is the children who chose the broad theme of children rights, identified the issues underpinning it, and prioritised those which would be the focus of their stories and performance. In TfD practice, where democracy should facilitate the choice of issues, I believe this was quite ethical. It did not cross my mind at any point to reconsider what the children were dealing with because they had actually chosen these issues and they appeared passionate in expressing them through drama. The unethical way of doing it would have been to impose the issues on them in an outright top down manner.

But I need to honestly concede that I did not, in my conceptualisation of the process, consider putting in place any support structures such as counselling and safeguarding in case these became essential. This was surely critical for me as a professional arts worker in community contexts because children are a vulnerable group of people who need to be nurtured with the necessary care and support. It is characteristic of children to require reassurance from the adults and people in positions of responsibility. I needed to consider what support resources were available to me to support the young people either individually or as a group in the school and families. I needed to consider how the school relates with families in giving support to children when need arises and more so, the child support services available in government departments such as the police and social welfare. These needed to be properly set up and incorporated in the project.

### **6.5.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on my own practical experience with TfD facilitation. Using my experiences as practitioner, I have been able to further explicate what implementing an effective TfD process might involve in practice. The chapter has been significant in making further analysis of the critical points emerging from contemporary Ugandan practices by local and international practitioners such as funding, power and

time/sustainability. This chapter has focused on a project which took place in 2014, earlier than Jane Plastow's work. Like Plastow's work discussed in chapters 7 to, it has examined the likely challenges that a TfD practitioner has to be aware of such as negotiating the power dynamics of the process, the politics of funding, and the centrality of the time factor in fostering a sustainable TfD process. As in Plastow's experience, this chapter has shown that it is not always easy to balance the dynamics of power in a TfD process. A practitioner may have all the good intentions of diffusing his/her power to ensure equal distribution of power. This, however, is sometimes impinged upon by factors such as one's known position in society relative to the participants and the space of time available. In terms of one's position in society, participants normally take a long time to figure how to relate with a high profile, external person as an equal partner. As for the time available to implement a TfD process, a short period of time in most cases compels even the most experienced facilitators to become imposing by restricting their strategies (as did happen in Plastow's practice in chapters Eight and Nine).

In spite of my effort and recorded successes, I have noted that more would have been achieved if only the project was sustained in terms of the time factor. I have also argued that more would have been achieved by putting in place some support for children possibly affected by rights infringements and extending the power network in and beyond the school. I have shown how more time was needed to allow the process of empowerment to flow naturally from the passions of the community and ensure ownership by the participants.

**Chapter Seven**  
**Collective Problem Identification/  
Participatory Research in TfD:  
The Walukuba TfD Experience**

**7.0 Introduction**

In Chapter Four, it was discovered that one of the major weaknesses of contemporary TfD practice in Uganda is a lack of participatory research which denies communities an opportunity to collectively identify and analyse the issues affecting their lives. It was revealed through IATM's work that contemporary TfD practice relied on traditional research methods such as interviews, the official eye technique and library research. As a result, it adopted a research on a people's problems model and not the desired research with the people model. In this chapter I continue to attend to questions relating to the nature of TfD practice in Uganda; the extent to which practitioners have adhered to the basic tenets or principles underpinning TfD practice such as giving voice, participation, and balancing the dynamics of power. The only shift here is that while in the previous chapter I looked at practice by local practitioners, here I focus on practice by an international practitioner. The chapter focuses on the Walukuba TfD experience and queries how effective the process was in affording the community collective research and investigation of the issues underpinning their lives and in effect led to a deepened awareness of their situation. Having taken part as an observer in the Walukuba project's weekly TfD workshops with permission from Plastow, the principal facilitator for six consecutive weeks, I analyse the work based on my personal experience of the process.

**7.1 A Brief Profile of the Walukuba TfD Project and of Facilitators**

The Walukuba TfD project commenced at beginning of February 2015 with the first community workshop aimed at community mobilisation and reached its initial climax in mid June 2015 with a grand community theatre performance. The project was initiated with the aim of engaging the people of Walukuba in exploring issues of environmental sustainability and development. The principal facilitator of the project was Jane Plastow,

a long time researcher of African Theatre for Development, Director of the Leeds University Centre for African Studies and Professor of African Theatre. Plastow has a deep grounding in the practice of community arts and TfD and has 30 years experience working in African countries such as Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda. She is well aware of the power exacted by international capital on the TfD processes. She has often warned TfD practitioners in the developing world to be aware of how global capital impacts on the TfD process. For instance, in one of her articles, Plastow advises practitioners thus:

The fundamental question we need to start asking before all others in relation to TfD or any other applied arts work in Africa, of funders ... is, why are you doing this? If the answer appears to be to promulgate an institutional or individual view of a 'good thing' then we should reject the project. If the makers tell us they are seeking to 'do good' or to 'help the poor' or any similar answer, we should reject the project, because this thinking is patronising, denigrating and domesticating (Plastow, 2014: n.p.).<sup>1</sup>

In the above quote, Plastow is cynical of TfD practices where the funders' ideology takes precedence over the need to engage communities in working out their own process of change. She is aware that if funders and the TfD practitioners go to the communities with the disposition of doing people good or to help the poor, they will not respect the potential of the community in contributing to the process of their own change. Plastow is not only aware of the influence of funding / international capital on TfD projects but also of the need for practitioners to structure a TfD process in such a way that it engages the people in all the stages of the workshop. In her view, conscientisation or the empowerment resulting from the TfD process needs to be seen as the 'transformation of the human person where participants become transformed into conscious beings aware of and claiming voices and choices on how their lives will be lived'(Boon & Plastow, 2004: 07).

Plastow was assisted by McQuaid, an anthropologist from the University of Leeds. Before getting involved in the Walukuba TfD project, McQuaid received essential

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<sup>1</sup>While this work is formally published in the Applied Theatre Research Journal, I was not able to access the published article. I contacted Plastow who gave me the work in manuscript form, as it had been accepted by the journal. She did not have the published article either. Since I cited the manuscript, I was not able to provide a page number, even in direct quotations.

training in the conventions of TfD practice (Plastow & McQuaid, 2016). Perhaps in order to create greater links between the two English practitioners and the Ugandan community in Walukuba and to foster a people centred process, Baron Oron, a Ugandan TfD practitioner was recruited into the facilitating team. Oron, who worked with Rose Mbowa the precursor of TfD in Uganda in its 1990s nascent stages (see Mbowa's work in Chapter Two) came to the project with his long standing skills in TfD facilitation. I noticed that he used these skills in provoking thought and drawing out discussion from the participants. He also helped in translating English to the local language.

Looking at the overall model implemented in the project, I noticed that Plastow and Oron shared some commonality in terms of facilitation methods. The Walukuba project model was similar to the Stepping Stones concept implemented by Mbowa and Oron in Uganda's early TfD projects (see development of TfD in Uganda, Chapter Two). A key feature of the Stepping Stones model adopted in the Walukuba project was peer grouping the community based on sex and age which ensured that each group was afforded an opportunity to explore its issues with freedom.

The project took place in Walukuba sub-county, Masese Division in Jinja municipality, Eastern Uganda. In the 1960s, Jinja used to be Uganda's industrial centre but lost this glory because of the economic slump caused by decades of political turmoil. In recent years however, the municipality has regained its reputation as an industrial hub with many foreign owned processing industries coming up. The area houses a number of factories in such as MML (dealing in steel and aluminium products), Tiptop which specialises in bread baking and many fish processing factories, all operated by Asian investors. Due to a lack of effective government regulation and rampant local corruption, the growing industrial sector has contributed to the destruction of the ecosystem with some industries built in swamps/wetlands.

Located in the fringes of Jinja municipality, Walukuba is an area composed of different levels of social and economic stratification. In fact, Walukuba is located in the greater Busoga region of Eastern Uganda, which is ranked as one of the worst poverty-stricken regions in Uganda. Generally, the region lacks adequate development intervention from government and non-governmental organisations to the extent that it is still home to people who die of preventable conditions such as jigger infestation.

Widespread poverty led to high levels of rural-urban migration involving mostly the youths who come to Jinja municipality hoping to find employment in the mushrooming small-scale industries.

Socio-demographically, Walukuba is composed of people with various tribal affiliations coming from neighbouring regions such as Teso, Bugisu and Buganda and Eastern Kenya. These people compete for the overstretched amenities such as accommodation, health centres, schools and business facilities. One of the most disheartening features of the Walukuba community is the widespread disparity between genders with very few opportunities for the women and girls. Peer group discussions during the workshops revealed rampant suffering of women and girls caused by a patriarchal system where men wield a lot of power as family heads and as leaders of the community. Women articulated several problems affecting their lives such as single motherhood, lack of sufficient education, lack of access to economic resources such as land and oppressive cultural practices such as bride price and polygamy, which deny the women a voice in society.

A glance at the place revealed the glaring divide between the high end and low end sections of the community. On one side of the area, there was the Nile International Hospital and an international school—Galaxy International School. These two establishments provided health and education services for the rich working class, mainly the local politicians and the foreign investor community largely from Asian countries such as India and Pakistan.

I talked to a local member of the community who revealed that parents who take children to Galaxy International School pay over 4 million Uganda shillings (Ushs), approximately 1500 USD per term and that a day in Nile International Hospital costs 1million Ushs, approximately 350 USD (see my field notes, appendix 20). These prices may sound small from the perspective of the Western developed world, but are exorbitant for a majority of the people in a developing country like Uganda.

Sandwiched in the above middle class establishments were a host of poor families who reside in a large colonial estate, which used to house council staff and civil servants in the pre-independence times. Many of the houses in the estate were dilapidated making the place look unkempt. Plastow and McQuaid discovered that

'originally designed as a series of one room dwellings in low blocks of four for single men in the colonial era, Walukuba now houses some 17,000 residents, most living as families in these same single room dwellings' (2016: n.p.). The photographs below illustrate the deplorable living conditions of the people in the estate.



Adopted from We are Walukuba website [www.wearewalukuba.com](http://www.wearewalukuba.com)

There were many jobless youths living in this community who flocked to the factories looking for casual jobs. I observed that some of the youths had resorted to antisocial habits such as drug abuse, alcoholism and gambling. There were no services for the hapless community. The only available services included two poorly built markets, a playground and a community centre. Looking at the community centre which was the venue for the TfD project, one noticed that the toilet facilities broke down many years ago and have never been repaired and that there were few bulbs to provide lighting when it gets dark.

The Walukuba TfD project was funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Intersection project. Intersection was 'an international research project, covering three post-industrial cities in Uganda, UK and China, looking at intergenerational understandings of justice in relation to environment and consumption'(2016: n.p.). Consequently, Plastow and McQuaid participated in this project as part of a bigger international team, examining, from an intergenerational

perspective, key urban sustainability concerns in Uganda using arts based methodologies.

Before establishing the project, Plastow and McQuaid did preliminary research about Walukuba by reading about the place and walking around Jinja interviewing a cross-section of residents from across the town. Through this research they resolved that Walukuba would be the focus of their arts work, precisely 'because it is a relatively contained community and because as one of the most deprived areas of Jinja town they hoped to be able to make the greatest impact by working with the residents' (2016: n.p.).

For most of the project—the first five months, the weekly workshops were led by McQuaid assisted by Oron. Plastow, who was still held by the normal academic obligations at the University of Leeds, UK, joined the team for the last three weeks in June (summer holidays) to facilitate the theatre making and performance aspect of the project.

### **7.3 Initiating a bottom-up process: Community Mobilisation through Local Community Leadership**

In the introduction to the study at the beginning of this thesis, effective TfD practice was posited as a process which eschews the “top-down” or the “outside in” approach of development to adopt “a bottom-up” or “inside out” process of development. Adopting a bottom-up or an inside out model implies that the process of development should start with the very community participating in the process. However, the challenge in most TfD projects has always been that the facilitators come from outside the community. They are normally people with some level of power ensuing from their high levels of education and high profile employment usually in universities and NGOs. Such a scenario normally disrupts the balanced power relations expected in a bottom-up TfD process. For the case of the Walukuba project, the facilitators were not just outsiders but also people from another country (a former imperial power) bringing in issues of race and assumed political power (these issues will be discussed in Chapter Nine).

So, in order to establish the desired bottom-up process, the facilitators had to carefully enter the community by dissolving the power inequality via cooperating with



the local leadership of the community. In so doing, McQuaid and Oron made contacts with existing social groups and the local leadership, especially the established Local Council (LC) structures. In the core group of the participants, there were three LC chairpersons from different villages in Walukuba sub-county who worked with the facilitators from the onset of the project. One of these chairpersons was female. As opinion leaders in the community, the LC chairpersons attracted members of the community to join the project.

Furthermore, the facilitators worked with a young man named Siraji who was helping them in mobilising the young people. Siraji was the leader of a community based group, Youth Legacy Africa and had been working as a peer educator using his artistry as a break dancer, mobilising young men and women and engaging them in activities that raise awareness about HIV and STDs. Because of Siraji's leadership, most of the young men in the Tfd project were members of Youth Legacy Africa.

In the February first community workshop, the community was grouped based on age and sex, a process called peer group formation. The process of peer grouping resulted into three groups: one group for young men, another group for young women and the other for older men and women who chose not to be divided according sex. McQuaid revealed that as a facilitation team, they had envisaged having another group of middle-aged participants but that these people voluntarily decided to join the older participants arguing that they were old enough.

In the process of doing participatory research and theatre making, the various peer groups worked at different times but the process later became intergenerational as the groups performed and dialogued with each other. In my review of the impact of the Walukuba project, participants spoke highly of having had an opportunity to discuss with various age groups—the little children, the young men and women and the elders. For some participants, the 'intergenerationality' of the project was the greatest motivation that attracted them to the project.

The voices<sup>2</sup> below reveal the level of satisfaction with the project set up:

Mwase Yusuf: When I was enrolling in this project, I came with great expectation to interact with other age groups of the community. Jane and Katie were working hard to bring together the young ones and the elders. In most cases it is the elders who participate in thinking and planning for the community. But they are ageing. It is the young people who will be responsible for society tomorrow, so they need to be trained by involving them.

Abdallah: My greatest expectation out of the 'We are Walukuba' was to socialise and interact with different people. I wanted to meet people across age groups. I was interested in seeing the young generation and the older generation interact and work together. The project helped the different age groups of the community to come and work together. Such a thing had not happened in our community, to find the young and the old discussing an important issue such as environmental conservation was really a big breakthrough for the community.

Siraji Koloto: My life has really changed because I have been able to work with various age groups, the young and the elders. I have now got new experiences of what life is with other age groups especially the elders. Different age groups have different challenges. I have been able to work with people of different characters.

Deo: My esteem increased, I became more popular especially among the elders of the community. The elder generation who took part in the project now know me better. They know that I can do something great for our community. I can now approach them with an idea to discuss and they will listen (see interview transcripts in appendix 10).

In my view, engaging various age groups of the community was a big step in garnering communitywide effort toward the project, in effect facilitating a bottom up process of development.

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<sup>2</sup> I did impact assessment of the Walukuba project through a focused group interview. My goal was to establish how the participants felt, having participated in the programme and to measure the extent to which the process had facilitated community transformation. The voices of the participants have been integrated in the discussion especially in the chapters on the Walukuba process. However, the weakness which a searching reader may decipher from the voices, here and elsewhere is that they are mainly from men, the young men's group. They are not representative of all the peer groups which participated in the workshops. This was caused by the fact that during the impact assessment I was only able to engage the young men. Plans to involve the young women and elders were did not materialise because I did not have funds for transport to the community. On the whole however, I believe the aim of the impact assessment, to make the voices of the participants alive in the discussion has been achieved.

## **7.4 The Significance of Participatory Research through Creative Performance and Letter Writing**

I started observing the Walukuba project in the seventeenth week. Before I could begin attending the session I wrote an email to McQuaid inquiring what had transpired in the last sixteen weeks (see appendix 4), and she replied thus:

I am living in Jinja at the moment which is where I am conducting the theatre research workshops. We began working with the community at the beginning of February, and since then each week on a Sunday I meet two groups, younger men and younger women, and on a Monday afternoon I meet with older persons, which is a mixed group. Within these groups we conduct a series of activities in order to explore every day constructions and understandings of the environment, as well as generational identities, dynamics, roles and responsibilities. Thus far we have used drama, music, poetry and art to explore ideas and generate data for our project. At the moment we are gearing up for a series of community theatre events to be held throughout the community in which we are working in mid-June, so our schedule is a little bit up in the air... (See appendix 5).

From the above revelation by McQuaid we note the Walukuba project from its onset adopted a participatory research process to explore ideas and generate the problems and opportunities which would be explored through the community performances. By the seventeenth week when I first attended and observed the workshops, the TfD process was still focused on using performance and theatre as a research method to explore the various problems affecting the community. McQuaid and Oron were trying to provide an environment in which the participants reflected on their lives as individuals and as groups.

I started observing the TfD sessions at a point when the different peer groups of the community were exploring their issues through letter writing. In their respective sessions, the young men and women were being encouraged to write letters to the elders expressing concern about anything they wished should be changed. Likewise, in their session, the elders were asked to write letters to the young generation advising them on anything they thought needed to change. Letter writing was done either by groups or individuals. In each letter writing session, there were moments of dialogue and reflection which came either after reading each letter or after the whole group had presented all their letters. What follows is a presentation of the letter writing process in

sessions involving different peer groups. The presentation focuses on how the letter writing technique helped unearth the problems and opportunities of the community.

#### **7.4.1 The Young Men Letter writing presentation**

The letters written by the young men in their 2pm-4pm session included the following.

Letter 1:

Dear elders, you are the key decision makers and thus responsible for the wellbeing of our society. You are advocating for industrialisation as a way of developing our communities. Factories are coming up all the time. But please in all these development plans, consider conserving our environment. Are there any plans put in place to conserve the environment?

In a moment of dialogue and reflection two issues arose: what should be done to conserve the environment and what have the youth done to conserve the environment? In response to the first question, the youth said that the elders need to engage the young people in using the environment sustainably. The process was facilitated to help the youth to start thinking about what they themselves can do to preserve the environment. In effect, the process was beginning to build the level of agency among the young men so that they may consider what they can do to bring about change.

Letter 2:

Dear elders of Walukuba community, you make love affairs with young girls and you spoil our chances for good marriages. Because you have a lot of money, the girls decide to go with you leaving us the young men with few chances. Please stop this practice and stay with the old women you have already married.

Following this letter was a moment of dialogue and reflection. Oron who seemed to stand in the place of the elders asked, “But the girls come to us, what should we do?” The boys suggested that the old men should say no when the young girls come to them. McQuaid the co-facilitator inquired about the age of young girls which was being implied in the letter. The boys replied “girls aged 18 or 19 years”—those who are allowed by the law to go to clubs. The issue of age triggered some interesting discussion as it emerged that while the young men complained that the older men were invading their age

bracket for love affairs, girls aged 18 or 19 were by the Ugandan constitution old enough (had attained the age of consent) and could thus get married to a man of any age. The discussion went back to the letter. It was discovered that while their letter was good, a number of issues such as the economic limitations of young men and HIV and STDs could be added to it. Oron reminded the young men to beware that recent research had indicated an increase in HIV infections related to inter generational sexual relationships.

The third letter was written in Luganda. The participant who read the letter started by addressing the whole group with a good measure of freedom, "I have written my letter in Luganda". This caused some excitement and laughter. The letter read "*Basebbo ne banyabo abazadde baffe. Tubasaba mutusasulire ebisale byesomero ngataamu ekyatandika. Mulekerawo sente kuzitwala mumakilabu. Kubanga bwebatugoba kusomero, tutataganyizibwannyo. Tusanga banaffe ngabasomye bingi. Awonno ngatufiriddwa bingi.*" Literally translated in English the letter read:

Dear parents we request you to pay our school fees in time, at the beginning of the term. Kindly stop taking all the money to clubs and bars. When we are sent back home for school fees, after two weeks following the commencement of the term, we miss a lot of learning.

The dialogue and reflection by the boys expanded this letter. The young men noted that the parents needed to understand that all young people needed to go to school whether there is hope that they will get employed or not. They emphasised that the education of the young people should be unconditional. This point was triggered by a prevailing problem in the Ugandan society where many parents are compelled by the rampant joblessness to stop sending their children to school. As a point for reflection, Oron asked the young men to ponder on the question why the parents take time to pay fees. The boys replied "some parents have the money but think that the children are stubborn, so they expect them to drop out, some do not have money, while others are just irresponsible." One participant, Siraji who said that he represented the voice of the elders noted that there seemed to be a problem of lack of sufficient communication between the parents and their children. Another participant noted that parents mind about commerce/business; instead of paying fees in time, they go to bars. They preferred to invest their money in trade than taking care of their children's welfare.

As a point of further meditation, Oron invited the participants to think about why the parents do that. He invited the youths to ponder on whether the parents buy food at home or take them to hospital when they fall sick. The young men replied that the parents do take them to hospital when they fall sick but when they buy food, they do not buy good food such as meat or fish and that it is mothers who care most. There was a feeling among all the participants that some parents think that even if children have not gone to school, they can still be useful. One participant noted that sometimes neglect of children results from wrangles between parents, making the parents transfer their anger to the children.

From the dialogue and discussion I observed that there was a great feeling among the youths that their parents don't love them yet young people needed to know that they are loved so that they are able to give love to others. In an attempt to take the discussion to a national level, the young men were invited to think about any help they can get from government concerning their welfare and protection. They were particularly invited to think about the probation and welfare services offered by the government. The youths in reply noted that government was discriminatory in that it serves the youth based on the parties to which they belong. If one belonged to the ruling NRM party, it was easy for that person to receive government support. This letter had facilitated a process of dialogue and discussion which helped the participants to explore the different dimensions of the school fees problem. An effective TfD process is one which empowers the participants to unearth underlying contradictions of their situation.

Another letter was addressed to the manager Tasco of Company, one of the factories established by foreign investors. In the letter, the youths requested the manager to take care of the needs and welfare of the workers who work for long hours and receive little or no pay. In reflecting about the contents of this letter, a young man, Abdallah narrated his ordeal. He said, "I was working for Bidco. We would work the whole night and be paid 3500 Ushs (an equivalent of 1 United States Dollar) per night. This money would come after two weeks. When this money would be paid, it would find me with many needs. The labour dispensed would be too much but with very little returns."

The discussion moved from analysing the local issues of workers to reflecting on issues of universal concern in the community. One participant queried which category of workers was by law supposed to register with saving institutions such as the National Social Security Fund (NSSF). Were low wage earners such as casual labourers supposed to save? This inquest resulted from the fact that some factories were advising the casual labourers to register with the NSSF. It became clear from the discussion that workers in the area were victims of an unjust labour system with factories and companies taking advantage of the desperate situation of the local masses to exploit them.

The discussion further led to a reflection on the issue of a minimum wage which the government of Uganda has not yet fixed. The participants noted with profound concern that the government had decided not to put in place a minimum wage because this would make labour expensive and scare away foreign direct investments. On 1 May 2015, at the International Labour Day celebrations held in Kisoro district in western Uganda, Mr Museveni, the President of Uganda had earnestly addressed Ugandans on the issue of a minimum wage and pay rise for civil servants. He had argued that what was critical to Uganda's current development was not a minimum wage or pay rise but investing resources in infrastructural development. This would provide an ample climate for foreign direct investments which would in turn lead to increased jobs.

The young men further noted with concern that top managers of companies and factories were largely picked from either India, Kenya or from other parts of Uganda such as Mbarara. Never were they recruited from the local area. This was interpreted by the young men as a ploy by the factory owners to keep them in continued isolation so that they could easily exploit them.

There was an attempt to take the discussion to an international level by reflecting on the international trade unions movement. This issue was particularly raised by McQuaid, the facilitator perhaps because she came from a part of the world where there is a well developed labour movement. She wondered whether there were trade unions in the country. The answer emerging from the group was that the trade union movement in Uganda was not fully developed. Participants noted that there were some unions such as the Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) and the Association of Uganda

Medical Workers and Midwives, but these are frequently neutralised by the executive arm of government which appoints seasoned union leaders to cabinet positions. McQuaid revealed to the group that the problem of weak trade unions and how they relate with the political powers was a global concern. She said, “I have recently been in Qatar, the trade unions there have been banned by government”.

There was a young boy of about 14 years who introduced himself as “So Skinny”, a name perhaps coined from his feathery weight. He addressed his letter to the elders as follows: “Dear elders, you engage yourselves in sex with children, please stop it because it is bad. Some of you mistreat children, please stop”. In reflecting on the letter, one participant told a story of a recent incident in the community which involved a renowned politician in the ruling National Resistance Movement Party (NRM) sexually molesting a child. He said it was rumoured that when the parents tried to complain and take the matter to court, they were threatened with imprisonment and death by the ruling party big wigs in the area.

The last letter by the young men was addressed to the headmaster of Kaboja High School, a school in the Buganda region of Uganda. The young man in this letter was particularly concerned about the tribalism in the school. The letter in part read, “I am pleased with the quality of education offered at your school, but I am not pleased with how I am treated for being a Musoga. Because of my tribe, Baganda students call me all sorts of names and describe Basoga as people of low minds. Because of my tribe I am mistreated by the Kitchen staff.”

When it came to moments of reflection, there was a heated debate about the subject of the letter. The young men argued that people in institutions of learning are not treated equally. The Basoga are referred to as people infested with jiggers and this breeds hatred and disunity which could be detrimental to national peace.

#### **7.4.2 The young women’s letter writing process**

In the session commencing at 4pm, it was the turn for the young women’s group to write their letters to the elders expressing their concerns. In beginning the session with the young women, McQuaid gave a prelude in the following words, “in the previous workshops, we have explored many issues: environment, sex and love, teachers getting



into affairs with students, money for love among others. Today we want you to write a letter to any elder or group of elders expressing concern about something you find so touchy, so critical that you would love something to be done about it.”

Unlike the group of young men where reflection on the letters came after each letter, in the girls’ group, all the letters were presented and then the group collectively reflected on the various issues raised in the letters. In the letters, the girls made various requests.

Letter 1 read by Sophie raised concern about rampant corruption among leaders, witchcraft, money and the complaint that local people do not have a say in their issues.

Letter 2 presented by Maureen read in part as follows:

We are tired of corruption; girls have suffered a lot because of corruption. Old men harass us by requesting for sex before they can give us jobs. I was a victim of this vice. There is also a big problem of political discrimination, before some elders offer a service; they first want to know your political party. They want to know whether one belongs to the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) or the ruling NRM. There is also a big problem of tribalism promoted by our elders. My name, Ayesiga identifies me as someone from Western Uganda. Recently I went to submit a job application. My name caught the attention of the lady at the reception. She asked me where I come from and I replied that I was from Western Uganda. Then the woman retorted, “You mean there are no jobs in Western Uganda?”

The third letter read, “Dear elders, we need justice and rights from the community. We need rights to do what we want. People should stop blaming us because we have rights.” Letter 4 read by Sarah made the following requests:

Dear elders, misuse of property belonging to orphans pains us so much. Caretakers should stop grabbing the property of orphans. We also want to attract your attention to the problem of defilement and rape. You send young girls to market squares late in the evenings. This exposes them to ill intentioned men who defile and rape them.

Letter 5 read:

We want to comment on the problem of too much love for money. Girls put money first before love. This leads to high rates of spread of diseases. Girls go into sex for money but in the end become pregnant. They resort to unsafe abortion, which culminates into deaths.

During the collective reflection phase, the girls were guided by the facilitators to think about the issues raised in their letters. In the process the girls told stories of their experiences. For example, reflecting on the problem of witchcraft, one girl narrated the story of an incident involving two women who were fighting to possess a stall in the market. She said, “The woman brought a dead rat and hid it in the vegetables of her colleague. When the colleague exposed the rat, she died on spot”.

Oron, one of the facilitators, invited the girls to think about which people in their community loved them and whether their parents loved them. All the girls agreed that the parents loved them but that they sometimes fail to help them when their welfare and rights are being infringed upon. The girls revealed that the offenders, especially the rich, buy their way out by bribing the police and the magistrates. While reflecting on whether the issues confronting them were similar to those of their counterparts the young men, the young women noted that girls had more chances of finding jobs. They argued that girls have access to men who give them jobs. The girls added that young men have a lot of needs—they are traditionally expected to be at a certain level of development before they can start family life.

One girl disagreed with the thinking that it was only young men who have a lot of needs, arguing that young women too, especially single mothers, have many burdens weighing on them. Evidently, the process was empowering young women to unearth the complex issues and contradictions underlying their lives.

Generally, having heard the issues raised in the letters of both the young men and women, I realised that there was increasing tension in the society. On one hand, the young men were overburdened by what society expects of them—to work hard and earn money before they can begin family life. On the other hand, there was the looming problem of single mothers who had to take on the responsibility of being both mother and father.

#### **7.4.3 Elders’ Letter Writing Process**

In the evening of Monday 18 May 2015, it was the turn for the elders to write letters to the young generation expressing concern about anything they felt needed to change. McQuaid, the facilitator, made efforts to link the day’s activity to the previous activities

and what was going to come in the coming days. This was significant in ensuring the participants continued moving together in the process as a unified group. She addressed them with the following words:

Dear elders, in the coming days; we shall be coming to workshops regularly. The process will become a little more intergenerational as we shall be interacting more closely with our young generation. Today we are going to get into pairs and write letters to our young generation advising them on critical things you think they should work on and change. Think about anything that we have explored in the previous workshops such as superstition, sustainability, environment, AIDs, the economy, family planning and others. In the coming weeks we shall make dramas revolving around these letters and perform them to the youth.

Letter 1 by the LC 1 chairman and his colleagues read:

To the youths of this generation. We love you, you are our children but please we advise you to work on the following: Behave well, respect elders, parents and grandparents. Dress properly. Boys stop dressing balance and girls stop putting on miniskirts and dresses. Stop over drinking and abusing drugs. Stop overlooking jobs. Start with little jobs and then go on progressing in your careers. Do not wait for white-collar jobs. Those of you, who have jobs, respect them by keeping time, and respecting your bosses. A boss is always right. Take your parents advices in matters concerning marriage, education and buying land. Put God first in all your plans; go to hospital when you fall sick and know your clan members and relatives.

Letter 2 was titled “behaviour change” and pointed out the following areas that needed change:

Stop drug abuse. It is a source of underdevelopment in our community and it causes mental disorders. Youths have become sex workers leading to high spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and this eventually leads to poverty. Stop too much alcohol consumption. Please abstain from drug abuse so that we have well disciplined youths.

The third letter called upon the youths to be well disciplined, dress decently, keep good hygiene, stop cutting trees without planting new ones, avoid gangs and abstain from sex until they finish school. Written and presented in Luganda, the fourth letter advised the youths to be well disciplined, respect other people, avoid bad groups, dress decently, have good speech manners and to avoid rude language and to be patient until

the right age of marriage. This letter also admonished the elders to stop marrying young girls.

The process of collective reflection and dialogue tended toward what Prentki (2007) called globalising contradiction by looking at issues in the local realm in relation to the universal or the global realm. One participant informed the group that government was in the process of tabling a Bill in parliament prohibiting treatment for those who get newly infected with HIV. The argument was that government had invested a lot of money in providing appropriate information and sensitisation. With this law in place, victims of new HIV infections would have to bear the cost of their treatment. The discussion on this issue raised a good debate relating to victims of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. Participants debated what would be done for these innocent children and concluded that government needed to be careful as it makes a law which may potentially violate the human rights of its citizens. It was evident that having the ordinary folks of Walukuba engage in discussions relating to policy was evidence of transformative empowerment. The process had enabled the participants to explore the contradictions underpinning their lives. Looking at the enthusiasm of the participants, I became aware that they would as the process progressed move from mere discussion to action.

As a way of further globalising contradiction, the participants reflected on the issues raised in the letters in light of the forthcoming celebration of the African child's day on 16 June. The LC 1 chairman noted that the TfD activity they were involved in was quite appropriate as it related to the theme of the day's celebration—early marriage. He noted that Bugembe, one of the suburbs of Jinja municipality, had been chosen to be the venue of the celebration because it was leading in terms of many early marriages. To elicit a deepened discussion, Oron the co-facilitator invited the group to think about what the elders had done to help young people given that all the letters seemed to raise issues related to good manners, respect and behaviour change. A number of issues came out of this process for further reflection:

Some parents do not have time for their children; some parents come home quite late and when they are drunk; some parents are not friendly to their children. Some parents just hate their children; some parents fight and quarrel in front of their children and in effect display a bad example; the way some

parents handle children matters is not appropriate—they overreact to situations and abuse the children.

The group concluded that parents played a huge role in shaping the way the children behaved.

For McQuaid, it was about giving a fair assessment of who the children were. She invited the elders to think whether the young people had anything positive for which they would be applauded. The answer was that they do good to go to school and that some of them help with chores at home during the school holidays. As the session was concluding, a participant observed that the group had discussed good points but they had not discussed at good length the issue of early marriage.

Generally, the process of problem identification through the letter writing technique provided an opportunity for every member of the community to think about what they could do to change Walukuba. In my dialogue with the participants about the project, some participants commended the process of letter writing:

Abdallah: Letter writing is confidential. When you are challenged to write down issues you think need changing, you do it freely. Nobody will say that it is so and so who said this and that.

Yusuf: The process of letter writing helped us think deeply about our problems as a community.

Siraji Koloto: It was a confidential process. It is only the heart and mind of the person writing which is involved. Sometimes people are afraid of saying out their issues in public (see appendix 10).

The above voices by the participants indicate that the technique of letter writing enabled every member of the community to articulate their issues. Members of the community who were still afraid of publicly mentioning their problems did it through writing. Thus, the process had gone a long way in increasing the voice of the participants.

## **7.5 Democracy, Collective Problem Interpretation and Prioritisation**

As a practice which empowers participants to choose the kind of development they need and the manner in which they want to achieve it, TfD places democracy at the

core of its process. Writing about applied theatre and social change, Tim Prentki and David Pammenter explain the significance of democracy in applied theatre processes such as TfD. They argue that:

The core of the shared intention between facilitators and participants is an understanding that theatre becomes the practice of direct democracy. It becomes a reimagining of the ways in which democracy might be practised in the world in which our young people find themselves. The act of engaging in theatre places direct democracy at the heart of political and social transformation, leading to the development of political 'actors' both individually and, more importantly in the face of social fragmentation, collectively. The politicization of this collective leads, via shared social action, to political transformation (Prentki & Pammenter, 2014: 12).

Typical of what the duo highlight as the significance of democracy, the Walukuba intergenerational TfD project displayed traits of the practice of direct democracy. Having identified the problems affecting the community through a participatory research process highlighted above, the various peer groups were led through a democratic process of collective problem interpretation and prioritisation. The first workshop sessions facilitated by Plastow who had arrived from the UK to take over the theatre-making facilitation process were devoted to prioritisation of the issues impeding the community's progress to greater human lives. As highlighted in the discussion above, the community had over the five months of a participatory research process identified several problems that hindered the progress of their community and several opportunities, which could be harnessed to promote better livelihoods and freedom. The process of prioritisation involved choosing both the most pressing problems and the most promising opportunities.

I sensed that Plastow and McQuaid had in their private planning meetings gathered all the problems and opportunities that had been identified through collective community research and analysis over the previous five months. They had neatly inscribed the problems and opportunities on large flip charts. In fact they stitched together two large flip charts to have one large chart on which the problems and opportunities were separately written. The fact that Plastow and McQuaid took time to plan for their TfD sessions was a gesture that they were keen to execute an effective TfD process. On many occasions when TfD projects have lacked effect, it has been because the

facilitators have not taken time to plan how they would engage the community. This normally results into try and error processes which mostly become anti-climactic. Figure 1 contains all the problems which were identified during a sustained participatory process of community engagement while figure 2 contains all the opportunities.

Figure 1: Showing the list of problems identified by the community through collective community analysis

**Contaminated water, youth not doing low class jobs, underage sex, rape and sexual violence, local corruption, poor communication between age groups, poor condition of roads, poverty, tension between generations, blocked drains, superstition, swamp degradation, bad habits (smoking, drugs, alcohol), energy(charcoal vs. Electricity), polythene bags (buvura) and plastic bottles, tradition vs. modernity, women expect men to provide everything, young women have no voice in the community, girls have many responsibilities at home, poor greeting mannerisms or lack of greeting, few latrines, young generation selling land, oppression of factory workers by Asian supervisors, cross generational sex, lack of respect for elders, tree cutting, single mothers, lack of HIV testing and disclosure, polygamy and domestic violence.**

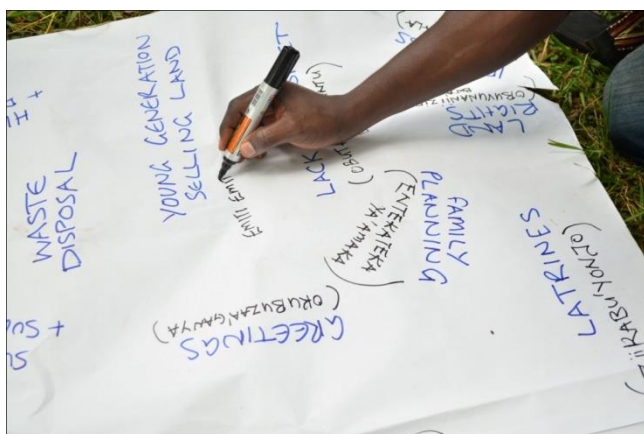
Figure 2: Showing the list of the opportunities available in the community

**Working across generations to share knowledge, irrigation, use of energy saving stoves, making pottery, creating local self-help organisations, cleaning up the community, unionisation, making biogas, making bricks (charcoal) from garbage, making crafts from recycled material, planting tree seedlings, better and sustainable use of land, Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs), peer education, lobbying local government, linking with useful NGOs, better latrines, helping develop talents, better nutrition, family planning, digging drains, creating sustainable arts groups, sharing practical skills, recycling and reusing and tree planting.**

Having grouped all the problems affecting the community and all the opportunities which could be exploited to create better communities, the participants were facilitated into further analysis and reflection. The problems and opportunities were still inscribed on flip charts in English, a language which could not be understood by everyone. To ensure that everyone understood the problems and opportunities, Jane invited



participants to volunteer and help interpret each problem and write a local language translation below each problem. In Freirian terms, this process of collective analysis deepened the process in which the participants could name their world in dialogue with one another. I remember in the young women's peer group session, I volunteered to help in the analysis of the problems. Plastow made it a point that instead of me it was one of the women who led the analysis. I sensed that Plastow's interior disposition was that it should be the very people who suffer the oppressive realities who analyse their needs, not me, a person who hailed from Kampala. The result of this reflective and analytical process was that all the participants in the peer groups moved as a unified whole in terms of knowledge and understanding of the community issues being explored. The photograph below illustrates the process of continued problem analysis by the community.



A young man volunteers to translate the problems of the community from English to Lusoga; the community's major language. The participants advised him on what to write. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki*

With the problems of the community and the available opportunities clearly identified, all the peer groups were facilitated in a collective and democratic process of choosing the most pressing problems and most promising opportunities. The democratic process was executed through voting during sessions in the various peer groups. The creativity of the facilitators in the voting process was good. I noted that they used plastic bottles which had been thrown in the environment to create/craft pieces which would be used as votes. It was captivating to see the facilitators bridge the

current activity of problem prioritisation to the previous sessions. Plastow addressed the participants saying:

In the last five months, you have been working with Katie and Baron, you identified several problems and opportunities. So the issues we are dealing with have all come from us. These problems and opportunities are too many. We are not able to handle all of them conclusively. We are going to choose through a democratic voting process just a few problems and opportunities.

Voting in each peer group was in three shifts. In the first shift, participants had three votes which they would place on the most pressing problem(s). In the second shift, participants had two votes while in the third voting shift, they had one vote. If participants felt the need to emphasise one pressing problem or opportunity, they were free to place all their votes on the particular problem or opportunity. After the first and the second vote, all the issues which did not attract a vote would be crossed out so that only those issues which received a vote would be voted on in the subsequent voting sessions. After each voting session, the participants were given the opportunity to consider if they could change their voting decision. Through this voting process, participants had to choose at least six problems and opportunities about which they would make creative pieces such as poetry, songs, theatre plays and image theatre. The photographs below show the voting arrangements.



From top left to clockwise: problems sheet displayed for community analysis, Baron Oron explaining the voting process as participants prepare to vote while McQuaid distributes the votes and after a voting session, Plastow is removing the votes to pave way for the next voting session. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki*

I observed that the voting process turned into some kind of exciting theatre game. I noted that the participants were excited and pleased to use the power in their hands to choose the most pressing problems and most promising opportunities. The process gave the participants equal opportunities and voices. The photographs below show the actual voting Process.





From top left to clockwise: in first two photographs young women and young men respectively are casting their votes and in the last two photographs, the elders are casting their votes. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki*

The results of the voting process were indicative of the needs of the various peer groups. In the young men's group, following the three voting sessions, tree cutting, poverty, tribalism, school fees, police violence and corruption emerged as the most pressing issues; while unionisation, developing talents, making crafts, better latrines and better nutrition came out as the most hopeful opportunities. In the young women's group, the problem of single mothers, HIV testing and disclosure, polygamy, tree planting and underage sex surfaced as the most pressing problems; while forming SACCOs, helping to develop talents, family planning, making crafts and peer education were viewed as the best opportunities. In the elders group, poverty, bad habits among the young people, HIV testing and disclosure and single mothers emerged as the most serious needs. This group was very decisive in their choice and came up with only these four issues. Because the facilitators wanted at least six most pressing problems, they requested the group to choose two more problems by casting one more vote. As a result, the elders added school fees and tree cutting to their priority list of problems. In terms of the existing opportunities, the elders chose planting tree seedlings, family planning, peer education, energy saving stoves and lobbying local governments as the most hopeful ones. Table 3 illustrates the community's choice of the most serious problems and most hopeful opportunities.

**Table 3: Showing the community’s choice of the most serious problems and most helpful opportunities.**

<b>Peer group</b>	<b>Priority problems/issues</b>	<b>Most promising opportunities</b>
1.Young men	tree cutting, poverty, tribalism, school fees, police violence and corruption	unionisation, developing talents, making crafts, better latrines and better nutrition
2.Young women	problem of single mothers, HIV testing and disclosure, polygamy, school fees and underage sex	forming SACCOs, helping to develop talents, family planning, making crafts and peer education
3. Elders	poverty, bad habits among the young people, HIV testing and disclosure and single mothers	planting tree seedlings, family planning, peer education energy saving stoves and lobbying local governments

Looking at the pattern of what the different peer groups considered their priority issues, it is interesting to note that some problems cut across all the segments of the community while others were felt more in particular segments of the community. It was fascinating to note that the school fees problem had not been a pressing problem among the elders but was a critical problem among both the young women and young men. It was also interesting to find out that unionisation as opportunity was only unique to the young men. This confirmed the earlier discussion during the participatory research process which had indicated that the young men were at the apex of a financial struggle in the community and the major victims of oppression in factories.

The fact that certain problems were unique to particular segments of society further emphasises the significance of participatory research in TfD. It underscored the fact that participatory research and/or collective problem identification in TfD helps communities to isolate the very problems and opportunities they feel are most pertinent to them.

As I interviewed the participants about the project in form of an impact assessment, I noted that they were satisfied with having chosen those problems they thought affected everyone. The following were some of their responses:

Yusuf: The process helped us choose the most pressing problems. We had many problems but, we selected only a few which needed special attention.

Deo: We were able to choose the most important problems: we identified problems such as abuse of political office through corruption and land grabbing. In fact the importance of these problems evidenced itself in the outcome of the local general elections. Political leaders who were known to be corrupt and grabbers of land were voted out. Even when those people dished out money to buy votes, they did not succeed.

Abdallah: It created awareness. People came to know the most pressing problems for each age group. We did not know the kind of problems that affect the youths, the women and the elders.

Siraji Koloto: We were able to identify the most common problems from the perspective of different people in the community.

The democratic process which was implemented to explore these problems led to deepened ownership of the project. Such a process was different from top-down processes where the problems handled in development programmes are simply impositions from above and in most cases different from what the community consider to be their pressing needs.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

The experiences recorded in this chapter have indicated that if a community is facilitated in a collective and participatory process of identifying their felt needs, the process becomes one of empowerment participation. As Mlama (1991a) puts it, 'Both animateurs and participants research and analyse development problems in order to arrive at a critical awareness and if possible plan a course of action to solve those problems' (cited in Chinyowa 2009a: 97, 2010: 14). The chapter has indicated that such a process helps the community to analyse the deep-seated contradictions underpinning their lives and in effect come to understand their needs holistically. This process leads to what Freire (1970, 2009) calls thematic investigation, a process in which the community analyses the themes and the generative themes of issues affecting their

lives. As Plastow and McQuaid put it in their post project reflections, they had ‘engaged men and women of all ages to achieve a ‘plenitude of praxis’ of action and reflection’ (2016: n.p.). They had facilitated a Freirian inspired process invoking the praxis of a sustained process of action and reflection as a means for researchers and community members to gain increased critical understanding of the factors that both constituted and constrained the people of Walukuba (Plastow & McQuaid, 2016).

One important point to make about the participatory research process above is that it developed because of the skill of careful and sensitive facilitators. They were facilitators who were willing to learn together with the community. On various occasions, McQuaid and Oron asked appropriate and leading questions which led to deeper reflection and dialogue. The issue of facilitation is critical because without a good facilitator, the process may only become another top-down experience. This happens when the facilitators come with a feeling of being all-knowing technocrats of development and want to “save” the community using their knowledge. In such cases, the process turns into an act of filling the participants with knowledge; denying them the opportunity of collective analysis. Here, the facilitators worked closely with the community to explore the problems of the community. As a result, there was effort to implement ‘a research with the people model’(Ledwith, 2005: 73); in so doing engendering a Freirian collective learning process.

The most captivating feature of the Walukuba participatory research process was the democratic process of choosing the most pressing problems affecting the community and most promising opportunities that could be harnessed to bring about better livelihoods, something which was found to be lacking in the contemporary Ugandan TfD practices by IATM, Rafiki theatre company and GIZ projects discussed in Chapter Four.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **TfD as a Participatory Process of Collective Transformation and Empowerment: The Walukuba TfD Project**

#### **8.0 Introduction**

As discussed in the previous chapters (Two to Four), an effective process of TfD is one which is participatory; involving all the members of the identified community. Such a process is posited as one which prompts community ownership of the issues being explored and agency to transform the situation into a better one. The nature of participation in an effective TfD process has been identified as a transformative integral process involving the participants in analysis of issues and theatre making. It is opposed to an extrinsic process where the community only participates by giving their views in a post-performance discussion.

Furthermore, effective TfD practice has been posited as a process which builds on the passions of the community to provoke a spontaneous process of collective devising and performance. This chapter continues to focus on the Walukuba TfD experience and seeks to analyse the extent to which it passes as a transformative process of collective community empowerment. While Chapter Seven focused on participatory research and collective identification and prioritisation of issues, an essential aspect of effective TfD practice, this chapter focuses on the theatre making and performance processes.

The chapter discusses the creative processes among the different peer groups and argues that the Walukuba TfD project was, to a large extent, a process filled with transformative power, animated by people's passion and executed through spontaneous improvisation. In this chapter I argue that, typical of an effective TfD process, all the different peer groups of the community were facilitated in the process of making and performing plays, image theatre pieces, poems and songs which explored their identified and prioritised problems. As the participants worked on their plays and other performance pieces, they reflected on the characters and situations which led to deeper understanding and empowerment. This collective transformative theatre making process is explored below.



## **8.1 The Collective Creative Process**

### **8.1.1 The young men's play making process**

Among the young men, the process started by usefully exploiting their energies and passions. It started with a participative game of collecting plastic bottles and bags (buvera) which had been littered in the entire environment at the Walukuba community centre. Plastow and McQuaid came to the TfD workshop with two large black bins. They divided the participants into two equal groups. I was part of one group, with McQuaid and Plastow participating in either of the groups. Each group was given a black bin and instructed to engage in a competitive game of collecting all the plastic bottles and polythene bags. The winner would be determined by looking at which group collected more plastics. We went into action and the game was highly participatory, engaging and filled with fun. I saw participants passionately render their energies and enthusiasm to the extent of sweating profusely.

After the garbage collecting exercise, the two bags were brought together and the two groups got involved in a further dramatic game of determining the winner. I say it was a dramatic game because the two groups gathered around the rubbish bins and started estimating which one was heavier. They then started asking each other what they would do with the rubbish. Would they burn the bottles or take them to a rubbish-collecting centre? Some members suggested burning them, perhaps because this is the most common method of dealing with garbage in the community. But McQuaid; one of the facilitators and now "a participant in role" advised, "No we should not burn them because if we do, we shall be emitting dangerous gases into the environment. Burning plastics increase the carbon print on the o-zone layer since the process of burning them produces carbon monoxide gas." I thought this was a well-informed and expected intervention from McQuaid because the idea of burning plastics or garbage is completely discouraged in the UK. The photograph below shows participants active garbage collecting game.



Young men with their facilitators deliberating in a dramatic game on how they would dispose of the garbage. In view on the bottom right is Plastow. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki*

On a whole, the game of collecting plastics proved so useful in this TfD workshop because it symbolically pointed to the various environmental and sustainability issues that had been explored by the group over the five months. It also pointed to the future aspects of the TfD process because some of the issues that had been prioritised by all the groups and which would be the focus of the theatre making process related to the unsustainable use of the environment. The game also practically demonstrated that effective TfD facilitation is about empowering the participants to utilise the very resources available in the community's environment to explore issues of major concern. It articulated Tar Ahura's (1990) definition of TfD as 'a theatre of the people which uses the expressive medium of the people and treats the actual problems of their environment highlighting the problems in a new light for the purpose of re-opening discussion on them in order to seek solutions' (1990a: 55). In this case, the plastic collection game became the springboard for building the TfD process further.

After the game, the group went back to their seats. The young men were now invigorated and ready to launch into the participatory theatre making process. I noted that the facilitators had planned before hand to engage the young participants in two varying genres of artistic creativity. One group would work together to make a short play

of not more than 15 minutes combining four prioritised issues—tree planting, tree cutting, school fees and poverty. Another group would work together to make a creative rap song exploring the problem of swamp degradation. The facilitators explained clearly that the song would not simply be about telling the people to stop cutting and destroying swamps. Instead, it would be one which would tell the various sides of the story, raise questions and, in effect, explore the various perspectives of the problem.

Choosing to belong to either the play making group or the rap song devising group was a prerogative of the young men. As a result, most of the young men chose to belong to the play-making group with only three volunteering to participate in devising the rap song. So, the young men chose the group in which they would make best use of their talents and passions. Giving the young men the freedom to choose was another instance of exercising democracy in the process and fostering ownership of the project. With the two groups decided, Plastow advised that they seat in separate places to analyse the issues that would make the two creative pieces. Plastow would lead the theatre making group while McQuaid would lead the rap song devising process. As a research observer, I was more interested in the theatre-making group. I thus stayed with this group to observe closely their devising process but kept an eye on the activities of the rap song-devising group.

In the young men's theatre/play making group, the process started with the group agreeing on a story which would help them explore the problems of tree cutting, tree planting and poverty. The story, which was made beforehand and suggested to the group by Plastow, was as follows:

There is a married woman who goes to the countryside to see her ailing father. She finds him getting better and in the process of planting seedlings for fruit trees. She is so impressed by her father's industry and requests him to give her some seedlings which she will plant when she gets home. While she is away, her husband who has been working in the factory as a casual worker loses his job. He as a result fails to pay school fees and to provide other basic necessities to the children. When the woman arrives from the countryside, she comes with seedlings but finds the whole home in a mess. She reprimands the husband for being irresponsible. The husband confused and disappointed goes to meet a friend and they decide to go and cut trees to sell to factories for energy. They are caught in the act of cutting the trees and arrested.

Essentially, as shall be fully discussed in Chapter 9, Plastow's act of suggesting a story was a betrayal of the TfD process. But as a way of collectively engaging the group in developing the above story into a theatre piece, Plastow asked them to consider who the characters would be by asking them lead questions. The starting point was to explore the character of the protagonist—the Father/Husband by answering the following question: What is the name of the father? How old is he? How many children does he have? How long has he lived in the area? Where did he come from? Why did he lose his job? As the group provided answers to these questions they generated the necessary material for the improvisation of the dialogue. At the end of the characterisation process the group had decided on the characters for the play to include Father/Husband, Mother, Children, Friend to Father and a group of persons who would constitute the crowd scene to play various roles such as using their bodies and voices to actualise the factory noise and machines.

With the story and the characters determined, the group moved into a process of spontaneously improvising the drama by rehearsing the scene. As the young men volunteered to take the roles played by the various characters, Jane suggested, "I think we need to move out of our seats and go to work under the other tree." Plastow always reminded the community that theatre is about doing and showing by action. The first scene to be enacted was at the factory. Immediately I saw a group of about four young men uncompelled, but moved by their own passion practise using their bodies and voices to create the noise produced in factories on one part of the stage, and two men (Father and his Friend) enact working on the factory machine on the other part of the stage. The two men acted working very hard but along the way they got tired and rested. The Indian supervisor found them standing and expelled them summarily. This was quite unfair as the men had worked in the factory for more than 15 years.

This was followed by another scene which takes place at home. In this scene, Father/Husband who is now jobless is at home with his three children. The children have not gone to school because their father has not paid fees. Mother is still in the village but she is expected back any time. The three children come to Father requesting for food. They have had only three meals of beans and posho (food made out of maize mill) in the last three days. They also cry requesting for school fees which Father is not

able to provide. At this point, Mother, who is not aware that her husband has lost the job, arrives from the countryside. She is carrying tree seedlings, which she gives to the children to go and plant, but she is surprised to find the entire home in a mess and the husband at home. She accuses the husband of being irresponsible and of going out with other women. This sends Husband out of the house to go and meet his friend with whom he decides to go and cut trees. They are caught in the act of tree cutting and arrested by the local defence unit.

With this outline in place, the group had through performance succeeded in exploring a combination of prioritised issues such as tree planting, school fees, poverty and tree cutting. All of them had worked together to produce the outline. Plastow explained that the aim of the play was to explore the relationship between the various problems through drama. Indeed, the play indicated that it was because of poverty that the men resorted to illegal tree cutting to sell to factories. Thus, planting new trees would provide them with trees to sell and alleviate the poverty problem and also end illegal tree cutting. After rehearsing the outline, the group collectively decided to perfect the dialogue. Immediately the young men went into a process of creating and writing down lines of dialogue they would use in their independent rehearsals. Jane gave them the pens and papers to do this.

Meanwhile the other group of young men led by McQuaid were working on the rap song. They collectively tried to work out stanzas for the song which would be sung by different rappers. The stanzas were to be developed based on three themes the young men suggested namely, the nature of the problem of swamp destruction, the value of swamps and the consequences of degrading the swamps. The young men analysed the themes to include a multiplicity of issues:

a) The nature of the problem of swamp degradation.

People are clearing swamps to build houses because of high population;

People fill swamps with soil;

It is largely the rich who are involved in swamp destruction;

Swamps are being encroached upon by people who do not have land for settlement;

People sell out their good spaces and then move to the swamps;

Factories such as MML (factory dealing in making iron sheets and steel products) and Sunbelt are built in swamps on directives from government; People have no choice. They have nothing to do. If people complain, they are threatened with imprisonment;  
Some people are not sensitised about wetlands;  
People grow crops such as yams, rice, sugar canes which dry up the streams.

b) The value of swamps.

Swamps are natural habitats for wild life;  
They are a tourist attraction;  
They provide water for irrigation;  
They are a source of food in form of fish;  
They are part of the rainfall cycle;  
They are a good filter for water going into lakes.

c) The consequences of swamp degradation.

Change in rainfall seasons which reduces the capacity of food production;  
It promotes destruction of aquatic life;  
It leads to prolonged droughts and desertification;  
It results in excessive flooding as all the swamps are filled with soil. This poses a great danger to human life and properties;  
Endangers the tourism industry;  
Leads to scarcity of water;  
Leads to water pollution and;  
It leads to extinction of important wild life species.

After collectively analysing the points which would inform their creative process as indicated above, the young men entered into a spontaneous process of creativity and rehearsal. I used to move around the community centre and I would find the young men working independently (without direction from the facilitators) and enthusiastically creating and rehearsing their rap song. They embellished their work with break dance

and beat boxing. In beat boxing, the young men used their vocal resources to produce sound beats.

In the subsequent TfD workshop session the young men performed their pieces (the rap song and the play) before an audience of the elders. The performance triggered further dialogue and discussion about the problems highlighted in the pieces. The process became a platform for telling and retelling stories expressing the community's problems. For example, after the rap song performance, one of the elders commented, "I learnt that there is a huge problem of swamp degradation. As a result we have got a lot of problems such as increased malaria outbreaks, lack of water and frequent floods." An old woman took the floor and told a moving story of environmental degradation, "Near the hospital, there was a big tree. I am sure many of us still remember it. It used to provide shade to the *bodaboda* cyclists (motor cyclists). That tree was cut down and the whole place now looks bad." Another old man, Sam said, "The young men needed to clearly show how swamp degradation is mostly caused by corrupt politicians. We cannot solve the problem unless we address these politicians."

Much of the post-performance discussion in response to the young men's theatre piece focused on the problem of mistreatment of casual factory workers. The participants noted that just as it had been portrayed in the play, local supervisors connive with foreign investors to exploit the local desperate job seekers.

The participants told stories related to the oppressions they faced. They cited one factory—Bidco, where girls have to give sex in order to get jobs and the young men have to pay money for jobs. The participants also noted that bereaved workers are never allowed to attend burials. One of the participants narrated a personal story involving his friend. While working at Bidco, his friend lost his hand in a machine accident. He was not supported by the factory to get the needed treatment and was sent home without any compensation package.

McQuaid, the facilitator, made an effort to focus the discussion on what should be done to guarantee workers' rights. The young men called upon the elders to put in place measures that would protect workers and stop conniving with Asian investors to exploit the young local job seekers. They called upon elders whom they considered key decision makers to form bodies which would protect workers' rights and to revitalise

existing groups such as Pressure From Below. This kind of thinking led to an important question: what had the youths done to help the unjust situation of the factory workers? The facilitators made effort to focus the discussion to help the young men to consider what they can do to protect fellow young people who were being exploited. This prompted the young men to consider practical ways to change their situation.

The key practical proposal which came up to remedy the situation was mobilising workers so that they may join voices and defend the rights of fellow workers (unionisation). They asserted that young people should not look on when their fellow workers are being abused. The young men also noted that they needed to form groups in which they could learn entrepreneurship skills such as handcrafts, which would help them begin businesses of their own; a move which would empower them to be less dependent on the exploitative foreign capital. One of the participants informed the young men of an ongoing project which involved making products such as bangos and candles. As a result, the discussion led the young men to realise that normally when they have problems, they tend to look outside for solutions yet solutions can be found within themselves. This way, the process was being directed towards increasing the level of agency among the participants to consider how they could be the beginning point for better livelihoods and communities.

### **8.1.2 The elders' collective theatre making process**

In the elders' peer group, the theatre making process was also built on the passions of the people and animated through improvisation and collective participation. In order to attract the attention of the participants, Plastow started by making connections with the previous workshop. She said:

Yesterday we explored and democratically chose the issues we considered most pressing. We were able to choose the most pressing problems and most helpful available opportunities. Today we need to begin thinking about how we can put forward these problems and opportunities to our young generation and the broader community by making a drama. Katie and I have come up with a proposal of a story which we want to share with you. You will have the freedom to accept it as it is or to enrich it with your proposals.

Plastow and McQuaid's proposed story was as follows:



There was a woman who had a big problem of giving birth to children, one after another. She wanted to begin practicing family planning but she was afraid of sharing it with her husband who was completely against family planning. She sought advice from her fellow women at a women's SACCO who advised her to secretly go to the clinic and begin taking birth control measures. While at the clinic, she unexpectedly bumped into her husband who had also secretly come to test for HIV. The couple was greatly shocked for having met each other in a place they least expected. They asked each other the question, "What are you doing here?" Finally, the couple decided to jointly go to the clinic for HIV counselling and testing.

Having shared the story with the women, they unanimously agreed that it was a good story and they started the theatre making process by sketching out an outline of scenes. In order to make the outline, the elders worked together in separate groups. One group led by Plastow was composed of all the women, while the other, composed of men, was led by McQuaid. As participant observer, I attended the women's group session because Jane requested my help to translate her directions to the participants from English to the local language.

The first step Plastow took to engage the women was to facilitate them in the process of thinking about the scenario, its characters and situations. To do this, she invited the women to actualise the discussion in the SACCO meeting and to focus it on family planning. The women were to discuss family planning as though they were in a real discussion about the topic. The discussion would focus on their experience of family planning—why they liked it and why they didn't like it. To me, this was an example where the process built on the passions of the community. Characteristically, when women in Africa meet in groups, they like to discuss and share knowledge about issues affecting their lives. So by inviting the women to freely discuss about family planning, she was telling them to do something they are passionate about. I listened keenly to the discussion of the women's real life experiences pertaining to family planning and noted the following voices from different women:

I have had many children. I tried to use family planning but I got many health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure and excessive bleeding;

I love family planning and I have tried to use it. But whenever I am on family planning, I lose the natural desire for sex and this threatens my marriage;

I love family planning because it has helped me space my children. I have a child in senior one, another one in primary two and the baby I am now carrying. But the problem is that when I use family planning, I suffer from excessive bleeding and sometimes miss my menstrual cycle and when I resume the cycle, the bleeding is excessive;

I need family planning but my husband does not want to discuss the issue.

With this free discussion of the women's experiences, it was now easy to decide on the characters, situations and dialogue for the drama. The women proposed that scene one would take place at a women's Savings and Credit Cooperative (SACCO) meeting and that the lead character would be the chairperson. The drama would begin at a point when the chairperson is ending the meeting, inviting any member who needs help to come up. Other characters drawn directly from the women's free sharing on family planning above would include:

1st woman: explaining her ordeal with family planning;

2nd woman: explaining why she loves family planning;

3rd woman: explaining why she both likes and dislikes family planning;

4th woman: who desires to use family planning but she is afraid sharing the idea with her husband;

5th woman: supports fully the war against family planning;

6th woman: SACCO member who advises 4th woman to go for secret family planning services and volunteers to accompany her to the clinic;

Nurse: works at the clinic where 4th woman goes for secret family planning services;

Two groups of women—one in support of secret family planning for the 4<sup>th</sup> woman and another against secret family planning for the 4th woman.

Having worked out the sketch of characters and the situations in which they find themselves, the women directed by Plastow started the process of rehearsal. This took the form of spontaneous improvisation. The chairperson of the SACCO stood up and addressed the women in these words, "fellow women, today we have discussed many useful things which will help us improve our savings. Now time has come for me to end

this meeting. I invite anyone who has a problem which needs our help to come up and share it with the group”. Following this invitation from the chairperson, the 1<sup>st</sup> woman explained her ordeal relating to family planning, “fellow women I have a big problem of abdominal pain. I tried to use family planning in order to stop giving birth but in the process I developed health complications such as excessive bleeding, diabetes and high blood pressure.” The 2<sup>nd</sup> woman dismissed the claims of the 1<sup>st</sup> woman, “I do not know what this woman is taking about. She is complaining about health complications resulting from taking birth control measures, has she visited the hospital for medical advice and treatment?” Finally, after all of the women had joined in the scene with their dialogue, the 4<sup>th</sup> woman who desired to use family planning but was afraid spoke. She said, “Fellow women, I have a problem with birth control—I give birth to baby after baby. I love family planning but I am afraid of talking about it with my husband.” Immediately the 6<sup>th</sup> woman joined in to advise her to go secretly and receive family planning services. Other women in the dialogue supported the advice while others rejected it. This built some kind of a dramatic conflict. At the end of it, the woman was secretly taken to the clinic where she met the nurse. The photograph below shows the women in a dramatic conflict on the issue of family planning.



Women perform a dramatic conflict scene. Some support the woman’s decision to go for secret family planning services while others oppose it. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki*

I observed that the creative process among the women was participatory, with the women feeling remarkably passionate about it. I also observed that though the women were often directed by Jane, they were in control of the process. Each woman was free to bring up a proposal to improve the drama which was collectively evaluated and then incorporated in the creative process. Some of the spontaneous proposals or voices from various women which were used to improve the drama included the following:

Instead of saying, "I have many children", let her say "I give birth to children at short intervals";

The lady is not playing the part well. Let it be played by the other woman; and

Instead of all of us rising up at one go to support or protest against the idea of secret family planning for the woman, let the action develop gradually. One woman will rise and say no and another will rise and say yes. Then the rest will rise and join either to support or to reject the move.

The act of introducing their own ideas in the play making process indicated that the women were taking ownership of the process, a feature expected of a transformative TfD process. It also demonstrated that the women were exploiting the grand opportunity enabled by the process to express their voices which had for long been stifled by the patriarchal system. Some of the ideas proved extremely helpful in the development of the drama which made the women pleased with their work.

While the women were working, the men, led by McQuaid, were also devising a bar scene. The scene featured the husband of the woman who had decided to secretly seek family planning services above (hereafter referred to as Husband), his friend and other men drinking in a bar. The discussion in this scene revolved around HIV testing and disclosure. In the dialogue of the scene, Husband complains that he has for a long time been feeling sickly. His friend asks him whether he has tested for HIV or considered going for testing and counselling services. Other men in the bar strongly discourage Husband from going for HIV counselling and testing arguing that it would cause him unnecessary worry.

Convinced by his friend about the merits of seeking HIV counselling and testing, Husband makes up his mind to secretly go for HIV counselling and testing. He is accompanied by his friend to the clinic. While at the clinic, Husband bumps into his wife who also has gone to the clinic to secretly seek family planning services. This dramatic

and unexpected meeting prompts the question from both the wife and husband, “what are you doing here?” The friend to Husband advises him to be a man and tell his wife the truth. At this point, Husband tells the wife the truth, “I have not been feeling well for a long time. I suspect I could be HIV positive. I have come for HIV testing and counselling.” This prompts the wife also to say her secret, “I have also been receiving family planning services.” The two jointly decide to go for HIV counselling and testing.

The two scenes, the women’s scene and the men’s, were linked together and performed/rehearsed and it was all good work. The two scenes were brought together using the techniques of double scene staging and action freezing with the creative process kept simple and to the point. Whenever the women attempted to exploit their creative potential by adding in more words, Jane would advise them not to and to keep it short.

Through this creative process, I realised that the elders got absorbed into a transformative, collective and participatory process of analysing issues of concern to them. They analysed the significance of family planning and HIV testing and disclosure. The dialogue and discussion leading to play making enabled the elders to bring out the various angles of issues at hand and in effect analyse and respect opposing views. The theatre making process became in pedagogical terms an effective means of problem posing education and thematic investigation.

In the subsequent workshop session following the above creative process, the elders performed their play to an audience comprised of the other peers—the young men and the young women. In the performance I observed that the collective devising process had transformed the elders into real actors—protagonists in the theatre process as Boal (1979) would call them. I particularly noted that some of the actors who had performed well in the previous play making process and rehearsal had not turned up for the performance. The elders made up for their absence and requested other persons to fill the roles.

To me, this was commendable because it indicated the level of agency that was growing among the participants in their quest to analyse their own issues. The new performers who had not been understudies of the characters played the roles quite well. Compared to the rehearsal session, I observed that the performers; both the women

and the men had more energy and urgency in the performance. This in my view was a sign of growing awareness and critical understanding of the issues being addressed. In the post-performance discussion, one of the participants applauded the performance saying:

I think it was a fantastic performance because the women explored the advantages and disadvantages of family planning and all the myths concerning the practice of family planning. The men on the other hand have brought out the stigma surrounding HIV and issues of HIV counselling, testing and disclosure.

Another young woman inspired by the performance asserted her voice and said, “I will speak in Luganda. There are some people especially men who still have ancient thinking. This has subjected many women to suffering. We cannot go on trusting such persons with our lives.” The words from the woman spurred spontaneous dialogue or speech from a cross section of the participants. Having made the point, I noted that the woman felt so pleased with herself. Her fellow women commended her saying, “you have made your point. Come back and take your seat.” In TfD terms, the process had empowered the colonised or dominated to speak back to the centres of power (see Prentki, 2007: 199, earlier cited in literature review). In my view, this kind of spontaneous or free speech ushered in by the process underscored the potential of a well thought out TfD process in giving voice to the voiceless and effectively creating spaces for empowerment to take its due course.

### **8.1.3 The little girls (aged 12-13) creative process**

This group had not been part of the five months’ process of community analysis. The process had over the five months exclusively engaged the young women and men and the elders. At the stage when all the other groups were making their artistic pieces, a group of about five girls aged 12-13 years came in to join the TfD project. Immediately Plastow and McQuaid saw it necessary to engage them and give them the opportunity to express their voice on issues that affect them. Jane started by enhancing the girls’ vocal skills by inviting them to sing any song familiar to them. It was necessary to increase the girls’ voices because it seemed they were accustomed to being silenced. The girls chose the song “Baby Jesus”, a common children song in the community. The

girls were invited to speak aloud and project their voices. Jane advised them that if they were to make their concerns heard by the elders and the rest of the community through performance, they had to make effective use of their voices and speak in loud voices. To help the girls to get the taste of singing loudly, Jane turned the exercise into a competition. She divided the girls into two groups and invited them to sing the song. The group which sung louder was proclaimed winner.

After the vocal exercise, Plastow and McQuaid led the girls through the process of exploring the problems affecting their lives as girls growing up and their ambitions. The results generated from the discussion would be used to compose a poem which would be performed to the community in Walukuba. The girls told Jane that their major problem related to love. They felt that they were missing the love of their parents. They said that their parents, especially their stepmothers, subjected them to suffering and that their parents sent them to live with their sengas (paternal aunts) who subjected them to heavy loads of work. As a result they often failed to do their school homework, which attracted corporal punishment from teachers at school. They added that these problems meant that many of them had to drop out of school and get married early.

The girls further explained that culture expects boys not to do certain types of work such as cooking, washing clothes and cleaning the house. Girls are expected to do all of these kinds of house work as a way of grooming them into the role of being house wives. Asked about their ambitions, the girls said they wanted to continue going to school so that they may become bank managers, nursing sisters and musicians.

With the problems and ambitions of the girls analysed, Jane encouraged them to make a poem exploring these issues. The poem would have three stanzas, each one exploring an issue or two. They were helped by Oron, one of the facilitators, to make the poem. Here is the poem the girls composed:

Bamama abato  
Mutuwe omukwano  
Temutuyisabubi  
Naffe tulibantu  
Ngamwe!  
Twagala kukulabulungi

Tubereba bank maneja, ba nurse ne ba musician.

Basenga mulekereawa  
Okutukozesa nga baddu.  
Twagala omukwano okuva erimwe, basenga  
Naffe tubere abempisa jemuli!  
Mutuwe obudde tusome ebitabo byaffe,  
Twagala twebake mukasera kitusobozese  
Okukera mu bude tugende kusomero.

Batata abato ne bamama,  
Tubasaba mulekere awa okutufumibiza  
Amangu nga tukyalibato.  
Tusobole okusoma tufuke bye mwagala,  
Tubere abemigaso jjemuli mumaso jetulaga.

Literally translated, the poem reads as follows:

Dear aunts, give us love. Do not treat us harshly because we too are human beings like you! We need to grow well and become bank managers, nursing sisters and musicians. Our dear aunts, stop making us work like slaves. We need love from you, aunts. We shall also be nice and disciplined girls to you. Give us time to read our books. We need to go to bed early and rise up in time to go to school. Our dear parents, we ask you to stop giving us in for marriage quickly when we are still children. We need to go to school and become useful people to you in future.

I attended and observed the process of making the poem and noticed that the girls absorbed themselves in the process of thinking about all of the requests they made in the poem. I noted that the girls were eager to exercise their voices and address their needs to the elders. Having composed the poem, the girls read it aloud and it sounded nice. They were advised to learn the poem by heart so that they would perform it to the larger community without having to read from the paper. Each of the girls wrote the poem on paper so that they could go home and practise independently in their free time.



As the day's session continued, the girls who had gone back to school for extra lessons came back to the TfD venue. The teacher who was supposed to attend to them had not turned up. Without being compelled, they got a separate place at the community centre and started rehearsing their poem. We (the facilitating team and I) watched them from a distance and noted that the girls were getting immersed in the process and were becoming more expressive. They were not only mastering the lines but also devising appropriate gestures to embellish the words. Another older girl from the community helped to direct the girls in this rehearsal process. It was evident that the empowerment process through TfD was emerging out of the spontaneous impulses of the girls. The incident exemplified the significance of the notion of passion in TfD practice as articulated by Prentki (2003). The photograph below shows the girls passionately engaged in an independent creative process.



A young woman from the community assists the little girls to rehearse their poem. Photo by Kenneth Bamukuraki

Looking at the girls engaging in an independent process of developing their piece, I commented thus, "I think this is what TfD should be about. The process should give voice to the participants so that they may collectively work out their own empowerment." In response to my observation, Plastow replied that, "Yes, the facilitators in TfD are there to open up the space in which the community can participate and eventually take over the process."

#### **8.1.4 The Young Women's Creative Process**

In order to kick-start the creative process among the young women, Plastow and McQuaid led them in a process of analysing the major oppressive forces affecting their lives. On the one hand, I thought this was a repetition of the process because the young women had already done this in the previous weeks. They had also participated in a democratic process of prioritising the issues where the problems they thought to be most pressing were identified (see problem analysis and prioritisation in the previous chapter). So, the process of making a fresh analysis of the issues led to new priorities.

On the other hand, however, the main thrust of participatory development processes such as TfD is providing opportunities in which the community can interpret and re-interpret the issues of major concern. Thus, this process provided the young women with an opportunity for continued analysis of their oppression which arguably led to further awakening of critical consciousness. In the process of fresh dialogue and discussion, the young women identified the following oppressive forces:

Confusion from men—men tricking them into sexual relationships and dropping them after impregnating them;

Theft of orphans' property by close relatives of deceased parents;

Young women lacking voice;

Men (husbands) stopping young women from working - the husbands want to control the women and be at the top all the time.

The girls explained that grabbing orphans' property leaves the children homeless, compelling them to go to the streets or get married at an early age. They also intimated that early marriage comes through being enticed by gifts from old men (the sugar daddies) whom the women commonly describe as "investors" because of their investment in young women. The problem of lack of voice among the young women was practically manifesting itself during the workshop sessions. In the sessions, the young men were very creative and expressive while the young women found it hard to express themselves freely. They were always silent.

The facilitators probed to help the young women explore why they lack voice. The girls explained that as they are growing, issues of voice depend on the family, religion and culture. In some families, the girls are listened to while in some families, the voices of girls are completely suppressed. They noted that religions such as Islam do not value the girl child and the women at all. In the large cultural spectrum, the girls are groomed to have a soft character and voice. The women are culturally expected to be soft spoken, especially before men. When a woman attempts to exercise her voice, she is considered a cultural rebel and uncontrollable, making it hard for her to find a man for marriage.

Asked about the options the young women had in light of these oppressive forces, they singled out leaving oppressive marriages and working hard to receive education and skills. One of the women argued that, “when a woman is educated and self-sustaining, the man respects her because he does not want to lose her contribution to the family. But when a woman depends on the man for everything, she is prey to men’s abusive and controlling behaviour.” In this way the process was transforming the young women to feel their human worth and begin considering strategies for change. This is what empowerment through TfD is about: the transformation of the human person, which in the long run manifests itself in tangible actions taken by the community to make life better.

Among the participants, there was a young woman named Maureen. She was viewed by her peers as a living example of a determined woman, always working to overcome men’s oppressive behaviour and become self-sustaining. She had received training from a vocational training institute and was planning to advance her skills by studying to obtain a diploma. She confessed that her determination to be a free woman had made her begin renting her own accommodation at the age of 18 years and that she was involved in making hand crafts to sustain herself. By getting involved in the dialogue and discussion the young women resolved to take control of their own lives like Maureen. The photographs below demonstrate Maureen’s assertiveness.



Above: Maureen, the assertive young woman, is marketing and selling her crafts to the facilitators after one of the TfD workshop sessions. Below: she is casting her vote to choose the most promising opportunities. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki.*

In order to articulately portray the oppressive realities that the young women were facing and the options they had to break through the oppression, the women were facilitated to create an image theatre piece. In this piece, they were supposed to draw from the skills of image theatre, which they had received in earlier weeks of TfD workshop sessions. The image theatre piece was discussed and visualised by the young women. There would be a resolute woman at the centre of the image who would practically be portrayed as being oppressed by many socio-economic and cultural forces. There would then be five women to represent the various oppressive forces, which would be practically depicted as weighing heavily on the woman. The resolute

woman would appear on stage and express herself in these words, “My name is Maureen. I want to express my voice and exercise my rights. I want to become economically independent.” After this vivid proclamation, women representing the various oppressions would come and load her with different burdens expressing their intentions as follows:

1st woman: I am your sugar daddy. I have come to make you my side partner, impregnate you and make you drop out of school;

2nd woman: I am your senga (paternal aunt). I have come to grab all the property your late mother left;

3rd woman: I am your husband. I want you to stop working. I want you to remain home and have many babies;

4th woman: I am your jaja (grandmother). I do not want you to dress like that. It is against our culture;

5th and 6th woman: we are the community. We want you to keep quiet and only speak occasionally and in a small voice.

The photographs below illustrate the artistic process of creating the image theatre piece.







Above: creating an image theatre piece, young women taking turns to pile oppressions on the resolute woman. Below: the resolute woman at the centre has been overcome by the oppressions. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki.*

In response to the oppressions, the resolute woman would push them off, saying, “No women, this is a modern age. Women are free to express themselves and be assertive.” At these words, all the oppressions would disappear; leaving the woman free. This image theatre piece was practically rehearsed and staged and I observed that it was effectively articulating the message.

## **8.2 Exploiting the human and artistic resources of the community—The Community Song**

In order to involve every member of the community, Plastow and McQuaid asked the community to compose a community song. Because of their vibrancy and/or good level of creative energies, the young men were requested to lead the rest in creating the song. The song was to be titled, “We are Walukuba” and would incorporate most of the activities and issues which the community had been exploring for the past five months. Plastow advised that it would be a simple song, one which every member of the community would find easy to learn. As such, it would have a cultural flavour so that it would appeal to both the old and the young segments of the community. It had not to be cool and trendy but one which could easily be sung by all. The plan was to have this song taught to a group of 90 school children and so it had to be composed in mixed language, English, Lusoga and Luganda.

The song resulting from the community's effort and artistic creativity emphasised the importance of unity, collective action and harnessing the potential inherent in the community to work for a better Walukuba. In part, the lyrics of the song were “. . . We are louder, when together, we've got the power, we can make it . . . we can be strong and free, we have the talent... we need some loyalty and we can stand as one . . .” (see appendix 6 for details).

In performance, this song was really engaging, enchanting and sounded revolutionary. It was revolutionary because looking at the members of the Walukuba community perform the community song composed by themselves, I noted that they were enthused and liminally transformed to take action in order to change their community. Considering the success of the creativity of the community in making the song, I noted that the facilitators were able to identify and utilise the artistic talents of the community. This way, they had put into practice Prentki's idea of identifying progressive elements to act as base groups in the community (Prentki, 1995: 392). In addition to requesting that the young men use their musical talents to lead the composition of the song, several other special talents were spotted and engaged over the five months of the project. I think this was quite clever of Plastow and McQuaid because as Ahura, a Nigerian TfD scholar would put it, 'an effective TfD facilitator is one who is able to utilise the material and human resources available in the community to engender a theatrical process of community change' (Ahura, 1990b: 95).

As a sign of the growing level of ownership of the process and agency among the participants, sometimes the decision to utilise particular talent came from some community members and would be supported by all the participants. One of these instances, which has already been hinted at, was when the elders thought that one of the women was not playing a particular major role well. They unanimously suggested that she swap her part with another woman in the cast. Another example was when the young women decided that because of her known industry and determination to be free, Maureen should be the resolute woman in their image theatre piece.

### 8.3 Engendering communitywide Empowerment: The TfD Core Group performs for the Walukuba Community

Having undertaken a protracted process of learning performance skills, problem identification, analysis, prioritisation of issues and theatre making, the participants were ready to take theatre to their own community. The phrase “taking theatre to the community” used here should not be confused with the agitprop performances in the colonial paradigm of theatre highlighted in Chapter Two of this thesis. Here, the participants who constituted the core group were local members of the Walukuba community. Consequently, it was the Walukuba community members performing for the wider community which ensured wider community empowerment.

The community performance took place on 13 June 2015. The participatory activities leading to this event saw the community make an effort to do something that could make their lives better. The TfD core group participated in making posters which would be strategically placed to invite people. In the process of designing the posters, the community members were given resources by the facilitators such as sharpened pencils and paper. Moving around the performance venue one could see some posters the community had made such as the one in the photograph below hanged on walls and trees.



One of the posters made by the participants to market the community performance. The message is in the local Lusoga language to appeal largely to the local population. Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki.



The dialogical course of action which marked the theatre making process discussed above was also applied in planning for final community performance. For instance, earlier on, in one of the planning meetings, some members of the community had proposed making stickers and leaflets containing information about the programme as a way of community mobilisation. This proposal, however, was evaluated and the community, guided by the facilitators, agreed that stickers and leaflets would litter the environment and defeat the very purpose of the community effort at hand; that was, increasing awareness and action in order to foster environmental sustainability. The community also proposed making street drives as a method of community mobilisation. This option was also rejected on account that it would cause excessive noise pollution.

In place of the sidelined options, it was agreed that one big banner with the words “we are Walukuba” be designed. On the day of the community performance, this banner was visibly carried by the participants. In addition, I saw different people carrying a portable loud speaker, sounding a call to the community to come and learn how they would join the struggle to make Walukuba better. The voice from the speaker could be heard by people in a radius of one kilometre. The community members who spoke on the speaker said words similar to these: *abantu be Walukuba, mujje tutetenkanye engeritunatasa obutonde bwensi yaffe. Walukuba yaffe fembi. Obutonde bugwawo.* These words translate as “people of Walukuba, come and join us in the struggle to save our environment. Walukuba belongs to all of us. Our environment is being wasted.” The photographs below illustrate the community mobilisation strategies.



Above: A banner with the inscription, “We are Walukuba” carried by members of the community. Below: A participant sounding a call to the community via a portable speaker. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki.*

With the mobilisation strategies executed, the performance venue—the community play ground was immediately filled with a mammoth crowd. TfD, the theatre for conscientisation strand of practice is aptly defined as the theatre of the people by the people for the people (see Mda, 1993: 50). This conception of TfD means that the people in the community themselves participate in making theatre exploring their own problems and then perform the theatre to the larger community. This was realised in the Walukuba TfD experience. The community explored their problems and existing opportunities for a better Walukuba and used the results of the analysis to make theatre. In effect, the theatre performed by the members of the community was a theatre about the concerns of the whole community. This was completely different from

the agitprop or the “taking theatre to the people” practice where an external entity makes theatre and then tours with it around a particular community that do not have any opportunity of deciding its subject matter, typical of the contemporary TfD experiences described in Chapter Four of this thesis.

In the final community performance, it was interesting to note that the various creative pieces were weaved together to create some kind of a story about the community’s needs and opportunities. I commended the manner in which the facilitators planned the effective use of the performance space to augment the performance event. The entire pitch was transformed into a stage by marking on it various points where different scenes would be performed. The performers had to be at these points at a given time ready to render their scene—they had to be ready to receive signals from the facilitators to be at these points. This ensured that there were no time lapses between scenes. After each scene, the community moved to the next point of the pitch for the succeeding scene. As a result, the community performance was like taking the community through a journey of exploring the oppressive realities in their lives and the available opportunities to make their lives better.

Looking at the above creative processes among the various peer groups, it is evident that the process of the Walukuba TfD project facilitated a Freirian problem posing community learning process characterised by active dialogue and discussion. Commenting on her experience with the work, McQuaid in her essay with Plastow notes that:

Paulo Freire speaks of praxis, where action and reflection interact in an ongoing process [. . .]. Here, in developing the scenes ... group members became true co-authors. At each stage in producing creative performances—in identifying issues, working out how to present them, shaping the plots of devised dramas or the key provocations of raps and poems—our members engaged in a dynamic exchange of ideas, drawing on the mutual support of a shared project and developing a culture of learning and knowledge-sharing. We held discussions as we continued the work of making performance for our participants to generate and communicate knowledge, to critically reflect on power structures ( 2016: n.p)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> While this work was co-authored by McQuaid and Plastow, each of the two authors is individually responsible for different portions of the work. This is why I attribute texts to individual authors. Also, this work is not formally published. By the time I received the essay from Plastow, it had just been submitted to a journal for publication and expected in an issue at a future date. This is why here and elsewhere I am not able to provide page numbers, even in direct quotations.

Such a process of critical engagement facilitated continued transformation of the participants. Community empowerment and transformation was attested to by the participants' narratives. I did an impact assessment of the project by seeking testimonies of participants through letter writing and interviews to ascertain the extent to which the people centred process of the work had transformed lives. The first assessment was done midway the project, towards the first 'We are Walukuba' community performance in June 2015 (see responses in appendix 9) while the second assessment was done in March 2016 (see interview transcripts in appendix 10). Since the major fruit of an effective TfD process is supposed to be human transformation, my assessment of the impact of the project aimed to determine the extent to which the process had fostered inner transformation of the participants as evidenced by the nature of the impact assessment questions (see appendix 1).

Responding to the question on how participating in the programme had transformed the participants as individuals, the majority of the participants confessed that their lives and personalities had significantly changed as evidenced by the following testimonies:

Yusuf: Personally, my life has changed much. I have become better programmed than I used to be. When there is a programme in our group, a meeting, a rehearsal or a community performance, I have to make sure that I attend and in time.

Steven: My life is changing in many ways. I used to behave badly, but when I started engaging in this programme I begun to change. I had friends who were enticing me to begin drugs, but when I got involved in this programme, I distanced myself from them. This is because one of the problems among young people which was being repeatedly cited by elders during the workshops was drugs and alcohol.

Deo: I used to be a reserved person because of disappointments that happen to me in life. But when I joined this project I was empowered by free sharing and dialogue... this one brings this problem, another brings that problem. In the end everyone opens up and begins to speak.

Abdallah: Before participating in this programme, I did not know how to interact with other people. This programme afforded me an opportunity to learn working with others on a common cause.

Siraji Koloto: My life has really changed because I have been able to work with various age groups, the young and the elders. I have now got new experiences of what life is with other age groups especially the elders. Different age groups have different challenges. I have been able to work with people of different characters (see appendix 10).

Individual participants confessed that participating in making plays and performing them had made their lives better:

Deo: I participated in the factory exploitation scene taking the role of an exploitative Indian supervisor. I discovered that I have a very good Indian accent, something which is not possessed by many. I noted through the process that I can discover more of myself. I am student of journalism. I will one day use the skills in radio programming. My esteem increased, I became more popular. The elder generation who took part in the project now know me better. They know that I can do something great for our community. I can now approach them with an idea to discuss and they will listen.

Yusuf: participating in performance increased confidence in myself. I learnt that if one has to perform, then he has to be confident. If not, people will understand that such a person is not sure of himself.

Abdallah: I participated in the tree cutting play. I liked it. I was given the most sensitive part—that of a police officer who is supposed to uphold the law. I did that by arresting the men we caught cutting trees (see appendix 10).

Furthermore, the participants I interviewed testified that the project had led to widespread community change, pinpointing the actions the people were taking and the decisions they were making to transform the condition of their community:

Isabirye Derek: I can tell that this community has changed. I saw it in the elections. People were able to choose the right leaders. I heard of a rumour that there was this leader who used to grab people's land. This time round, this leader was voted out. I think this happened because we had the 'We are Walukuba' event where a play on land grabbing was performed and watched by many people.

Deo: The project has changed how we do things at our pottery project. We learnt from the 'We are Walukuba' project that before you do things, you have to discuss as a community and also carry out some research. We also have started involving all age groups, the young and the elders.

Abdallah: Change is really a gradual process. Though nothing much has so far changed, there is some change. Elders are able to meet and discuss with the young about important issues that affect the community.

Siraji Koloto: The community is changing. People are now using briquettes, made out of garbage in on to reduce the demand of charcoal and reduce tree cutting. The civil and political leaders are now beginning to focus on the issues we have been performing about. Before this project, people used to see the problems but could not do anything about them. We have performed before council and people are like mmmh. You know sometimes people see things but they pretend not to have seen them (see appendix 10).

#### **8.4 Conscientisation? Performing for Collective Community Action and Change**

The ideological foundation of TfD is fostering the conscientisation of communities. Conscientisation reaches its full realisation when the participants involved take action to better their situation. The process of conscientisation in the Walukuba TfD project was well entrenched through the creative process examined above and accentuated in the last scene of the final community performance. The final scene at the community wide performance was a practical demonstration of tree planting, one could say a performance of community action. To prepare for this scene, the facilitators bought over 100 mango tree seedlings and many candles. In performing the scene, each performer held high one seedling in one hand and a lit candle in another and triumphantly sang the community song (the “We are Walukuba” song). Having sung the community song, four performers came forward brandishing their seedlings and candles. One of the performers addressed the community, saying, “this candle represents our ancestors.” Another one addressed the gathering saying “this tree seedling represents our hope for the future”, and the other two performers thanked the community for having come to participate in the process of bringing change to Walukuba, marking the end of the event. The photograph below shows the final action of the community performance.



The participants in the final action at the community performance. Performers are presenting tree planting as the future of the Community. *Photo by Keneth Bamuturaki.*

Generally speaking, the tree planting scene was, in Boal's words, a rehearsal for taking action, an act of transforming words into action. I personally observed that the participants were edified, energised and empowered to go tree planting. Mangeni (2007) posits that 'TfD provides a liminal space enabling women and men to move from the representational to existential reality and drawing on their experiences as a frame to problematise their world' (2007: 256). Boal calls this kind of transformation metaxis, 'the state of belonging completely and simultaneously to two different autonomous worlds' of the 'reality' and the 'image of that reality' (1995:42). I perceived that the Walukuba TfD process had started to achieve this state of metaxis and liminality. For instance, as we moved from the performance venue, I realised that many participants looked at the tree seedlings in their hands with admiration and a sense of care. After the TfD event each member would go and plant the tree at home. In case one did not have space at home for the tree, one of the participants named Deo volunteered to look for spaces on public land where the tree seedlings would be planted. In that case, the trees would belong to the community and the participants would plant them so that the future generation may enjoy the fruits.

While all the participants were seated in the community hall waiting for dinner, Alex from Jinja Joint Development Organisation (JJODA), an NGO which works in the district to promote tree planting, was invited by McQuaid to come up and advise the community

on seedling handling, tree planting and care. Alex had been working with McQuaid in her research on tree planting and the environment. He addressed the participants on the importance of joining hands to promote tree planting in order to alleviate the looming threat of environmental degradation and climatic change. He advised that, “please take tree planting seriously. We are heading for difficult times—bad weather. At JJODA we have many tree seedlings. Please come for them.” He then invited one member the community to volunteer and demonstrate the process of tree planting. One participant came up and illustrated with his seedling the importance of removing the polythene bag, while taking care not to break the soil. Alex finally illustrated the importance of frequently watering the planted seedling until it is well established.

Unlike the reigning politics of development practice where the process of development starts from the NGO with information packaged in the theatre piece and then disseminated to the people, here the process was first established among the people and the NGO was involved later. In some way, the process practically demonstrated the actual meaning of a bottom-up approach to development desired in TfD. It was quite interesting to me that while the community performance had ended minutes back in the community gardens, Alex’s speech was like an extension of the performance, a continued process of community transformation.

From the above discussion, it is evident that there was effort to transform the TfD process from a neo-colonial agitprop practice into what Prentki would describe as a post-colonial one (Prentki, 2007: 199, earlier cited in the literature review chapter). In Chapter Three, it was argued that investigating TfD in the context of the postcolonial movement entails analysing how it has been deployed as a tool of decolonisation, a process that ‘not only involves the political transformation of nation-states but also the articulation and transformation of dominant ideologies at the level of communities and individual bodies’ (Perry, 2012: 103). The place of TfD in relation to postcoloniality was likened to what Amkpa describes as ‘postcolonial desire’: ‘an act of refusal to assume that passive, static essentialist identity of colonial domination which begins at the very moment in which the subordinated understand their subjugation and launch strategies of defiance and change’ (2006: 167).



As already evidenced through the participatory research process (see Chapter Five) and the various creative and collective theatre making processes among the different peer groups discussed in this chapter, the Walukuba TfD process passes as having been an effective decolonising process. As research observer, I perceived that the state of a postcolonial desire emerged in the lives of the participants in the Walukuba community as they rehearsed and performed about their oppressions. I saw participants think deeply about the oppressions in their lives as they evaluated different situations and negotiated a way out of oppression. In one performance, the elders articulated a desire among many sections of the community to seek secret family planning and HIV testing; in another, the young women said no to the oppressive ancient cultural and patriarchal practices; in another, the little girls detested suffering caused by paternal aunts (basenga) and stepmothers, while in another, the community protested against corrupt and selfish politicians. McQuaid in her work with Plastow attests to the growing levels of empowerment and transformation of the participants which the process fostered:

Whilst using theatre techniques to generate ideas [. . .] I became increasingly aware that we were generating new forms of engagement within these groups, as participants were not only exchanging information and ideas and learning from each other, but also discovering and gaining access to new ways of discussing their problems and potential interventions. The very act of participating in these workshops was transformative for many, not least through activities we led in group-building and confidence in communication, as we encouraged the group to reflect critically, and to complicate their own understandings of what happens around them [. . .] Democratising the space and emphasising that everyone had something of value to say regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or educational background, was extremely confronting for some, and cautiously liberating for others. Those in the group who were less eloquent, less educated, who struggled with language, or had little confidence in sharing opinions in front of a group, could thus tentatively experiment with new ways to express themselves and contribute. All were encouraged to participate, to steer discussion in new directions, and to (respectfully) challenge each other ( 2016: n.p).

As Amkpa would put it, the Walukuba TfD project showed the potential of being a process where people were beginning to come to terms with the reality of domination and consequently formulating strategies that limit oppressive forces, ultimately transforming themselves from the objects of social reality to subjects of social reality

(Amkpa, 2006). But one may rightly query: did the community in Walukuba attain the fullness of the decolonisation process, of empowerment? Aware that the empowerment process in TfD matures with time (see Chapter Three, section 3.1.5), my answer to such a question would be “No”. In my view, the process of a postcolonial desire would grow to its fullness with continued engagement with the community—the six month process recorded in this chapter was just the beginning of the process.

## **8.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has been significant in illustrating the importance of engaging communities in a collective process of play making, performance and analysis. It has shown that if participants are facilitated in a collective process of play making and improvisation, the participants become engrossed in analysing the issues that affect their lives. As a result, the process emerges out of the passions of the people leading to greater ownership and consequently empowerment. I observed that when the TfD process is arranged in such a way that the participants become the centre of the experience, it becomes some kind of rehearsal for a revolution. The participants perform actions which can be translated into real life situations—the TfD process in Boal’s terms becomes a rehearsal for change.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Notions of Power, Time and Sustainability in the Walukuba TfD project**

#### **9.0 Introduction**

In the previous two chapters, Seven and Eight, we have seen a practice where effort was made to execute a people centred bottom-up TfD process. However, in the foregoing chapters I did not discuss the issue of distribution of power in the TfD process between the UK based practitioners and the Ugandan community with whom they worked and the issue of time and sustainability of the TfD. As we might have already realised from the experience of IATM, the notions of power, time and sustainability in TfD practice are quite interrelated. In most cases, when there is little time to invest in the work, practitioners will want to take the lead so that they may achieve high output in a short time. Similarly, when little time is allowed for the work, the quality of engagement by the community is in most cases weak, diminishing the possibility that the benefits of the work will continue after the departure of external support. In this chapter, I analyse how these issues played out in the Walukuba TfD project, beginning with the aspect of power.

#### **9.1 Power**

One could ask: compared to the contemporary Ugandan practices in Chapter Four where the practice is limited by power excesses from facilitators and funders, was Plastow's work completely free of unfair performances of power? How did the practitioners deal with their assumed possession of cultural, political and economic power? This section sets out to analytically answer these questions. Analysing the performances of power in Plastow's work is imperative because she came from another country, the UK to implement a project in Uganda - something which produces postcolonial connotations. As such, I begin this section by making recollections of post-colonial operations of power as discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.2.1.

In Chapter Three, the forces of power likely to shape the TfD process were identified to include the closely related postcolonial processes of neo-colonialism and

globalisation and their inherent political, economic and cultural perspectives. Explicating the post colonial trends of neo-colonialism and globalisation in the literature review, it was argued that normally it is those with political, economic and cultural power that control the trends of events in today's world order. Consequently, a TfD experience involving facilitators coming from abroad as the case was with Plastow and McQuaid in the Walukuba project has a number of post-colonial power related dimensions. Since Plastow and McQuaid came from the UK a former imperial power over Uganda, it most likely brought about reminiscences of the past colonial times, which were characterised by the superiority of the colonisers and the inferiority of the colonised. With the facilitators coming from abroad, it undoubtedly brought on board issues related to travelling cultures, cultural interaction and intercultural communication which as noted in Chapter Three are laden with power operations. In Chapter Three, it was argued that in cultural encounters where cultural differences exist, the central problem is an imbalance of power. Power relationships dictate so much of what is right, correct, logical and reasonable. The limits are drawn by those who wield the economic, political and cultural power (see also Asante 2008:48). Consequently, applied to a participatory development practice such as the Walukuba TfD project, it is assumed that Plastow and McQuaid exerted their purported political, economic and cultural power on the process instead of cultivating an atmosphere of equal partnership with the community.

In my examination of Plastow's work in the Walukuba project, I was keen to analyse how issues of power and postcoloniality played out. I was particularly eager to investigate how the facilitators were aware of their position of assumed superiority as white practitioners moreover from a former colonial power. Since this was a sponsored project, funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), a reputable funding body from the Global North, I was interested in evaluating how the power of sponsorship worked out in the project. Would I still see the ideology of the funder influence the trend of the practice as previously noted with the contemporary TfD Practices in Uganda in Chapter Four of this thesis? Would it be an experience similar to the global neoliberal operations of power where economic resources from the Global North are used to influence trends of events in the developing world? In the subsequent

discussion, this section illustrates how these different dimensions of power played in the Walukuba project.

### **9.1.1 Attempts at diffusing the facilitator-participants power dynamics**

In terms of the facilitator-participants/community power dynamics, I noted that Plastow was well aware of her position of power and made every effort to diffuse the power to ensure that the facilitating team worked closely with the people as equal partners. Her awareness of the need to dissolve the power lines was demonstrated in her first meeting with the community. She arrived from England on Friday 29th May 2015 and on the 31<sup>st</sup> before 4pm, the time at which the workshop session was expected to start, she was at the Walukuba community centre, the venue for the TfD workshop sessions. Thus, as way of respecting the community, she kept time since most the participants found her at the venue. Arriving early at the workshop venue served to dissolve her power and enabled her to become like one of the community members. In Ugandan communities, it is a common practice for dignatories or powerful people to arrive after everyone else. It is also a common practice to honourably recognise their arrival. By arriving in time, Plastow seemed to be aware of this etho.

The first time I met Plastow at the community centre, I noted that she was a down to earth person, light hearted and chatted freely with every participant who arrived at the venue. I believe these are vital qualities expected of a professional TfD facilitator. When someone addressed her as professor, she was quick to politely say, "I prefer to be called Jane. Wherever I have gone, people have known me as Jane." When McQuaid introduced her to the community as her boss, Plastow said "I prefer to be considered as being equal to anyone else instead of being respected as boss." She greeted all the participants as they arrived, inviting the women who have been culturally groomed to kneel not to do so. Her view was that she was just a woman like them and that they did not need to hold her in any higher position. Thus, even before beginning her facilitation of the TfD project, Plastow was already conscious of her position of power as a professor and as a woman from England and how this could impact on the TfD process. She already had started to ensure equal distribution of power between her and the participating community.

Her simplicity was also attested to by the participants who had been informed by McQuaid during the several weeks of the project of her academic rank as a professor from the UK. In their honest revelation, they expected to see a woman wielding power and high levels of knowledge. To their surprise, they saw a simple person who was freely conversing with them. At the community centre, while we were waiting for more participants to arrive and chatting over the project, one of the participants, Deo commented:

I am surprised that you are able to come to the lowest community. In our country here, professors do not come down to work with poor communities. They remain up there. Even the way they talk is very different. They . . . (He demonstrated how professors put on their specs to address people) . . . even doctors with three degrees do not come to communities like ours.

However, I become aware that since facilitators are often from outside the community and holding some form of higher position connected to their jobs, level of education and economic potential; it is always difficult to completely dissolve the power lines between the facilitators and the participants. In my scrutiny of Plastow's experience, while she made effort to, it seemed particularly difficult to completely diffuse the power lines in the TfD process. Because of the colonial history where the white colonial masters were considered superior by their colonised black subjects, African communities till today view themselves as inferior to the whites. Even when Plastow told the women that it was alright for them not to kneel, the women continued kneeling to greet her even in subsequent workshops. The women saw it as a cultural duty to show respect to someone highly educated and besides a white woman from England. Inviting them not to kneel was like leading the women in some kind of a cultural revolt.

Furthermore, in African contexts, practitioners from Europe working in African communities are normally seen by the people as 'white saviours' who have come with ready solutions to local problems such as poverty and poor health. I observed that the participants viewed Plastow and McQuaid in this respect. This in itself seemed to me a reoccurrence of the colonial times when the North moved to the South to 'save', 'develop' and 'civilize'. There was hope amongst community members that since there were whites involved in the process there would be serious development rewards at the end of it all. I heard some young men and women express hope that if they impressed

Plastow and McQuaid, they could easily get an opportunity of scholarship to fund their postgraduate education in England.

### **9.1.2 Awareness of performance of power in project financing—thinking about money issues in the Walukuba project**

Considering that the Walukuba project was funded by AHRC, a body which could have its own well-defined programme, I contacted Plastow via email to inquire whether the funder's agendas could have influenced her practice in any way as was the case with IATM, GIZ and Rafiki Theatre Company in Chapter Four. I discovered that Plastow was at liberty to expend the money in a manner she deemed appropriate. Responding to my inquiry on the issue of funding:

Our funding is from a research council so it was under no obligation to be message led like so many projects. And I was not obliged to account for what activities we undertook so long as we could report back the community ideas and the impact of the work (see appendix 7).

In spite of the freedom they had with dispensing the funds, I observed that the facilitators were sensitive about the unhealthy power dynamics that could result from giving lots of money to community members. It seemed to me that they were aware that this act could create power rifts which could impact on the TfD process. Throughout my attendance and observation of the workshops, I noticed that young participants were given 1000 Ushs, approximately in British currency, 27 pence while the elders were given 2000 Ushs, approximately in British currency, 54 pence. This money was an estimate for refreshment, but the participants had the options of either taking a tangible bottle of refreshment or cash. I noted that most of the participants opted for cash.

Reflecting on the amounts given to the participants, I thought the money was too little given that the cost of coming to and from the community centre using the cheapest means of transport - motor cycle transport or *bodaboda* as it is locally called was at the lowest 2000 Ushs. In my view the money given to the participants could not even reimburse the cost of transport. Commenting on the quality of the community's involvement in one of the TfD sessions, one of Plastow's assistants from Makerere University who desired anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter said, "these

people have really helped Jane and Katie in their research, but they are giving them very little money. For me I advised them to give the people more money, but they have refused.”

Being a person with training in the social sciences(gender studies), it is assumed that Plastow,s assistant had been exposed to the dynamics of development funding in participatory development processes. However, considering her perspective in this scenario, it was apparent that she was not aware of the impact of development capital on the performances of power in participatory and collective learning processes such as TfD.

I did not interview Plastow about the amount of money given to participants because I thought she would find it rather a sensitive matter. But at second thought, I realised that the facilitators were keen to avoid posing as if they were buying the participants into the project.

In Uganda where people live on what Plastow describes as ‘a hand to mouth economy, ( 2014: n.p), any amount of money given to a person is taken as a valuable gift. Some participants can even save small amounts of money meant for transport to get start up capital for at least a small business. Mangeni (2007) reports a similar experience in a TfD project he facilitated with women at the Mulwadde post-test club in Kampala, Uganda. He used to facilitate them with transport money but the women would view him as a saviour and they would always thank him for helping boost their small business. This would in effect threaten to distort his much desired equal power relations. This to me points to the paradoxes of TfD theory and practice where the practitioner has to provide financial facilitation to the people and yet it is ‘their’ development work.

In the case of the Walukuba TfD project, I sensed that Jane and Katie aimed to ensure that participants came to the project out of free will and love for the community’s wellbeing. Looking at the extent of the success of the project, I affirmed that the community got committed to it for the love of changing their community, not because they sought financial rewards. So Plastow had achieved her intention. If Plastow and McQuaid had achieved participation after injecting a lot of money in the project, they would have implemented one of the anti TfD modalities of participation highlighted in



Chapter Three of this thesis that is, participation for material or financial incentives (see Preston's (2009) delineation of the forms of participation in development in 3.1).

In regulating the sum of money handouts, Plastow was emphasizing her disapproval of the adverse impact of neoliberal tendencies on TfD projects in the developing world. In the article on the Ideology of TfD in Africa, Plastow (2014) is critical of the impact of large amounts of money splashed by NGOs may have on development projects.

Plastow's approach to finances in TfD has profound implication for TfD practice in Uganda where practitioners wait for lots of funding from NGOs before they can begin practicing (see Kisense view on TfD and funding in Uganda, appendix 11). Her approach has indicated that what is needed in TfD projects is just enough money for facilitating transport and refreshments, accommodation for the facilitators and then the project happens. Many development practitioners in Africa are obsessed with big and powerful cars to drive them to the field. Plastow and McQuaid demystified all this—I observed that on their journey to the community centre—the venue for the workshops, they either walked or used the local *bodaboda* (motor cycle) transport. This made them look like one of the community members, not the highly learned and all-knowing technocrats similar to most NGO and civil service staff in Uganda. This way, the facilitators made effort to transform themselves into what Gramsci would term as 'organic intellectuals' (cited in Chinyowa, 2007: 11).

### **9.1.3 When facilitators seemed to impose their power and knowledge on the community**

In the previous two chapters (Seven and Eight), I have argued that the facilitators of the Walukuba TfD project made every effort which was needed to execute a bottom-up transformative model of TfD. On the other hand however, I need to honestly note that the process was not completely devoid of unfair performances of power which might have happened intentionally or inadvertently. I observed that there were incidents in the TfD process when the facilitators consciously or unconsciously imposed their power and knowledge in the community. One of these occurrences happened when the facilitators chose not to give the opportunity to the members of the community to suggest their own stories and then develop them into theatre. As already noted in the creative process of

the young men and the elders (see Chapter Eight, sections 8.1.1 and 8.1.2 above), it was the facilitators who proposed the stories. In kick starting the theatre making process among the young men Plastow said, "I have a story which I have made. I will share it with you. You have the freedom to take it as it is or to alter it by proposing some changes." In the workshop session with the elders group, Plastow and McQuaid proposed a story which they shared with the community. (See sections on young men's and elders' theatre making process for details of the stories).

As research observer and TfD critic I reflected on Plastow's and McQuaid's act of suggesting the stories with mixed feelings. At first, I thought the action was not disenfranchising since the participants had participated in many self-led activities over the past weeks of engagement such as participatory research and that they were yet to participate in many more similar processes. Looking at the quality of the stories the duo had suggested for the participants, I was tempted to think that the act of suggesting a good story was significant in sustaining and raising the enthusiasm of the group, making them get ready for another activity. I also exonerated them of disempowering the community by suggesting stories with the view that TfD facilitation is about providing leadership to the group while also being cognisant of the need to balance the facilitator-participants' power relations and being careful not to dominate the group, which Plastow seemed well mindful of.

On the second thought however, I realised that suggesting stories for the community had great implications related to performance of power by the facilitators and the process of community empowerment itself. I concluded that since TfD is about giving voice and transferring the means of production to the participants, the stories in the community sessions should have been created by the participants themselves.

Weighing up the scenario, I saw at play the issues of power, the time factor and facilitator-participant paradoxes of the TfD process which are sometimes very difficult to escape. I was made to think that Plastow and McQuaid chose the stories because they underestimated the ability of the participants to develop suitable stories. If this was the case then the facilitators violated the basic Freirian principle of problem posing education which is; respecting the potential of every participant in contributing to the collective learning process. One could also argue that in suggesting the stories, the

facilitators wanted to 'save time'. This supposition is most likely true because Jane who had travelled from England had only a few weeks to work with the community. If this was the case, they contravened one of the crucial aspects of TfD needed to ensure sustainability of the process—ample time.

I also became aware that since the suggestion of the story came from 'powerful experts' it indirectly silenced the community voice even though they were called upon to accept or reject the stories. This certainly adversely impacted on the quality of the empowerment process given that empowerment in TfD is also about giving opportunity to the community to exercise the often muffled voices.

From my experience with TfD practice over the years, I had witnessed the transformative effect of allowing the participants to propose and develop their own stories. For instance, in 2009, I attended a TfD workshop in Mbarara district in western Uganda. The workshop which was facilitated by final year drama students from Makerere University involved a community of persons with disability. As Plastow and McQuaid did in the Walukuba project, the students had divided the participants into peer groups and led them into a process of collective problem identification.

The key problem identified and prioritised in all three peer groups was the stigma faced by children with disability. After problem identification and prioritisation, the participants were challenged by the facilitators to make stories expounding the problem and which would be developed into plays. In the women's group, one of the participants excitedly inquired, "Is there any one of us who can help us and give an example of a play we shall make?" Immediately one of the participants proposed a story. Her story involved a man and a woman who fall in love which resulted into a pregnancy. When time comes for the woman to have her child, she gives birth to a baby with a disability. The man refuses to take responsibility for the baby because it is disabled.

The facilitator then intervened with a question, "you have heard her version of the story for the play. Is there another person who can give us another story which brings out the problem?" The group unanimously agreed to go ahead with the story already suggested by their colleague. However, another participant contributed by suggesting how the proposed story could be improved. She advised that:

We can make the story more revealing by adding something. Let the man go home and tell his mother and father that his girlfriend has given birth to a disabled baby and suggest that he is not the father of the baby. Then his father and mother should also support him arguing that since in their family or clan they do not produce disabled children, the baby was not fathered by their son. The mother of the baby will then suffer with the baby on her own.

This proposal was taken and the group went into the process of rehearsal. In my observation of the above experience, I noted that having the participants make their story was highly transformative. It gave voice and agency to the women and they felt in control of the process of exploring their own development needs. This was clearly demonstrated by the enthusiasm and passion of the participants to contribute to the process. It also exemplified the fact that local participants however rural they may be do not lack the knowledge and potential to make good stories and drive the theatre making process from the beginning to the end. All that is needed is a facilitator who can inspire them and allow them time to be creative. Indeed, as Nogueira has indicated, 'when the members of the community are given the space to interpret and re-interpret their stories, they begin to find ways they can make their stories more enlightening and in effect evolve a deeper dialogical process' (2015: 351).

The other instance quite connected to the issue of suggesting stories above, where the facilitators in the Walukuba project seemed to unconsciously impose their power concerned the planning aspects of the project. During the creative process, the facilitators were always well prepared and planned their engagement with the community beforehand. To substantiate this point, I noted with thoughtful interest that Plastow and McQuaid planned beforehand, conceivably in their hotel accommodation how they could package the prioritised problems by creating causal relationships between them. For example, they sought to articulate how poverty was the cause of tree cutting and how tree planting could help in providing a source of livelihood to alleviate poverty. They also sought to show how the issues of family planning and HIV testing and disclosure were linked to lack of voice among the women and their inability for self-determination. The resultant artistic process about these issues underscored that fact that if the women exercise their rights and begin expressing their voice by

discussing with their partners, they would be able to effectively use family planning and have manageable families.

At one level, it should be acknowledged that the facilitators did well to plan. It is a good professional practice for the facilitators to plan. Planning focuses the process and it is one way of demonstrating that the facilitators respect the community with which they are working. It was not surprising that because the facilitators planned, the sessions always moved on smoothly with balanced involvement of both the facilitators and the participants.

However, the critical point about Plastow's and McQuaid's planning is that by thinking in advance about how the various prioritised problems and opportunities would be linked together in performance, they did the work which should have been done with the participants during the community sessions. To me this scenario constituted the bottom-up-top down contradictions in TfD which practitioners need always to be cognisant of. In my view, the practical way to engage the community in planning would be to address the participants: 'we have three issues we want to bring together in a piece of drama, showing how they are related. Let us together use the available twenty minutes to discuss and evolve a story revolving about the three issues..., or something similar to that, and then the participants would go working.

By giving the participants opportunity to decide on how the issues would be linked together in performance, they would be launched into a process of further collective analysis and in effect exercise their voice and analytical power. I noticed that such a process was enabled for the young men in the process of creating the rap song (see Chapter Eight, section 8.1.1), and the participants became transformatively immersed in the process, unearthing the deep seated contradictions of the problem. Planning beforehand the interrelationship of issues by the facilitators could be explained by the feeling that there was not enough time for the participants to engage with the process, which further underscores the issue of "ample time" needed in every TfD process that claims efficacy as discussed in Chapter Three, section 3.3.

Furthermore, I sensed that there were moments during the community research process when the facilitators, particularly McQuaid drove the process for her own academic expediency and not for the good of the empowerment of the participants.

McQuaid is an anthropologist and before this project had conducted research on human rights in refugee camps in Uganda. One of the experiences where McQuaid appeared to drive the process for her convenience related to the cultural contexts of child upbringing in the Busoga region which had been presented in an elders' performance. The performance intended for community research had focused on problems relating to girl child education and the tradition of circumcision.

In the short play, Dad rises up early in the morning, and advises mom to awaken the children so that they may go to school. Girls are supposed to do house work before they go to school as part of "their good upbringing as future house wives." So, early in the morning they are seen doing household work. As a result the girls arrive late at school which jeopardises their learning. For the boy in the home, he is advised about plans to have him circumcised, a rite that he has to undergo to fulfil the cultural demands of his tribe.

Much of the discussion in the post performance reflective process was triggered by McQuaid who wanted to know about the cultural framework for the grooming of children in Walukuba, Busoga. I noted that McQuaid was driven by her academic training as a social anthropologist, seeking to understand the social framework of issues. She asked questions relating to the expected behaviour of children in the community, the social understanding of circumcision, sex and gender roles in the community, and the age at which a child is considered grown up in various cultures.

In answer to these questions, the discussion became essentially informative in McQuaid's favour and less transformative for the participants. I saw the participants inform McQuaid about the various intentions of circumcision in Ugandan communities. They said that in some cultures such as among the Bagisu circumcision was done purposely for traditional reasons and in religious circles especially in Islam, it is done for belief purposes.

Regarding the question when a child is considered grown up in various Ugandan cultures the participants made connections between the current situation and in the olden days. They argued that in the olden days, a girl was considered grown up at 13 years, when she developed breasts and after her first menstrual cycle. In such instances, the parents would immediately find a man and give her in for marriage.

Nowadays however, they added, a child is considered grown up after graduating from school. The participants further informed McQuaid that in Busoga, girls are supposed to be groomed to be better future house wives and that is why in the performance they are instructed by their mom to do house work early in the morning before they go to school.

On one hand, it was good that McQuaid dug up the above information from the participants. This is because a TfD process is supposed to raise issues and the facilitators are supposed to lead this process. However, it was necessary that the process moved from being merely an extractive process to one which could help the participants analyse deep seated issues. It would have been transformative if the participants had been facilitated to look afresh at the fairness of their cultural practices. They should for example have been facilitated to discuss the issue of the objectification and *wifisation* of the girl child and the women in general. They should have analysed the contradiction: “Why should the girl child and the woman in this era of globalisation be thought about merely in terms of a house wife?”

The impetus of wanting to know more about African culture by McQuaid as shown above may be interpreted in terms of colonialism and neo-colonialism. To me, this could be interpreted as a gesture of continued search into the cultures of a country formerly torn apart by imperial capitalism to facilitate a continued penetration of western capitalism. Amilcar Cabral (1973) has argued that:

The practice of imperialist rule demands a more or less accurate knowledge of the society it rules and the historical reality, both economic, social and cultural in the middle of which it exists. In fact man has never shown as much interest in knowing other men and their societies as during this century of imperialist domination. An unprecedented mass of information, of hypotheses and theories has been built up, notably in the fields of history, ethnology, ethnography, sociology and culture concerning the peoples or groups under imperial domination (cited in Mlama, 1991:15).

According to Mlama, this information has played a vital role by providing capitalism with a guide to facilitate cultural conditions that support the capitalist system (Mlama 1991a:16). Besides, in the reigning postcolonial era, there is a tendency by western scholars to develop academic profiles about African issues so that they may profess

expertise in African issues. This seemed to be one of the driving forces behind McQuaid's inquiries.

Besides, the experience at Walukuba demonstrated that if a project involves persons who do not have grounding in TfD practice ethos as part of the facilitating team, there may always ensue problems related to balancing the power dynamics. Such persons unconsciously impose their views on the community and in doing so make the process tend to a top-down one. They are usually quick to suggest and influence how a certain character or scenario in the play should be presented and they use their power to oppose collectively agreed positions. As a result, their intervention is in most cases deterministic and lacking in the intent to give voice to the participants.

In the Walukuba project, there was one such a person named Rose (not actual name). Rose was one of Plastow's research team members who had been involved in gathering ethnographic data on climatic change and the environment. I came to learn that she had received training in problem based development approaches at Makerere University's College of Health Sciences but had not been involved in participatory development approaches such as TfD. Consequently her outlook to situations was quite tokenistic and top-down. For example following the little girls' poem performance, Plastow advised the girls to find a title for their poem but Rose immediately suggested one for the girls. Plastow tried to cleverly diffuse Rose's imposing proposal but Rose continued to suggest how best the poem could be performed to produce a better message. This scenario made me to suggest that when a TfD project involves facilitators with diverse professional backgrounds, it is important to always hold pre-facilitation trainings and debriefings similar to the one McQuaid received (see Plastow & McQuaid, 2016: n.p). This can help the team to move together with a unified understanding of the core principles of TfD practice.

Scenarios similar to the one involving Rose are typical of TfD programmes funded by NGOs. In NGOs, one finds educated women and men from the middle class working as programme managers and supervisors. In most cases such persons are not grounded in the TfD approach. They normally interpret their key role as ensuring that the NGO's programme is adhered to as much as possible. The team leader mentioned in the discussion of the GIZ projects in Karamoja (see Chapter Four, section 4.2) is



typical of such officers. One other such example of domesticating interventions by NGO technocrats was reported by Mangeni in his experience of facilitating TfD under the auspices of the NGO Isis-WICCE in Uganda. In what he describes as the Margarita effect, he reports that during the analysis phase of the workshops, higher status participants wielded more influence:

Margarita, a representative of Isis, participated in the workshops. Margarita's acknowledged expertise in gender provided her with status above the male and female participants. Her presence as a participant appeared to affect the process. Participants closer to her in rank (as local representatives of the organisation) often 'consulted' with her, agreeing on a variety of cases. The existing status hierarchies presented as potentially domesticating. There was a tendency for participants to seek Margarita's affirmation of their opinions [. . .] The Margarita effect would at times present itself in the form of participants attempting to revise their views to accommodate Margarita's latest observations even when they contrasted sharply. These situations at times affected the discussion and tended to silence or incorporate other voices. This domestication, although not intended, could be attributed to Margarita's *power-over* as an educated working class woman, and a program officer with an NGO that was responsible for facilitating them (Mangeni, 2007: 65-6).

Generally however, while it seemed quite difficult to balance the realities of power between the facilitators and the community, Plastow and McQuaid made the necessary effort to diffuse their power. They laboured to ensure a collective learning process in which they moved systematically with the community. The facilitators were encouragingly sensitive in their facilitation. Throughout the process, I noticed that the facilitators moved along with the community always linking current activities with the previous activities and connecting the present activities with future plans of the TfD project. This helped to sustain the interest of the participants and ensure that the community moved together in the process of community change and empowerment.

In Chapter Three (see section 3.5.2), we noted that the colonial didactic theatre practices were mostly characterised by the Mr Wise and Mr Foolish formula. This formula vested the colonial extension workers with unlimited wisdom to change the African masses who were deemed ignorant about issues of social economic development. As a matter of fact, even when the facilitators involved in the Walukuba project were from Europe, I did not see the recurrence of this colonial paradigm in their work. Apart from the tendency to suggest stories for the participants which most likely

was prompted by the time factor, I did not see any extreme moments where the facilitators posed as all-knowing technocrats of environmental and community change. Rather the facilitators always sought to learn together with the community, conferring with the community on best choices to make.

#### **9.1.4 Power Dynamics related to Travelling Cultures and Intercultural Communication**

As already noted in the introduction to this chapter, the fact that Plastow and McQuaid - the facilitators of the Walukuba TfD project came from another country, a former colonial power in Uganda and Africa, means the process became embroiled in power operations resulting from cultural differences. I discerned that there were moments when the facilitators were either consciously or unconsciously inclined to promoting a certain cultural view without fostering an effective dialogue and understanding in the community. For example the facilitators adopted an activist approach to women rights and empowerment in a community which is still mainly patriarchal. In addition, instead of leaving the participants to take the lead in creating artistic pieces involving cultural issues, Plastow, the principal facilitator, created the scenarios and directed the community in devising them. This, in some way, led to a process where participants were not co-intending or agreeing on issues instead of a community that is supposed to come together and work out how to make their lives better. The intercultural TfD experience as Martin and Nakayama (2008:77) would say became a destabilising factor in the community.

The TfD experience became a process where the facilitators seemed to impose their cultural behaviours on other peoples' cultures through "behavioural and structural forms of power". While the idea of women's emancipation which the facilitators were pressing for is needed in the reigning trends of globalisation, I argue that the mode of work should have been one which privileges discussion and dialogue to foster understanding on the issue.

In one of the post performance discussions, I perceived that the message from the young women's image theatre performance seemed very difficult to take in by some conservative male elders. One man called Sam, the chairman of one of the villages in Walukuba said, "I feel that the message has not been brought out properly. It is

misleading the community. Their work was sweepingly condemning culture, old men and bringing out a wrong view of rights.” Seemingly disappointed by the chairman’s analysis and afraid that such an analysis would skew the message, McQuaid, one of the facilitators addressed him saying, “Sam, we just wanted to keep the presentation short and address only the issues the women have articulated in their personal stories. Some of the views you find pertinent will be dealt with in other performances.”

I felt that Sam should have been encouraged to substantiate his points. Instead, he was simply brushed off and his voice muffled, yet effective TfD practice is about giving voice to the participants so that they may explore their heartfelt needs. Allowing him to express his voice would have been countered by other voices and as a result lead to the unveiling of deep-seated cultural contradictions in the community. For example as a result of brushing off Sam’s grievance, there were other unheard voices among the participants. I heard some young women whispering among themselves, “Chairman is disturbed that the white women (Plastow and McQuaid) are destroying culture, but that is what we want. We want to dress the way we like.” This means the process had created issues relating to the post-colonial theory whereby the ‘white women’ from the global North were seen by some people from the global South like the Chairman as agents of cultural imperialism, and Ugandan culture destruction thereby creating some suspicion in the entire TfD process. I argue that as a way of implementing the cultural dimension of development which promotes respect for the people’s cultural heritage, the facilitators should have worked with the community to cause collective understanding of touchy cultural issues through dialogue.

The dialogue inferred here is one which should have focused on promoting a clear understanding of the differences between the cultural perceptions of gender in the Western developed world on one hand and Africa/Uganda on the other. The facilitators needed to engage the whole community in analysing issues related to the plight of the women in Walukuba in light of the reigning era of globalisation. A dialogical process should have facilitated the community to discuss how the potential of women in Walukuba could be enhanced by focusing on issues such as ownership of property, ownership of land, participation in income generating activities and unfair cultural and religious practices affecting women. I noted that the process leading to the making of

the image theatre piece which articulated the oppressions of women had only focused on women. Moreover, the process had largely been extractive whereby Plastow and McQuaid sought to gather the problems affecting the women. Given the cultural sensitivity of the issues gathered from the women, the men needed to be involved at some point in a discussion with the women. The facilitators would also have done well by globalising the subject so the community could learn about the perceptions of women in other parts of the world such as Britain. In short, dialogue would have fostered a problem posing process of learning.

The other moment where Plastow and McQuaid seemed imposing in terms of their cultural views involved a performance on love and money. The scene on money and love featured a presentation different from the known norms in the community. While it is the men who normally use their economic power to oppress women, this scenario featured a woman/wife in a family who has all the money she needs. She uses her economic power to influence the trend of events in the home. Whereas it is women and girls who normally do household work in the community, here it was the husband and his son who were presented cooking food, cleaning the house and washing clothes. The wife was seen influencing her son to get involved in a relationship with a sugar mummy (old rich woman) in the town. She was presented coming home staggeringly drunk.

The post performance discussion following this scene demonstrated that the community members were afraid that the performance was imposing foreign cultural views on them. Plastow who facilitated the discussion engaged the community with these words, “as you have seen here, the men have to do everything the women normally do. What do you think about it?” The responses were largely in defence of the cultural heritage of the community. The various responses included:

In our Busoga culture, girls are supposed to do housework, not the boys;  
Boys have specific work they do—fetching water and cleaning the compound,  
and;

Girls should wash boys' clothes because boys do a lot of heavier work.

There was a woman who made her submission in Kiswahili, one of the languages spoken across the East African Community region. The actual English translation of her contribution was, “Mothers should not drink because they have to take care of the

children.” Interestingly Sam, the LC chairman who translated the submission from Kiswahili to English, changed the gist of the message. He said, “The lady has advised that if a man is a drunkard, the woman should not mistreat him. She should instead look after the children and find ways of looking for school fees”. Sam and other men in the community viewed the women’s quest for freedom as anti-culture and was apt to defend the existing patriarchal power structures by mistranslating the woman’s contribution.

Thinking about these moments where the process seemed to cause indignation within the community, with some people feeling quite insecure about issues of women rights and gender equity, I contemplated that the facilitators should have facilitated a deeper dialogue involving the women and men on the issues. This would have engendered a collective learning process.

### **9.1.5 Mobilising and involving the Power Base of the Community**

Negotiation of power related dynamics in TfD often requires practitioners to meditate on the question of who lets things happen in a TfD expedition. Research has revealed that for TfD to resolve the contradictions that underpin people’s lives in a target community, it should involve the whole community including the very people in the community who often influence decisions or who sometimes are the cause of the contradictions being explored (the power base). Tim Prentki demonstrates the necessity of involving the community’s power base using his practical experience in Bangladesh. In a TfD project involving the needs of children, Prentki noted with great concern that:

The absence of the men, in particular, repeated a typical limitation in development work whereby those with the economic, social and political power in the community are not included in the process which addresses itself to the habitual ‘soft’ targets of development: old people, women and children [. . .] if TFD is to be taken seriously as a means of social transformation, it has to find ways of engaging all sections of the community and include the power-brokers who may be best placed to enable change (2003: 50-51).

In Uganda, it is widely acknowledged that the power to make things happen lies in the hands of the politicians. Commenting on the link between TfD and the politics of the day, Kisense—one of the leading teachers of theatre in Uganda said:

There are two forces at play—the communities and the politics. But at the end of it all, who makes things be? There is the issue of politics and the politicians.

The politics of the day and the politicians that exist at a certain time, their thinking and political inclination may make TfD redundant. Now in Uganda we end at a level where communities may collectively understand and discover the contradictions underlying their well-being. For example bringing a school near could be identified as a key factor. The one who brings the school is the one who makes things be. At the end of it all, the development we are talking about cannot be practically separated from politics. So the politicians and the politics are the ones who make things be. If they listened to the people, then the TfD and other processes would be helping them identify specific problems in specific areas and the politicians either through acts of parliament, decide on what to do (Kisense, 2011, see also appendix 11).

Seemingly aware of the role of the reigning politics in fostering the success of the TfD process as indicated by Prentki and Kisense, the facilitators of the Walukuba TfD project mobilised and engaged the civil and political leadership. Whereas the civil and political leaders were absent during the participatory research and performance devising process they were later mobilised and engaged in a knowledge exchange workshop dubbed “We are Walukuba” on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015. I personally did not attend the workshop since my engagement with the project as research observer had ended with the community wide performance in mid June 2015 as described in Chapter Eight. I was content that what I had observed until then would give me a clear picture of the nature of practice in the project. However, I kept a keen interest in the developments of the work, thereafter through email correspondences, study of scholarly proceedings about the project and personal interviews.

According to Jane, the workshop attracted some 80 stakeholders from local government, NGOs, CBOs, Jinja Municipal Council, Makerere University, the media, the police, religious and educational institutions (see McQuaid& Plastow, 2016: n.p).

This knowledge exchange workshop built on the eight months of community research, theatre devising and performance. The issues which were explored during this event emerged from the stories which the community had told. In this workshop however, the facilitators chose to empower the people of Walukuba to speak to those in power on three key issues: gender inequality, insecurity of land, and intergenerational environmental knowledge-sharing (McQuaid& Plastow, 2016). Two performances were staged by the people of Walukuba that is, *Precious Women* and *This Land is Ours but Not Ours*.

The play *Precious Women* was put together by Plastow using the experiences and stories of the women of Walukuba gathered over a six months period of participatory research. It highlighted critical issues facing women in Uganda at the time of fieldwork, including forced early marriages, defilement, lack of access to family planning, domestic violence, abandonment, lack of employment opportunities and sexual harassment. Commenting on the process of creating the play, Plastow observes that:

All the experiences and nearly all the words have been lifted verbatim from transcriptions of interviews and focus groups. These are not my words, they are the words of the women of Walukuba. [. . .] In the discussion event that followed no one could challenge the veracity of the play or claim it was in any way exaggerated or unrepresentative because it drew on the experiences of over a hundred women and was endorsed by the actresses who were of that very space and place (McQuaid & Plastow, 2016: n.p).

*This Land is Ours, but Not Ours* was developed out of conversations with the community, community support organisations and stakeholders involved in the struggle to attain land titles in Walukuba/Masese division. During the eight months long ethnographic process the facilitators had with the people, land had been repeatedly cited by the people of Jinja as one of the biggest concerns they had when thinking about the future. Ownership and control over land and other forms of property had been cited as particularly difficult in Walukuba, with the urban poor, and women and girl children frequently marginalised and disenfranchised in a process steeped in bureaucracy and corruption.

The participants debated the issues raised by the performances in mixed interest groups of about 10 sited around a table, alongside representatives from Walukuba, in order to discuss the work and suggest ideas for future change. In Plastow's words, 'Discussion was vociferous and impassioned' (McQuaid & Plastow, 2016; Plastow & McQuaid, 2016). The photographs below illustrate the event.



Left: The cast composed of participants from the Walukuba community just after performance. Right: members of the civil and political leadership of Jinja and professionals from the academia discussing the issues raised by the performances. *Adopted from the We are Walukuba website [www.wearewalukuba.com](http://www.wearewalukuba.com).*

The ensuing discussions indicated that the power base of the community had been drawn to the plight of the people. Plastow cited a number of experiences which substantiate this claim:

The Principal Environment Officer was so touched by the performance. He invited the group to subsequently perform for senior members of Jinja Municipal Council. In early October the cast of women performed for the Mayor, Deputy-Mayor, Town Clerk, Deputy-Town Clerk and Principal Environment Officer. Inspired by this performance, the Town Clerk immediately insisted on them returning to perform both this and the land corruption play, *This Land is Ours, but Not Ours*, for further members of Jinja Municipal Council's Management Committee. Here 35 senior policy-makers were invited to reflect on, and confront, the issues raised, and answer questions posed by the theatre participants. A vociferous discussion ensued, during which politicians and technocrats butted heads, and leaders pledged to serve their communities better. The land play evoked a particularly explosive response, with the Town Clerk insisting on further performances during which all stakeholders, from the Ministry of Lands to the associating banks, were to come together to solve the issues raised by the community. Repeatedly in these two latter performances, stakeholders explicitly commented on the power of performance, on how "the true suffering and pain" embodied in performance made the work hard to ignore (see McQuaid & Plastow, 2016: n.p).



Consequently, the TfD process in Walukuba which had begun with the facilitators making effort to ensure equal distribution of power between them and the participants had almost smashed the power disparity between the ordinary members of the community and those who wield power. In the process of doing impact assessment of the 'We are Walukuba TfD project in March 2016, I discovered that the participants were excited and profoundly fulfilled for having performed before political and civil leaders at Hotel Bax and having engaged in post performance discussion with them:

Isabirye Derek: What I liked about performing for our political leaders is that we reached a hand to those people and our voice was really heard. Now they know that they are leading people who know what they are supposed to do. They used to lead us with this feeling that we do not know what we need and what we should expect from them. I am sure after these concluded elections, the new leaders will be fully aware that there is a community which is critical of their nature of work and service.

Steven: It was very good. Some people used to grab land from poor people, but this trend is now reducing.

Deo: The civil and political leaders learnt that even if they hinder the people from knowing the truth, there will always be another way through which the people can come and express their grievances. They came to learn that there is no way they can silence or shut up the people. Walukuba became a focal point- it became known as a watchdog which can always scrutinise the oppressive acts of those in power.

Abdallah: Before we performed at hotel Bax, we had not had a chance of addressing our problems to the people in power—the political leaders. We were able to articulate the most pressing issues in our community such as corruption in land offices. I was very pleased with that. The leaders got the real core of the problems we are facing as a community. They promised to take action and save the situation. One police officer was so surprised to learn the oppressive realities that women go through. She immediately advised women confronted with abusive situations to contact police—they would be supported in any way possible. She promised to come down to the communities and help address any problems the people face. The land committee was also touched by our work. They helped explain to us the process of acquiring land titles.

Siraji Koloto: Performing our plays before the civil and political leaders was like a direct address. I have been meeting some these political leaders who say to me. . . oh you made us look bad. . . this means that they were touched by our performances. They promised to take some positive action to remedy the

issues we presented. They are fast tracking the process of issuing land titles, in response to our play on corruption in the land office (see appendix 10).

A vital point to make is that much similar to the desired bottom-up process of development, it was the community which after a sustained period of self discovery was unveiling its needs to the leaders of the community. This to me was much different from the common trajectory where development programmes begin from the top government offices such as the district local government and sometimes the central government. The people who had by now attained some degree of consciousness about their needs through a sustained period of community research were now speaking to the centres of power.

As cited from Prentki (2007: 198) in Chapter Three, section 3.5.3, an effective TfD process should globalise contradiction, which means it should empower participants to understand how events happening in the local environment relate to those happening far way. The facilitators seemed to be aware of this demand of globalisation. They structured the knowledge exchange workshop in such a way that the issues explored were placed in the context of most current international/global events—the promulgation of the new sustainable development agendas which were replacing the millennium development goals. Addressing the participants on the global contexts of the workshop, Plastow informed the participants that:

On 2 August 2015, world leaders agreed on a new Sustainable Development Agenda to be adopted at a UN summit in September 2015. The 193 Member States of the UN reached agreement on the outcome document that constitute the new sustainable development agenda and seek to end poverty by 2030. They agreed to promote shared economic prosperity, social development and environmental protection, three key goals we can also pursue in Jinja through multi-stakeholder partnerships with people and environment as core concerns, through embedded and participatory research, and the empowerment of communities to transform themselves (Plastow & McQuaid, 2015: n.p).

There was effort to focus the discussion on three sustainable development goals—goal 5 which is achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls and two related goals 13 and 15 which centred on taking action to combat climate change and its impacts.

## **9.2 The Benefits of Sustained Engagement with the Community: the concepts of Time and Sustainability**

Chapter Three, section 3.4 of this thesis made references to the notion of “time” and “sustainability”. It was noted that the two concepts are different but closely linked—the amount of time invested in a project determines the vibrancy of the project and its eventual sustainability. It was noted that enough time will normally be needed to make useful links with the community, allow the participants to develop skills they need to become effective communicators and to help stakeholders plan how the work might best be used in the service of broader aims of sustainable change within the community (Prentki, 1998: 421, 2003: 46; see also Aitken, 2009: 504-5). Furthermore, it was indicated that sustainable change is not possible with hastily implemented TfD projects in communities where people have suffered from long term and highly entrenched oppression (Prentki, 1998).

The amount of time put in TfD projects also affects the level of ownership of the work by the community and the possibility that the gains of the work will continue after the departure of the project animateurs. It has to do with the growth of independence of the community, their ability to harness the transformation gained from the process to continually confront the oppressive realities in their community. Having discovered that the Walukuba project had gone many strides in fostering the empowerment participation of the community, I was eager to find out the safeguards the community had put in place to ensure that their efforts do not wither with the departure of Plastow and McQuaid.

Unlike most of the TfD projects in Uganda which are implemented in a matter of days, the Walukuba project was implemented for a fairly long period of time. The facilitators initially engaged the community in a six months period of participatory research using participatory techniques such as image theatre, body mapping, drawing, letter writing and performance. This culminated into a community wide performance “We Are Walukuba” in mid June 2015 and was followed by another “We are Walukuba” performance at a workshop in August the same year involving the civil and political leadership of the community.

The benefits of such a sustained investment of time in the project were enormous. Writing about the experience of her work with the Walukuba community, McQuaid attests that the successes attained in the Walukuba TfD project was largely enabled by a sustained engagement with the community. She says, ‘two key factors were paramount; the long-term nature and the ethnographic terms of the engagement, ensuring that we fostered high levels of mutual trust within meaningful relationships that pushed beyond the classical researcher/facilitator–participant connection’ (McQuaid& Plastow, 2016: n.p).

It was only through long-term work with the community that Plastow and McQuaid were able to facilitate a process which challenged entrenched hierarchies and the traditional power of the patriarchal voice which were characteristic of Walukuba. Echoing Prentki’s earlier point of the need for sustained engagement in communities which have long cultural and social oppressions, McQuaid confesses that:

**(Working with the Walukuba community)** was not a simple, romantic argument about giving the people a voice. Rather it was about uncovering and recognising historical layers of (particularly gendered) silencing and subjugation, and using theatre as a tool to work alongside people in their struggles to be able to identify, name, and confront present-day forms of oppression (McQuaid& Plastow, 2016: n.p) (words in bold brackets are mine).

In fact as I observed and as Jane puts it, ‘in the early weeks both Baron and McQuaid had found it really difficult to get the younger women’s group to voice any opinions, especially about matters outside their immediate day-to-day lives’(McQuaid& Plastow, 2016). But with continued involvement with the women, ‘those same young women wrote and performed poetry, and made physical theatre critiquing their oppressions and voicing their aspirations, and then went on to claim a full place in discussions. . .’ (McQuaid& Plastow, 2016: n.p).

Furthermore, because of sustained engagement the facilitators were able to win the support and confidence of the community. This was especially evidenced after the first community performance. It was as though by participating in a process of participatory research, making performance pieces such as plays, poems and image theatre and performing them to the wider community, the participants had come to own the project.

In the build up to the August performance, the participants willingly gave their all to the work. Writing about the August process with the community, Plastow testifies that:

When I returned in August 2015 I could not help noticing the increased commitment of people to come—with no material inducements whatsoever—to weekly meetings, and increasingly, to daily rehearsals, in a prompt and well prepared manner. I also noticed a marked change of tone in which people were far more open about their hopes for real action and their expectation that we could work with them to achieve some of their aims. It was in this atmosphere that we elected as a group to move from community engagement to a more activist stance of ‘speaking to power’ (McQuaid & Plastow, 2016: n.p).

Long-term commitment with the community ensured that all the people—including the power base of the community were well mobilised to support the project. Commenting about the attendance of the civil servants and the politicians at the August event, Plastow points out that:

[. . .] I strongly doubt if all those powerful people in Jinja would have come to the dissemination event if they had not been aware of our long-term engagement. Katie had interviewed many of the people involved, so they already knew something of our undertaking, and awareness of the work was widespread both because of the first show and because our members were talking about it to all their relevant contacts (McQuaid & Plastow, 2016: n.p).

As a result of deepened engagement with community, the TfD project is now yielding fruits of sustainability as the community has now taken over the control of the work. When I made a visit to Jinja to speak to the members of the community about how the TfD project has changed their lives, I was amazed at the growing level of self-help in the community. In November 2015, 37 members of the community came together and formally constituted themselves into an organisation named ‘We are Walukuba’. To date, the organisation has grown to 60 members of all ages and sexes (see [www.wearewalukuba.com](http://www.wearewalukuba.com)).

I had access to the organization’s website and noted that ‘We are Walukuba’ is committed to a culture of working together across both gender and age to promote local action towards sustainable development and environmental conservation in their local community and beyond. The organization’s vision is to fight inequality and achieve sustainable development from the ground-up as they demonstrate the importance of inclusive and equal partnership of both genders and all age-groups working together

(see We are Walukuba, 2015: n.p). 'We are Walukuba' eschews the traditional norms of hierarchy and male dominance leadership and embraces democratic principles of group leadership. For instance, I was delighted to know that every month the organising committee is voted for, and each month four people are elected to lead; an older and younger woman and an older and younger man. No one can retain their position for multiple consecutive months (see McQuaid & Plastow, 2016; Plastow & McQuaid, 2016).

As evidence of the growing spirit of self-help, the members of the community registered 'We are Walukuba' at both Divisional and District levels as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) aiming to use creative arts to promote sustainable development and environmental conservation in their local community and beyond. 'We are Walukuba' are adept to using the locally available talents and expertise. For example, the organisation's website was built by one of the members while another member sourced a local lawyer to freely help craft the constitution. The members meet at least twice each week, on Monday to share ideas, identify key social and environmental concerns and develop local interventions and on another day in the week as scheduled by members to rehearse plays. Since their formal constitution as a group 'We are Walukuba' have made and performed plays on contentious themes such as HIV/AIDS testing, disclosure and discrimination, and domestic violence. Before making the play on domestic violence, they made their own research and then used the data obtained to inform the play.

In the impact assessment interviews with the members of the organisation (see appendix 10 for transcripts), all of them were excited about having engaged in community service activities such as cleaning up public spaces. They are also engaged in making fuel briquettes out of waste materials to both generate income and instruct people on the danger charcoal demand poses to the already rampant deforestation.

The importance of long-term work in the Walukuba TFD project was also underscored by one participant, Siraji, who had been previously disappointed with short term projects in their community. In an interview he argued that:

When I was making my decision to participate in the 'We are Walukuba' project, I expected to participate in a project which would make a long term engagement with the community, not something which would be short lived. I expected something which would go on for years. I am involved in community

arts project where we use break dance to sensitise communities in various issues. My experience shows that long term projects produce more lasting results. Short term projects lack follow up. An organisation comes and engages with the community for only three months and vanishes, where is the follow up in such circumstances? Arts projects with communities take long. The process will usually begin by educating the people in arts skills before they can be left to work alone. When they begin working alone, follow up will be crucial to know how they are getting on with the work. I was in a project. What facilitators did was to train people in dance for only one and a half months. I do not know whether it was an NGO, but I am sure they got funding to do the work. When they left, everything they had started ended. People need follow up. 'We are Walukuba is quite an exceptional project. The leaders—Jane and Katie came and worked with us for a full year. When they went back home, they continued and are carrying on with supporting the community (appendix 10).

The above views by Siraji imply that investing sufficient amount of time in a TfD process was rewarding to both the facilitators and the participants. Both the facilitators and the participants came to realise that by engaging in a sustained process, they gave adequate attention to the problems impinging on people's lives. The facilitators came to realise that an ample amount of time helped them to break through historically established oppressions as the participants slowly began to express themselves freely while the participants got more time grow in the ownership of the process of their own development.

#### **9.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has been significant in demonstrating the fact that in order to implement a successful TfD process, the facilitators have to be aware of the power related dynamics always at play. The discussion has indicated that the facilitators were aware of how their unique position as practitioners from Europe would produce power disparity in the process. They made it a point to as much as possible lower themselves to the level of people. They were also aware that as people from Europe, the community expected them to give out a lot of money. The facilitators however, avoided this by giving out just a little amount of money. I noted that they did this not to appear as if they were buying the community into the project. The chapter has also demonstrated the

benefits of engaging the power base of the community and of investing a sustained period of time in the process.



## Chapter Ten

### Conclusions and Future Possibilities

#### 10.0 Conclusions

This thesis set out to make a critical examination of contemporary TfD practice in Uganda. This exploration was led by the following general research question: is TfD in Uganda entirely shaped by the politics of international development funding? Moreover, what kind of TfD is being practiced in Uganda: is it the neo-colonial agitprop type or a conscientisation approach? And in order to answer this question, the study framed several related questions about TfD practice in Uganda: 1. To what extent is TfD practice in Uganda based on the core principles of practice? 2. Whose voices are privileged in TfD practice in Uganda? 3. Who determines the issues addressed by TfD projects? 4. What are the forces informing contemporary Ugandan TfD practice? 5. To what extent are contemporary practitioners mindful of balancing power-related dynamics between themselves and the communities and between themselves and the funders? 6. What does it involve in practice to implement a bottom up TfD process?

The theoretical foundation of these questions was the understanding that appropriate thinking in TfD practice is one where the TfD practitioner and the participants engage in a participatory process of collective learning in order to analyse and find remedies to the oppressive forces in the community. Effective practice in TfD is grounded in Freire's theories of dialogue, problem posing education and conscientisation. Consequently, this study started by expounding on the conceptual framework of TfD with the aim of understanding what effective TfD practice is. In expounding the concept, the study analysed the historical development of TfD, beginning with its roots in colonial agitprop theatre practice. Three levels of practice were identified namely, agitprop theatre, participatory theatre and the theatre for conscientisation (see Chapter Two). It was noted that theatre for conscientisation is the strand that describes the effective form of practice since it emphasises the transformational liberation of the human person. The core principles of theatre for conscientisation were reviewed in Chapter Two to include participation, ownership, collective creation, sustainability and time.

Furthermore, the research questions required the study to explore more broadly the socio-economic, political and ideological milieu of TfD by exploring how TfD, as a cultural practice of development, is shaped by forces such as (neo-)colonialism, and global capitalism. This was also achieved in Chapter Three, section 3.5. It was the clarity of the concept of TfD and the forces that shape its practice that guided the critical examination of TfD practices in Uganda.

In terms of the key findings, this thesis discovered that much of the contemporary TfD practice in Uganda (see Chapter Four) has tended to adopt a centre to periphery paradigm, which is also a continuation of the long standing tradition of the capitalistic and domesticating colonial approaches of theatre in development communication. As a result, much of the contemporary practice tended to use theatre as a tool of disseminating information concerning exogenously or externally determined development strategies.

The study discovered that the nature of participation in, for instance, IATM's work was mostly domesticating; projecting participation as a tyranny or a deceptive myth. These terms, which have been used in critiques of participation in development, imply that theatre activities have mostly perpetuated the very oppressive structures that they aim to transform. Practitioners were by the time of the study talking of their intentions to give voice and foster participation but were at the forefront of denying this voice; sometimes explicitly arguing that the communities have no potential to clearly understand their issues. A further example of the tyranny of participation was examined in relation to the work of Rafiki Theatre Company in Bukwo district in eastern Uganda (see Chapter Four). While it is true that Rafiki intended to open up discussions on the oppressive reality of women, their performance, *You Are Just a Woman*, served to underscore the domestication of women maintaining the status quo of a powerful, male-dominated society. I have argued that this was caused by the failure to structure participation as a transformative process which should have involved all the members of the community in all the stages of the practice. Rafiki exogenously designed a play they performed to the community and then engaged them in brief post-performance discussion.

This thesis concluded that one of the political factors adversely impacting TfD practice in Uganda is the influence of international capital (see discussion in Chapter Four). As already indicated, much of the contemporary TfD practice in Uganda is donor funded. More often than not development funders have their own development strategies and objectives by which all their partners are required to abide. The study discovered that donors have their own model of development practice and are vigilant to ensure that their model, with fixed modalities of measuring the impact of intervention is preserved. Some donor organisations have explicitly imposed agendas since they hold the view that, because of their long experience in development practice, their model is infallible. This kind of sentiment was exhibited by both MS Uganda/Actionaid Denmark; IATM's funder and GIZ which funds TfD in the North Eastern Ugandan region of Karamoja. Such an outlook in most cases implied that it is the TfD practitioner who has to adjust their work to the agendas of the funders. In the case of IATM, it was discovered that the practitioners had to struggle to be relevant to MS Uganda/Actionaid Denmark's country development strategy so as to guarantee continued funding. MS Uganda viewed the success of their development interventions in terms of statistical output. They were more interested in how many people were reached and influenced by the intervention not the quality of the process through which the output was achieved.

This contradicts the aims of TfD to foster the transformation of communities, previously objects of development, into subjects of their own autonomous, self-determined development. The idea of wanting to be faithful to the development strategies of Actionaid Denmark saw IATM implementing a programme that proved the impact of their work through statistical and numerical indicators. So in reporting their work, IATM used the formula that, "we went to community X with an aim of reaching number of men X and women X and our programme achieved X." The end result of such a vision of work was a formula which advocated having a calculated number of pre-packaged performances, an idea which contradicted the aims of TfD: to engage communities in a participatory process of reflecting and analysing issues that affect their lives. In general, because of the inclination to adopt the top-down modernising approach to theatre, and the need to be faithful to funder's ideology, the TfD processes by local Ugandan practitioners tended to alienate the voices of the participating communities.

On a promising note however, this study discovered that the vision of implementing a people-centred, participatory TfD process was not entirely impossible. The experience of the UK based international practitioners, Jane Plastow and Katie McQuaid, discussed in Chapters Seven to Nine, proves my assertion. Plastow and McQuaid came to Uganda and implemented a TfD project in Walukuba making an effort to adhere to the basic principles of TfD practice. They started by doing their own research and interviewing key personalities in Jinja, Eastern Uganda, in order to ascertain the communities where they could make their intervention. In the process, they selected Walukuba sub-county in Masese division, Jinja Municipality. Departing considerably from the idea of using theatre to disseminate messages, Plastow and McQuaid did not proceed to use their own research findings to make plays which they could perform back to the people. Instead they engaged the community in Walukuba in a protracted process of participatory research using performance and other techniques, such as body mapping, image theatre, drawing, storytelling and letter writing, to unearth the limit situations of the people (see Chapter Five). The project fostered a process of collective analysis and interpretation of issues. At the core of their work with communities was the grand principle of TfD practice: participatory democracy. Embracing this principle, they aimed to ensure that all persons in the community, regardless of their stations in life, age, sex/gender, and level of education, had the opportunity to raise their voice and speak against the oppressive situations affecting their lives. Democracy was best demonstrated through the process of voting for the most pressing problems in the community and the available opportunities to transform their situation in Chapter Seven.

When it came to theatre making and performance, the community was brought to the centre of the process. The different peer groups of the community participated in rehearsing and performance producing a spectrum of performance forms such as plays, image theatre pieces, poems, and songs addressing the problems and opportunities of the community. I have argued in Chapter Six using the voices of the participants and my own observations that such a collective and participatory process was remarkably empowering.

Considering the extent of the success achieved by Plastow and McQuaid, practitioners from abroad, I concluded that local practitioners in Uganda can also

achieve such heights of practice. But they need specific qualities expected of an effective TfD practice such as commitment, willingness to sacrifice one's high position to come to the same level with the community, integrity and being equipped with the necessary skills. These are the things which Plastow and McQuaid possessed but are still lacking among Ugandan practitioners as indicated in Chapter Three.

Thinking further about what it takes to achieve success in TfD practice, this study discovered the following.

- a) There should be sufficient physical, financial and communal resources. Physical resources may take the form of workshop and performance venues and they are normally obtained through proper mapping of the target community and making contacts with the local leadership. Plastow and McQuaid obtained the community centre, the venue of workshops, and the community playground, the venue for the communitywide performances, by making requests to the Walukuba Sub County, Masese Division and Jinja Municipal Councils. The issue of finances is two-pronged. First, there should enough money to mobilise, build and sustain the core group of participants. The practice of providing refreshments and transport re-imburements in the Walukuba project proved quite useful in maintaining the community throughout the project. Using my own experience (discussed in Chapters Five and Six), I have demonstrated that lack of funds led to the failure of my mobilisation and group building strategies compelling me to opt for working with a pre-existing group for my TfD project. Second, finances in a TfD project have to be properly managed and regulated. Practitioners may need to consider not giving a lot of money to the participants because this may turn out to be a performance of power on their part.
- b) Practitioners should consider investing a considerably long period of time in the TfD project. If a sufficient amount of time is put into the process, it gives enough time to the practitioners to develop relationships with various interest groups within the community. Slowly, the participants will begin to consider the facilitator whom they earlier held in a very high position as a partner in the struggle and as a colleague. When I started observing the Walukuba project, I sensed this kind of collegial relationship between McQuaid and the community. McQuaid had

worked in the community facilitating participatory research workshops for five months and I noted that her relationship with the community had transformed into one of friendship. Giving time to the process facilitates more equal power relationships between the facilitators and the community. Furthermore, long-term TfD projects ensure that the process deals with the deeply entrenched cultural and oppressive realities in the community. In Chapter Nine Plastow and McQuaid attested that it was because of a sustained engagement with the community in Walukuba that they were able to break through the historical, patriarchal and cultural oppressions to which women were subjected (see also McQuaid & Plastow, 2016).

- c) If the TfD process in Uganda is to foster empowerment, practitioners have to structure it in such a way that it is participatory. Participants must take centre stage in all processes such as participatory research, choosing the most pressing problems, the collective creative process of making plays, songs, frozen pictures and poems. Such a process proved transformative in the Walukuba project considering the evidence presented in Chapter Six of this thesis.
- d) Involving the power base of the community is a very important aspect of TfD practice. The people in positions of power, such as politicians and civil servants, are at the centre of planning, decision-making and implementation of welfare processes. Engaging them ensures that agreed solutions to problems or strategies for change may be implemented. The engagement of the civil and political leadership of Walukuba (discussed in Chapter Nine) fostered a deep discussion on how the problems presented in the performance would be solved. Those in power were made to reflect more on their responsibility for taking action to ensure community welfare. In my own experience in the child rights TfD project, I realised that having the children participate in making theatre about the violation of their rights would not effectively transform their situation. Rather, there was need to engage the relevant stakeholders whose responsibility it is to promote the welfare of children.

This study has, perhaps for the first time, evolved a coherent discussion about the issues relating to what constitutes effective TfD practice in Uganda. Before this study, any performance by a group with a specific message targeting a particular group of people was celebrated as TfD practice. Practitioners were mainly interested in finding ‘magical’ solutions and were satisfied with the immediate positive changes that their intervention seemed to make. Little attention was being paid to the quality of the process, issues of distribution of power and the sustainability of the practice in the communities. In contrast, this study has explored and attempted to evolve TfD practice as a conscious process of engagement privileging the voices of the participants and their participation, and allowing equal distribution of power among the stakeholders involved in the process. This knowledge is not only expected to enhance contemporary TfD practice in Uganda, but it is also hoped to shape global practice. In the process of writing this thesis, I have come across tales of contemporary practice in other parts of the world such as Nigeria and India (see for example Martin 2010; Nwadiwe, 2012; Umenyilora, 2014) that continue to espouse the colonial, capitalistic paradigm of TfD emphasising dissemination of development messages. Practitioners in Uganda and elsewhere in the post-colonial developing world will significantly benefit from this study by learning how they can structure TfD processes to privilege the voices of people in the margins, balance the power dynamics, promote the democracy of the TfD process and structure participation. The stakeholders involved in TfD will benefit from the comparative experiences discussed in this thesis. In particular, Plastow’s work critically demonstrates the implementation of an effective participatory research, community-based TfD process. Plastow’s practice models how to design a TfD process leading to action and consequently conscientisation.

### **10.1 Future practice-based research in TfD in Uganda: a personal note**

On a personal level, this study has been a learning process for me and has widened my perspectives of what is involved in TfD practice. Before embarking on this study, my experience of TfD facilitation was limited to student projects at Makerere University where I served as Teaching Assistant until 2010. These were short, interventionist processes. In other words, while I understood that effective TfD practice

should be participatory, dialogic and sustainable in engaging the participants in solving the problems that affect their lives, I had little experience of what that practically involves.

The intensive literature review broadened my perspectives on TfD practice. This was only possible once I was based in Drama at the University of Exeter, with its wealth of study resources. African TfD scholars such as Byam (1999), Kerr (1991, 1995), Kidd & Byam (1982), Mlama (1991), Okagbu (1998), Mda (1990, 1993) and Chinyowa (2009, 2011) offered sound definitions of the concept of TfD. I started by reading about the projects that marked the historical development of TfD in Africa beginning with the premier Laedza Batanani project in Botswana in the mid 1970s. This led to investigation of subsequent projects such as the Ahmadu Bello projects in Nigeria, the Murewa workshop in Zimbabwe, the Chikwakwa theatre in Zambia, the Maratholi travelling theatre project in Lethoso and the Chalimabana workshop in Malawi. My reading of these TfD endeavours, not detailed here to ensure economy of words, exposed me to an understanding of the complexity of TfD practice.

My learning deepened further after I became involved in observing and analysing the practice of other practitioners, both local and international. Observing and analysing Plastow's work in Uganda offered me a deeper experience of what meaningful TfD was about. The project demonstrated participatory research in TfD and how to engage participants in the process of collective devising and performance. From her work, I came to learn the significance of mobilising and involving the power brokers in the community in the TfD process, something which was lacking in my 2014 child rights TfD project examined in Chapters Five and Six. By having the members of the Walukuba community perform for the civil and political leadership of Jinja, Jane and Katie achieved a communitywide process of empowerment.

Generally, through the methods of literature review, observation of TfD practice and practice-based research, I have been able to understand TfD as a composite process achieved through sufficient planning, and a greater awareness of the forces that shape it such as power, funding and the time factor.

As an emerging practitioner, I am drawing on this learning and I hope that it will be significantly useful in my future TfD practice efforts. For example, in 2015 I used the



learning experience offered by this study to lead a process of making two funding applications for work involving TfD. The first application was made to the Wellcome Trust, a UK based charity that funds projects which seek to foster community engagement in health research, while the second application was made to Echoing Green, a US based organisation which funds community based innovative ideas in their early stages. The details of the two funding applications and proposals are presented in appendix 16 and 17 respectively. In the funding applications I sought to work with professionals in other disciplines. For example, in preparing the Wellcome Trust application, I collaborated with a biomedical science professor and a community health scientist. As a prospective leader of the project, I developed the idea to do a project focusing on community health issues among fishing communities around Lake Victoria in Jinja. Scientific research indicates that these communities are exposed to multiple health risk factors such as binge drinking, poor sanitation and hygiene, and high rates of HIV/AIDS infection through the illegal sex trade that concentrates around the lucrative industry (see for example Kiwanuka *et al.*, 2014; Mawa *et al.*, 2012; Opio *et al.*, 2013, Opio *et al.*, 2013). I envisaged that a TfD project would enable the fishing and related communities to come together and analyze health needs.

In the Echoing Green application, I worked with Grace Mary Mbabazi, an investment professional whose interest is to educate communities, and especially women, in financial literacy. The idea for this project developed from our dual engagement with young people in a school child rights TfD project discussed in Chapter Five and Six of this thesis. The children's pieces showed us that prejudice against girls and women was endemic. Their plays tackled issues such as parents' refusal to pay girls' school fees and violence against girls and women. This compelled us to consider an organization focusing on women's concerns to transform community attitudes. Our idea was to incorporate an organisation named 'Transforming Women Concerns into Action' (TRAWOCA) which would champion the transformation of women and girls using TfD as the method of community engagement. TRAWOCA would address the problem of gender disparity and lack of voice among women and girls in Uganda in socio- economic development programs such as education, participation in economic activity and human rights by transforming people's attitudes. Our approach would centre

on mobilizing and building groups to provide forums for dialogue and critical analysis of the problems that impede the prospects of women. This would foster collective empowerment and communal strategies for change.

Before embarking on the funding proposal development, we had done some pilot research on the plight of women and girls in Uganda and noted that Ugandan grassroots women and girls remain in margins in terms of participation in education, the economy and decision making. They are about twice as illiterate (43%) compared to men (26%), and dominate (74%) in the informal non-waged, unskilled, technique-based labour force (Lakwo, 2007: 13). Only 29% of girls complete lower secondary education (Plan, 2012: 22). They produce 70% of the total agricultural output but lack ownership and control over land and labour. While 97% of women have access to land for farming, only 8% have leasehold (Lakwo, 2007: 14). This denies them collateral for credit in the formal banking system. We also discovered that 41% of women endure domestic violence and their participation in community activities requires men's approval (Lakwo, 2007: 14).

We had also noted that women remain in the margins because of cultural perceptions which subjugate women to men. Atekyereza (2001) asserts that patriarchal traditions uphold the interests and needs of men over those of women. Society holds that women should not own property since economic power makes them more independent and less subject to the control of others. The education system in Uganda instils basic skills geared towards ensuring women are mothers, rather than fostering skills that would ensure successful participation in the public, professional realm (Atekyereza, 2001: 117). We noted that such attitudes persist because little effort has been made to transform and foster grassroots understanding.

While TRAWOCA intended to focus on women, we believed the voice and potential of women could best be amplified through collective dialogue with men. We planned to facilitate community and school-based programs to foster a sustained engagement with people. The community-based program would mobilize men and women into groups in which the people would engage in participatory theatre-based processes such as storytelling, image theatre, body mapping and drawing to identify the problems that hinder the potential of women and girls. Through dialogue, people would engage in

problem analysis and prioritization, collective theatre making, performance and strategizing for action. The school-based program would target young people who have been socialized by the patriarchal system to marginalize women and girls. We would work with partner schools on a TfD program in which boys and girls would collectively analyze their problems and participate in theatre making and performance.

Our proposals seemed innovative given that contemporary approaches to social empowerment by gender-focused NGOs in Uganda are mostly top-down adopting a diffusion of innovations or trickle down model. While advocacy is vital, we had identified a lack of linkages between advocacy at the top and community initiatives geared at the engagement of women. We planned to adopt a bottom-up cultural process where the victims of oppression would be engaged in analyzing their needs in dialogue with one another and with the oppressive structures. We aspired to adopt the unique tenets of collective participation, critical reflection and dialogue enabled by our theatre making/performance and the Stepping Stones program. This we hoped would prompt a process of cultural synthesis and transform women into agents of their own change.

As I bring this thesis to completion, Grace and I are planning to formally incorporate TRAWOCA as a Community Based Organisation (CBO) in Wakiso district even without the Echoing Green funding we had hoped to receive. With a formally incorporated organisation we hope to be able to seek and obtain support from stakeholders such as government and international donors.

Reflecting on shortcomings of my own practice in the child rights project, I feel enthused to go back to the school and continue from where the previous child rights project ended. This time however, I want to first establish the needed organisation base for the work. This will involve mobilising all the teachers in the school and stirring their interest for the project, putting in place the necessary emotional support which the children may require, mobilising the parents and other stakeholders such as the child protection unit of the police and the welfare department of Wakiso local government.

## Appendices

### **Appendix 1: Impact assessment of the Walukuba TfD project: questions to the local community participants (set in Lusoga, the community's local language and in English)**

Bwewasalawo kwetaba mu programme eno wali osubira ki? (What were your expectations as you chose to participate in the theatre programme?)

Ekiwali osubira wakifuna oba wakilaba? Were your expectations met?

Wenyumiriza okubera nti wetaba mu programme eno? Do you feel proud that you participated in this programme?

Obulamu bwo bwali butya nga tonetaba mu programme eno? How was your life like before you participated in this programme?

Obulamu bwo bwa cuuka butya nga wetabye mu programme eno? How is your life continuing to change as a result of participating in this programme?

Wetaba mukukola emizanyo nokugizanya? Did you participate in making plays and performance?

Okuzanya emizanyo kwayongerawo ki kubulamu bwo? How did participating in making of plays and performing them change of your life?

Nyabalaba nga mukuba akalulu ku bizibu byekitundu, ekikolwa kino wakyagala? I saw you casting a vote on the problems affecting the community, what did you like about this process?

Nyabalaba nga mwetaba mulondolola ebizibu byekitundu kyamwe nga muwandika ebaluwa, kiki kyewayagala mu kikolwa kinu.? I saw you gathering your problems through letter writing, how did you like about this process?

Abantu be wazanya nabo bacuuka batya oluvanyuma? How did the community change after this programme?

Obumwazanyira ku hotel Bax we mwali abakungu, wakyagala otya? What did you like about the idea of performing before political and civil leaders at hotel Bax?

Kiki kyakusikiriza kwetaba mu programme eno, Kansente ka refreshment na transport, oba? What attracted you to participate in this programme? Transport and refreshment money or something else?

Bintu ki byewasinga kwagala ku programme eno? What did you like about this programme?

Bintu ki bye watayaala ku programme eno? What didn't you like about this programme?

Mwandyagadde kutwala omulimo guuno omumaaso? Lwaaki? Would you wish to continue with this programme? Why?

Mwewulira nga musobola kutwala enkola ya programme mumaso nga Jane ne Katie tibaliwo? Do you feel able to continue with the programme without the support of Jane and Katie?

Okubera nti Katie and Jane bazungu, waliwo ekinene kyona wali obasubiramu? Given Jane and Katie were white practitioners from the UK, did you have any bigger expectations from them?

Abazungu baano basisinkana baatya ne byobuwangwa byaffe? Babyonana? How did the white practitioners interact with the culture of the community? Did you experience any conflict?

Kiki kyewayagala ku Katie ne Jane? What did you like about Jane and Katie as facilitators?

I saw you participating in games and exercises, what did you benefit from these games and exercises

## **Appendix 2: Letter to Jane Plastow requesting to observe her practice**

Dear Jane Plastow,

My name is Keneth Bamuturaki from Uganda, a PGR student at the University of Exeter. I recently wrote to you regarding your article on the ideology of TfD in Africa which you gladly sent to me. I am researching about the ideology underpinning TfD practice in Uganda by looking at how issues such as global capitalism, power dynamics and facilitation impact on the aesthetics of effective practice. To achieve this I am surveying contemporary TfD practices in Uganda.

Currently, I am doing my fieldwork in Uganda and I am at the stage of making useful contacts so that I may participate in ongoing projects. I have met your former postgraduate student—Lillian Mbabazi who informed me that you are currently executing a TfD project in Uganda which will climax in June. The purpose of this email is to request you to allow me be part of this project as one of the participants. Also before June I will request you to answer some questions regarding your experience in Uganda. I will be grateful if you consider me. Thanks.

Keneth

### **Appendix 3: Jane's email responding to my request to observe her practice**

To:

Bamuturaki, Keneth;

Cc:

Katie McQuaid <K.R.V.McQuaid@leeds.ac.uk>;

Hi Kenneth,

I am doing a project in Uganda, in the Walukuba area of Jinja. The project is specifically with people from there so you couldn't actually be a full participant but you would be most welcome to come along to sessions and help out. Weekly workshops have been taking place for some months being run by Baron Oron and my research assistant, Dr Katie McQuaid, who I am copying in to this. If you contact Katie I am sure she would be happy to arrange for you to go along and observe. The project is intergenerational looking at environmental issues in the area. I will be in Uganda in June working on the project.

I hope this helps,

Best wishes, Jane

#### **Appendix 4: Email to Katie McQuaid making initial contact**

From: Bamuturaki, Keneth [<mailto:kb327@exeter.ac.uk>]

Sent: 11 May 2015 16:23

To: Katie McQuaid

**Subject: Research Contact**

Dear Katie,

I hope this finds you well. I recently wrote to you regarding the TfD project led by Prof. Jane Plastow which you are coordinating in Uganda. I got in touch with Jane about this and she advised me to contact you. I would like to attend as a participant observer the weekly workshops being conducted with the community in Jinja. The results of my observation will help me write a thesis for a PhD at the University of Exeter. Kindly help me and let me know when the next workshop will be held. Thanks.

Keneth



## **Appendix 5: Katie's email communication inviting me over to observe the Tfd workshops**

Dear Keneth,

Thank you for your email. I have been out of the country until last night so apologies for not responding to your emails earlier.

I am living in Jinja at the moment which is where I am conducting the theatre research workshops. We began working with the community at the beginning of February, and since then each week on a Sunday I meet two groups, younger men and younger women, and on a Monday afternoon I meet with older persons, which is a mixed group. Within these groups we conduct a series of activities in order to explore every day constructions and understandings of the environment, as well as generational identities, dynamics, roles and responsibilities. Thus far we have used drama, music, poetry and art to explore ideas and generate data for our project. At the moment we are gearing up for a series of community theatre events to be held throughout the community in which we are working in mid-June, so our schedule is a little bit up in the air, but you are welcome to attend the workshops this coming week on the 17<sup>th</sup> (2-6pm) and 18<sup>th</sup> (4-6pm). The following week I already have colleagues attending so that would not be possible. I will be in touch about the more intensive workshops we will be conducting in the first weeks of June once I have a schedule for those, as you will be welcome to attend and observe those.

With best wishes,

**Appendix 6: The Walukuba Community Song—composed through collective community effort**

Chorus

Walukuba

Yange Nawe (Walukuba belongs to me and you)

Nze Naawe (me and you)

Nga tuli omu, Nga tuli omu, we are

Walukubaa (if we are one, if we are one, we are Walukuba)

Yenze Naawe (me and you)

We have the power

And sound louder

We can make it

We can we can do it all

That is why we are nana

Nana nana

We nana

Nana nana we sing it

Oooooh! Oooooh! X 2

Oooooh! Oooooh! X 2

Stanzas

1

We can be strong and free

We have the talent, see

Transparency, our leaders and elders

We need some loyalty

And we can stand as one

For the truth...

We can make it

We can, we can make it

That is why we are nana

Nana nana

We are nana

We sing it

Ooooooh! Ooooooh! X 2

Ooooooh! Ooooooh! X 2

We sing it

2

We are louder

When together

We got the power

Nze Naawe nga tuli kitole (if I and you are one strong voice)

We can make it x 2

We can, we can make it x 2

That is why we are nana

Nana nana x2

We are nana x2

Nana nana x2

Ooooooh! Ooooooh! X 2

Ooooooh! Ooooooh! X 2

We sing it

## **Appendix 7: Email from Jane responding to my inquiries about issues of power, funder's agendas and sustainability**

Dear Kenneth,

I am attaching a couple of papers, the first is to be published next year, the second was given at a symposium in Leeds recently. You should also look up We are Walukuba on the internet as you will see the group's own website which tells you what they have been doing. You will see they are now an independent on-going organisation with their own programme of activities, though Katie and I will be back in Jinja in March working on enhancing skills training and some more theatre work - now very much as partners not as leaders of the work. You can also contact the group directly through their website to ask any questions you like. However, you can see the group is now working independently and sustaining itself without any outside funding.

Regarding funders agendas this is indeed true—I trust you have seen Patrick Mangeni's excellent article which deals with the problem very well. I am afraid I am in Ethiopia at the moment so don't have it to hand but you could ask him for the publication information if you don't have it. You could also see the latest issue of 'African Theatre' which 'African Theatre: Contemporary Women, which has an article which may be useful by myself and Susan Kiguli about an intergenerational women's project in Uganda a few years back.

Regarding our own funders, we simply had a brief to look at intergenerational understandings of environment and sustainability. We took this in a very broad sense in that environment includes the social as well as physical environment, so we looked at anything the community wanted to concerning the social and physical environment. Also our funding is from a research council so it was under no obligation to be message led like so many projects. And I was not obliged to account for what activities we undertook so long as we could report back the community ideas and the impact of the work. The work is funded by the AHRC.

Regarding the work you saw please be aware that was only the first set of work. We subsequently made the three short plays you will see described in the articles which are continuing to be requested - particularly in relation to the land corruption issue, which was the most pressing issue the community wanted to address.

Regarding the work you saw in progress it ended in many scenes, made in a variety of ways, but all coming out of the issues the community groups identified as most important after 6 months of weekly meetings combining discussion and theatre-based activities. I think you saw their selection voting process? Of these scenes: 1. From the older group, linked scenes about contraception and HIV testing were entirely the group's idea, I just helped shape them. 2. The young girls poem was their group production with baron helping them create the poem and an older group member, grace, helping them rehearse it. 3. The young men's scene about factory conditions and poverty and tree cutting was devised with both my and Baron's help to respond to these 3 issues they had identified as very important to them. The group wrote the script. 4. The linked scenes about corruption in the police, in councillors and in politicians all came out of massive community concern about corruption and related directly to stories we had shared, again I simply helped shape the scenes. 5. The young men's rap and break-dance about swamp degradation was entirely their own work 6. The physical theatre sketch about the multiple pressures on young women was shaped by me but was an attempt to visualise the competing pressures these young women had repeatedly discussed in relation to shaping their lives. 7. The only one I wrote was 'Love and Money'. This was a deliberate experiment. In group meetings many competing and contradictory narratives had emerged about gendered responsibilities in relation to sexual and marital relationships, though the inequality of power between men and women shone through. The short play was an attempt to highlight a number of these issues - it was an experiment that had mixed success. 8. The final song was entirely written by a group member—Derek.

There will shortly be a film available about the work. I can send it to you if you like. I hope this is helpful. Good luck with the rest of your PhD. Also please describe yourself as an observer of the work not a participant observer, we did make it very clear to you that you were invited solely as an observer.

All best wishes, Jane

## **Appendix 8: Questions of inquiry to Jane on issues relating to her approach, funding and sustainability**

Dear Jane,

My name is Keneth Bamuturaki, a Ugandan and a postgraduate research student at Exeter. I thank you for allowing me to attend your practice in Walukuba, Uganda as a participant observer

The purpose of this email is to make a few inquiries:

I have discovered that one of the shortfalls of Uganda's TfD is that practitioners such as IATM, Rafiki Theatre Company and GIZ suffer from patronage. Practitioners find themselves compelled to implement what the funders consider important, not what the community think is good for them. Given that your work in Walukuba was funded by another body and part of another international project, how did you balance the expectations of the funders and the need to give voice to the participants?

I noted that in you practice you sometimes suggested stories for plays instead of having the communities make/invent their own stories? How were you mindful of issues of power in the choice you made?

Please tell about the sustainability aspect of your work in Walukuba? How do you plan that the community continues with the work—self-help without your support.

Thanks

Keneth

## **Appendix 9: Midterm Project Walukuba community testimonies/tales of empowerment and transformation**

This appendix is a collection of testimonies from community members which I gathered through interview and requesting participants to write letters to friends expressing how they had benefit from the project. The names and testimonies of their experience are highlighted. The testimonies are recorded verbatim, in the language and expression the participants have used.

Nakyesa Edith

Before I joined this project, my thinking had grown old. I am now young in my thinking. Coming together with others takes away unnecessary thoughts from my life. I am now happy. I have learnt so many things which I had forgotten. I have learnt that if I had used family planning, I would space my children and be able to take good care of them.

Anonymous letter to a friend

Dear friend, how are you. Let me hope that you are fine. I am fine. I can't believe that I'm now different ever since I joined the Walukuba environmental project. It happened after we had made an experiment on polythene bags. We got a polythene bag and tried to plant a seedling in it; instead of growing the seedling simply dried. Therefore I learnt that disposing polythene bags everywhere in the environment destroys the environment. If we continue disposing polythene bags everywhere, our environment will be more destroyed. Join me in the struggle to preserve the environment.

Steven

Walukuba East Primary School,

Po box 133,

Jinja, Uganda.

Dear Deo,

How are you and how is life these days. I am writing to invite you in our workshop at the community centre. For me I have learnt many things about the environment. I have learnt how to protect the soil. And I was shy to speak in public but now I can speak.

From Steven

Abdul Jawal

Dear friend, let me hope you are fine. Me too am too fine. Did you know that we need the environment so that we should survive? But not like those who think that the environment is not our concern. But what I think is that last time we collected the rubbish, I experienced a situation of pollution of air which made me feel unconscious during my hour of breath. What I learnt that time is that people don't know the result why other people recycle items like polythene bags which can be used for other stuff such as bottles. And I also thank the association for that great work

Yours faithfully,

Abdul Jawal

Deo Bwire

Lead ministries

Po box 833, Jinja, Uganda

Email- [leadforafrica@gmail.com](mailto:leadforafrica@gmail.com)

Dear Friends

Re: Comment on the Environmental Issue/Program

I am so grateful for being part of the ongoing environmental program. A million thanks to Dr Katie and her colleagues. To me it is the first of its nature at Walukuba. I have been involved in the discussions so far undertaken and mobilising some members both males and females. I was captivated by the themes like forming frozen images about what the community expects of us and the current image portrayed. We have been discussing the morals, right from our families, community, region, national and the world. We shared and heard ideas about love and money, cross generation sex relations, tribal segregation, exploitation and mistreatment of workers by the economically superior people especially the investors. There has been a very big gap between the youths and the elderly on matters of discussion and decision making. Elders do not give chance to young people to express themselves in terms of their choices preferences and interests. However, though this programme has done much in identifying the vices in community and environmental degradation, a solid strategy for sustainability should be prioritised. Talk again later.

Yours sincerely



Deo Bwire

Anonymous letter to a friend

Dear Friend,

How are you doing? Let me hope you are fine. Back to me I am fine. I have written this letter to tell you about the change which has happened to me due to the project am in. I have learnt much in this project starting from the time I joined it. I really now know how to preserve the environment. Because without the environment we are nowhere at all. And I also have learnt that among the factors that destroy the environment we human beings are involved knowingly or unknowingly due to the different activities that we do. So I am in the struggle that we become the major factors that preserve the environment. In fact it is something you are missing my friend.

Walukuba east

John Joel

Dear friend,

Am happy to inform you that a lot is happening here which is great. We have learnt from this project meeting new friends, making discussion. A lot happen in our community and we just ignore it. But am so happy to inform you that solutions can only be got from discussing them. This is why I recommend you to join us in this programme. This pushes our life in a better way. I see forward to see you with us.

Much love

John Joel

## **Appendix 10: Interview transcripts from 'We are Walukuba' participants relating to their experience with the 'We are Walukuba' TfD project**

### **1. What were your expectations as you chose to participate in the programme?**

Mwase Yusuf: I expected to interact with other age groups of the community. Jane and Katie were working hard to bring together the young ones and the elders. In most cases it is the elders who participate in thinking and planning for the community. But they are ageing. It is the young people who will be responsible for society tomorrow, so they need to be trained by involving them.

I also expected to carry out carry out community service by cleaning markets, collecting garbage, which we are currently doing.

Steven: for me I did not expect much, but what I got is actually much. I used to fear speaking in public but participating in the programme, especially performance has helped me become confident before people.

Deo: My participation in the programme begun from my work with Katie during her research on the environment. Katie contacted me at our pottery project office and told me about their project which would focus on using theatre to discuss environment issues. When I had about such a method of work, I thought I would learn new skills which I would use in our pottery project. So I made up my mind to attend. I thought that theatre would be another method of engaging people. The people learn as they are being entertained.

Isabirye Derek: When I first heard of Katie and Jane with their programme, I immediately wished it was about sensitising people. As a Musoga, I had been a victim of discrimination. We people from Busoga are discriminated against by tribes from western and central Uganda. So, when this programme came, I thought it was an opportunity for me to show that we the Basoga can do something. I wanted to prove this by any means, whatever little.

Abdallah: My greatest expectation out of the 'We are Walukuba' was to socialise and interact with different people. I wanted to meet people across age groups. I was interested in seeing the young generation and the older generation interact and work together.

Siraji Koloto: When I was making my decision to participate in the 'We are Walukuba' project, I expected to participate in a project which would make a long term engagement with the community, not something which would be short lived. I expected something which would go on for years. I am involved in community arts project where we use break dance to sensitise communities in various issues. My experience shows that long term projects produce more lasting results. Short term projects lack follow up. An organisation comes and engages with the community for only three months and vanishes, where is the follow up in such circumstances? Arts projects with communities take long. The process will usually begin by educating the people in arts skills before they can be left to work alone. When they begin working alone, follow up will be crucial to know how they are getting on with the work. I was in a project. What facilitators did was to train people in dance for only for only one and a half months. I do not know whether it was an NGO, but I am sure they got funding to do the work. When they left, everything they had started ended. People need follow up. 'We are Walukuba is quite an exception project. The leaders—Jane and Katie came and worked with us for a full year. When they went back home, they continued and are carrying on with supporting the community.

## **2. Were your expectations met?**

Isabirye Derek: Not really much. Some have, while others have not. We were able to meet our leaders. We met and talked to our chairman Badman. We were able to meet them and share with them what huts as Walukuba community. I was really impressed by our meeting with the political leaders.

Deo: Yes. I expected to meet people of the different age groups. This expectation has been met. I was able to meet elders which opportunity rarely happens.

Abdallah: Like I said the project helped the different age groups of the community to come and work together. Such a thing had not happened in our community, to find the young and the old discussing important issues such as environment conservation was really a big breakthrough for the community.

### **3. Do you feel proud that participated in this programme?**

Yusuf: I feel proud having participated. Most of the youths do not like to do voluntary work—unpaid work. In the beginning, boys and girls were expecting pay. Some of them stayed because Katie was giving them sodas but when Katie stopped, they ran away. For me I remained because I wanted to make a contribution to my community.

Deo: I am proud having participated because as a result of this programme, people became interested in our pottery project. There are some who are planning to visit us again. I have been able to transfer the skills used in the project to our pottery project. Nowadays, in our organisation we use the approach of dialogue and discussion in exploring our problems.

### **4. How has your life change because of participating in this programme?**

Yusuf: personally, my life has changed much. I have become better programmed than I used to be. When there is a programme in our group, a meeting, a rehearsal or a community performance, I have to make sure that I attend and in time.

Steven: My life is changing in many ways. I used to behave badly, but when I started engaging in this programme I begun to change. I had friends who were enticing me to begin drugs, but when I got involved in this programme, I distanced myself from them. This is because one of the problems among young people which was being repeatedly cited by elders was drugs and alcohol.

Deo: I used to be a reserved person because of disappointments that happen in life. But when I joined this project I was empowered by free sharing and dialogue. . . this one brings this problem, another brings that problem. In the end everyone opens up and begins to speak.

Abdallah: Before participating in this programme, I did not know how to interact with other people. This programme afforded me an opportunity to learn working with others on a common cause.

Siraji Koloto: My life has really changed because I have been able to work with various age groups, the young and the elders. I have now got new experiences of what

life is with other age groups especially the elders. Different age groups have different challenges. I have been able to work with people of different characters.

5. How did participation in making plays and performing them change your life?

Deo: I participated in the factory exploitation scene taking the role of an exploitative Indian supervisor. I discovered that I have a very good Indian accent, something which is not possessed by many. I noted through the process that I can discover more of myself. I am student of journalism. I will one day use the skills in radio programming. My esteem increased, I became more popular. The elder generation who took part in the project now know me better. They know that I can do something great for our community. I can now approach them with an idea to discuss and they will listen.

Yusuf: participating in performance increased my confidence in myself. I learnt that if one has to perform, then he has to be confident. If not, people will understand that such a person is not sure of himself.

Abdallah: I participated in the tree cutting play. I liked it. I was given the most sensitive part—that of a police officer who is supposed to uphold the law. I did that by arresting the men we caught cutting trees.

6. What did you like about the process of casting votes on the problems facing the community?

Yusuf: The process helped us choose the most pressing problems. We had many problems but, we selected only a few which needed special attention.

Deo: we were able to choose the most important problems: we identified problems such as abuse of political office through corruption and land grabbing. In fact the importance of these problems evidenced itself in the outcome of the local general elections. Political leaders who were known to be corrupt and grabbers of land were voted out. Even when those people dished out money to buy votes, they did not succeed.

Abdallah: It created awareness. People came to know the most pressing problems for each age group. We did not know the kind of problems that affect the youths, the women and the elders.

Siraji Koloto: We were able to identify the most common problems from the perspective of different people in the community.

## **7. What did you like about the process of writing letters to other peer groups expressing what you wanted to see changed?**

Abdallah: It is confidential. When you are challenged to write down issues you think need changing, you do it freely. Nobody will say that it is so and so who said this and that.

Yusuf: The process helped us think deeply about our problems as a community.

Siraji Koloto: It was a confidential process. It is only the heart and mind of the person writing which is involved. Sometimes people are afraid of saying out their issues in public.

## **8. How has the community changed as a result of this project?**

Isabirye Derek: I can tell that this community has changed. I saw it in the elections. People were able to choose the right leaders. I heard of a rumour that there was this leader who used to grab peoples land. This time round, this leader was voted out. I think this happened because we had the 'We are Walukuba' event where a play on land grabbing was performed and watched by many people.

Deo: the project has changed how we do things at our pottery project. We learnt from the We are Walukuba project that before you do things, you have to discuss as a community and also carry out some research. We also have started involving all age groups, the young and the elders.

Abdallah: Change is really a gradual process. Though nothing much as so far changed, there is some change. Elders are able to meet and discuss with the young about important issues that affect the community.

Siraji Koloto: The community is changing. People are now using briquettes, made out garbage in on to reduce the demand of charcoal and reduce tree cutting. The civil and political leaders are now beginning to focus on the issues we have been performing about. Before this project, people used to see the problems but could not do anything about them. We have performed before council and people are like mmmh. You know sometimes people see things but they pretend not to have seen them.

## **10. What did you like about the idea of performing before political and civil leaders at Hotel Bax?**

Isabirye Derek: What I liked is that we reached a hand to those people and our voice was really heard. Now they know that they are leading people who know what they are supposed to do. They used to lead us with this feeling that we do not know what we need and what we should expect from them. I am sure after these concluded elections, the new leaders will be fully aware that there is a community which is critical of their nature of work and service.

Steven: It was very good. Some people used to grab land from poor people, but this trend is now reducing.

Deo: The civil and political leaders learnt that even if they hind the people from knowing the truth, there will always be another way through which the people can come and express their grievances. They came to learn that there is no way they can silence or shut up the people. Walukuba became a focal point- it became known as a watchdog which can always scrutinise the oppressive acts of those in power.

Abdallah: Before we performed at hotel Bax, we had not had a chance of addressing our problems to the people in power—the political leaders. We were able to articulate the most pressing issues in our community such as corruption in land offices. I was very pleased with that. The leaders got the real core of the problems we are facing as a community. They promised to take action and save the situation. One police officer was so surprised to learn the oppressive realities that women go through. She immediately advised women confronted with abusive situations to contact police—they would be supported in any way possible. She promised to come down to the communities and help address any problems the people face. The land committee was also touched by our work. They helped explain to us the process of acquiring land titles.

Siraji Koloto: Performing our plays before the civil and political leaders was like a direct address. I have been meeting some these political leaders who say to me. . . oh you made us look bad . . . this means that they were touched by our performances. They promised to take some positive action to remedy the issues we presented. They are fast tracking the process of issuing land titles, in response to our play on corruption in the land office.

**11. What attracted you to this programme? Was transport and refreshment money or something else?**

Yusuf: For me I wanted to leave a legacy in the community. I joined the programme to make a contribution to my community.

Deo: I was attracted by the fact the programme was free and that it accepted everybody. In other theatre programmes people are admitted on the basis of talent through auditioning. Here everybody was allowed in. Also, in many theatre programmes, one is admitted after buying a ticket. This programme was completely free.

**12. What did you like about the programme?**

Yusuf: The programme helped us look at our own selves critically. We are changing and transforming each day.

Deo: I like the idea of being able to collectively identify our own problems.

**13. What didn't you like about this programme?**

Abdallah: Too much expectations. Some participants expected to be paid a lot of money. Most of the people have never worked voluntarily. Personally I have been involved in many projects on voluntary basis. People have been intimating with me that they expected to be paid, but we have not.

**14. Would you wish to continue with this programme? Why?**

Yusuf: Yes, I would wish to continue with the programme on condition that it remains focus on the original objectives.

**15. Do you think this programme will continue without Katie and Jane's support?**

Deo: It will if it gets a physical address and a proper structure of leadership. Currently we meet at this social/community centre which is managed by the division council. It may be difficult for us to be independent in our thinking and critique the system. We have already shown them that we are critical of their work. We need a place where we can display our programmes without any fear.

Yusuf: They programme may not continue without Jane's support because many of the members to do not have a permanent job. They will need to go and find activities



from which they can earn. So the programme needs to find ways of funding its programmes and sustaining its core members.

Isabirye Derek: It can continue but I think not now. We still need their support for at least two more years. Again this project has many programmes which one would think are beneficial to the whole district. So we really need their continued support to obtain more funding, so that we may take our work far.

Abdallah: It is very hard. People are expecting much from the project. Once they discover that their expectations are in vein, they will all go their different ways.

Siraji Koloto: It will all depend on the expectation of the people. If people meet their expectations, the programme will continue. The problem is that people do things expecting to be paid this and that amount of money.

## **Appendix 11: Transcripts from a 2011 interview with Mr. Dan Isiko Kisense**

**KB: Keneth Bamukuraki**

**DIK: Dan Isiko Kisense**

**KB: What is this relation between sponsorship and Theatre for Development practice and how does it impact on the theory and practice of Theatre for Development in Uganda?**

**DIK:** When you talk about TfD and the aspect of funding, it touches my own feeling. Can TfD exist without funding? My own thinking is that the people who have gone into this TfD practice have made it that, the two things - TfD and funding go hand in hand but it is the funding which comes first and the practice comes after. People who have rushed into TfD practice have done it because there is a funding factor or they smell some funding into it. To go into TfD because people are professionals and good hearted, that they know that they can be able to have an impact on the community, I would tell you that I do not know of that. Either there is a funding opportunity they smell or there is funding already on the table. Then they will go to justify the funding. So it is the funding factor that comes first and the practice follows. The money element has come in so that even people, who should be practicing purely conventional theatre, go into it. The money element has come in so much that the sustainability of TfD in Uganda here looks impossible without the funding. Even the theatre groups that have been saying that TfD is their business; groups such as IATM who have been saying that they are the leaders of the anti-corruption campaign, when there is money they make a play, but when the money is finished, they keep quiet and corruption goes on the rise. So it is very unlikely that TfD in Uganda can be sustained without the funding factor.

The only part where we have heard people practice TfD without the motivation of funding is with students on training at Makerere University. These ones have gone into it without the funding factor. But at the end of the day, it is not free because there is an element of marks to be earned for the training. So the marks are

the equivalent of the funding as a motivating factor. Tfd as a strand of theatre is there and the people practice it. But the way it is handled in Uganda- everybody becomes an active Tfd person because there is funding. Without funding people keep quiet, but the moment funding is cited, they become very active. Even other elements in life such as the church . . . I am talking about how the money element has infiltrated every aspect of life. Today there are some churches where coins are not accepted. The goodness of a Christian is tagged to how much money one gives in . . . In terms of Tfd practice, it should not be the overriding factor because Tfd can be used to address so many issues and so many issues go unattended to . . .

**KB: I have heard some practitioners and theatre scholars in Uganda insinuate that Tfd in Uganda is a myth and not a reality. What is your view about such a sentiment?**

**DIK:** In the context of Tfd, I would not have to say that it is a myth. First of all there is a lot of literature written about Tfd. Secondly people have used the literature available and used it as a technique and done some work. From what they have done there has been evidence that Tfd has facilitated change of attitude and change of behaviour. It would be unfortunate to say that Tfd is a myth. In the Ugandan condition if it was not for the money aspect, it has worked. There are some cases which we were talking about where students do their practice for marks —it has worked. How it is handled by the people is what makes us think that it is a myth. A lot of documentation is available, people have followed that and gotten results.

**KB: When can we say that Tfd is developmental? Is intellectual to say that conventional theatre does not lead to development such that we talk of a strand called Tfd?**

**DIK:** labels are good, but levels can also be bad because they bring about bias and division. So when we label and say this is TfD, this is conventional theatre, that is Drama-in-Education (DIE), this is community theatre; without those labels, I would say that theatre right from its ancient Greek origins has always been developmental. Because when you look at the use of theatre in ancient Greece, one important development it achieved was to bring about unity in the Greek society. During the celebration of the return of spring, everybody including the local people and the politicians looked forward to it. As a result, the Greeks became the leading scholars in theatre and in philosophy. I think that idea of oneness in the Greek community to me is development. When we say that it is TfD that brings about development, it is another way of blowing one's trumpet. In as far as theatre is concerned; it is and will always be developmental. Theatre is society based. Theatre looks at society and applauds the strength of role models. If you look at it from an historical perspective one example where theatre has been very developmental, is the Irish question. This is when the Irish people were fighting for their identity and independence. In Ireland military wars failed to achieve freedom. They remained divided until they used theatre to promote the agenda. When they did this through the Irish literacy revival, they brought people to think together. It brought back Gaelic language and people started writing in the Gaelic language. They wrote plays such as the *Lady Gregory* and *The Rising of the Moon*, which were able to bring the people together and think that unless they started thinking together, they would remain divided. And as a result they achieved something which they were not able to achieve politically or militarily. The Southern part of Ireland was granted independence. So, theatre and development can go hand in hand when you remove those labels. You know when you bring labels; we begin to think that it is only TfD which can be used for development. There have been plays which have been written and have had a tremendous impact on the society. There have been plays which

have been written as historical records and when we look back, they are some kind of check points.

**BK: Please comment on the talk that, in Tfd the audience is actively involved and in conventional theatre it is passive.**

**DIK:** The word passive is too strong, and I would not buy it. Take for example a moving comedy, in a conventional theatre performance. Why do people laugh?

**BK: Because they are involved.**

**DIK:** So it would be so strong to say that the audience in Tfd is actively involved while in conventional theatre it takes on a passive role. At the end of the performance, you will find that people are discussing outside the theatre house what transpired in the play. How do they evolve that discuss if they were passive? In some performances this one has happened - because they are excited, they go to the stage and join. In the performance of the play Agaali Amakula by the Bakayimbira Dramactors, there was a character called Nabibi who was hated so much. Nabibi, the actor performed her role very well that not even during the performance, but in a taxi park - after the performance; a group of women attacked the actor saying: "you woman, how can you be so bad and do such things to people's children? Who do you think you are?" The performance team had to come up and say "please distinguish between the 'actor' and the 'character'. Leave that woman she is a very good woman in real life situations but on the stage she was portraying the character of a devil." If the people were passive how could they do that? So the involvement of audience in Tfd and the non-involvement of an audience in conventional theatre; I think these are just thoughts held by the people.

In Tfd, I believe if you have a weak facilitator, it will turn into a less participatory process. So participation in a Tfd process also depends on the strength of the facilitator who must be good to drive and bridge the process. In conventional

theatre the people will come to watch performance and applaud without being 'facilitated' or directed to applaud, because though seated, they are active. If the audience in conventional theatre had nothing to actively engage them, they would spend their time in other activities such as drinking a bottle of beer. They would not even pay their money to come to the theatre to take a purely passive role. I don't believe in the notion that the audience in conventional theatre is passive especially when they go because either they hope to learn something. If that is their objective then they will seat and watch attentively—get mentally involved or they go for fun. And if they go for fun those are even more involved because they do not want to miss any moment.

**KB: But the missing link in conventional theatre is an opportunity for collective action which is enabled in Tfd. What do you say about that?**

**DIK:** The issue of collective action in Theatre for Development is there and it is a good assumption. But I think if you did the theatre event and left it without follow-up it would come to nothing. And I think that is the greatest problem of Tfd practice here in Uganda. People do the practice but they do not complete. There must be a follow-up for you to be convinced that there has been collective action / response. If you do not follow-up, I do not know on what basis you can stand up and say there has been collective response and action. If you are talking about say health, Tfd is a kind of a process. It is not like a conventional play that is going to be acted in two hours, when it is finished the people go and think about it. This is a process. In Uganda in my thinking is that the process is often not complete.

**BK: Who makes things be? If people have collectively identified that a road is needed somewhere, who would make things be, so that we see the impact of Tfd? It links to the practice of politics and development.**

**DIK:** There two forces at play—the communities and the politics. But at the end of it all, who makes things be? There is the issue of politics and the politicians. The politics of the day and the politicians that exist at a certain time, their thinking and political

inclination may make TfD redundant. Where we are? Now in Uganda we end at a level where communities may collectively understand and discover the contradictions underlying their well-being. For example bringing a school near is a key factor. The one who brings the school is one who makes things be.

At the end of it all, the development we are talking about cannot be practically separated from politics. So the politicians and the politics are the ones who make things be. If they listened to the people, then the TfD and other processes would be helping them identify specific problems in specific areas and the politicians either through acts of parliament, decide on what to do. In Uganda, the price of vanilla per kilogram had reached over 200,000 Ushs. When it reached that price everybody was warming to invest in vanilla production. Government immediately said that there was no market for vanilla. . . . people cut down the vanilla trees. The price of vanilla had dropped from 200,000 to 5,000. But in TfD we would talk about bringing about conscientisation of the people it kind of stops there. The one who makes things be at the community level is the politician. And if you start a project at the community level without involving a politician, you would be disappointed.

## **Appendix 12: Transcripts from a 2011 interview with Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare**

**KB: Keneth Bamuturaki**

**MMN: Mercy Mirembe Ntangaare**

**KB: When is plausible to say that theatre is developmental? Is it intellectual to say that other forms of theatre are not development such that we have a strand called TfD?**

**MMN:** That one depends on what one understands by the term development. For me I look at development not just from the structural perspective; first and foremost development is about the individual. What are the concepts about life held by an individual? How are they progressive; because also we can look at development from negative perspective or positive perspective.

Does TfD real have a right to exist as form? Because, development has been part and partial of our existence. If we look at the conventional theatre, we realize that right from its beginnings theatre exists to develop an individual. Theatre is developmental right from its beginnings. Some people have said that there is art for art's sake; that you can get theatre that is purely for entertainment, but even mere entertainment is developmental especially if you are aiming at the wellbeing of an individual, it allows you to get relaxed. Who likes boredom? Who has ever gone to buy boredom? And why do we describe traditional or conventional theatre as being mere entertainment? Right from its inception, be it formal theatre or traditional theatre, theatre had a purpose. Andrew Cohen lists four functions of theatre which every theatre process must have; namely to inform to entertain, to education and socialize. There is no theatre process that does not educate. We seem to be suffering from the craze to get new labels.

TfD does not exist as a form in its own right because it emerges out of the crave to look for survival. Many of the practitioners of TfD are not trained artists or dramatists. It is just an opportunity for them to go out and conduct something and at the end earn. I am convinced that the motivation in TfD is not to have a genuine form but earning. Am also convinced that the reason why people go on coining new terms and labels in theatre is survival. When you exhaust the economic potential of one term you coin another to become more attractive and sellable.



I believe in culture being the spring board of development. We should start with ourselves, what are we? Who are we? What values are we bringing forward? If we conceived development from cultural perspective we would not be having these big problems of people amassing big amounts of public funds. When you see somebody stealing public funds without reservation, you really wonder what roots such a person has.

I think theatre is really by nature of its presentation part of culture. It is really part of culture because we who make the theatre are rooted in a culture. But also there is no theatre that happens outside a socio-cultural context. Every performance has a social cultural background, whether you have got a person to write down the play or whether it is spontaneous. That is why we need each one of us in the world to begin with who we are, and then our cultures will later harmonize and become one. Here in Uganda, one of the issues we are struggling with is garbage collection or waste disposal . . .

**KB: It appears from your discourse that there is a great relationship between TfD and funding?**

**MMN:** Yes/No. There are practitioners in theatre who genuinely sit and think and come up with a theatre product. We have been with this convention theatre to which we tag a price and eventually we sell to people. Why don't we open up this theatre and make it free. And especially that theatre has a message which you think will help in the development of society. Why don't we take that theatre to people. In my opinion, that is when applied theatre makes some kind of meaning.

In any case, every theatre is supposed to be applied, is supposed to be useful. There are people who are called the founders or the fore fathers of TfD and the name for example of Augusto Boal has always sounded high. Now those people [. . .] the theatre which is conventional is also useful and applied, although in different aspects. The type of TfD practice where there is no money motive the practitioners genuine sit and burn candles, they practice whether there is money or not. Some invest their own resources for the service of the community.

I say there is a big relationship between TfD and money because TfD in Uganda became popular when we had a lot of donors. These donors, because they wanted to

pass on a message were looking for easiest means to do so. In Uganda, in the mid-1980 and early 1990s we had only one radio station—Radio Uganda, one television, newspapers were not circulating effectively. In that situation where there were no radios, no TVs, no newspapers, only theatre could be used that is why the donors noted that they could now use the arts of the people, namely drama, songs, dance, games etc. what actually we call Theatre for Development is not theatre per se, but they had to get a term that sounds good and progressive.

But look at the time when the donors winded up their programmes in that area and when they no longer commissioned projects and facilitators to take TfD to the people. Do we still have it? Don't we still need development? Are we so developed such that that we no longer need TfD. This is why I say TfD practice is largely motivated by the money factor.

**KB: Is TfD in Uganda a myth or a reality?**

**MMN:** That is what I have been saying. I am not saying that it is a myth. Because there is nowhere in the world where one can say there is TfD when it is not there.

The word theatre in many parts of the world is foreign. May be you can go to Greece and start talking theatre for development, because theatre started from there. But on the other hand, we had our own theatrical performances which I genuinely regard as theatre especially if they are being shown to people and it has message. If such a performance has a message which is positive and they are being shown to the people, I would qualify such as theatre for development. But knowing what the TfD label carries for us in Uganda, I want to say that there is no such form. It is that people wanted to get a label for this kind of practice.

## **Appendix 13: Transcript from a 2011 interview with Mr. Augustine Bazaale**

**KB: Keneth Bamuturaki**

**AB: Augustine Bazaale**

**KB: What is the social, political and economic background of the Karamojong community?**

**AB:** Karamoja community is a stateless community. It does not have a chief or a king like many of the communities in Uganda. They run their communities in terms of councils of elders. The elders are the custodians of culture or are the opinion leaders. The people listen to them. If you have to do anything in the community you have to go through them first as the entry point. The lower levels are the warriors. These are usually younger people, they are the people who go for cattle raiding and rustling. To qualify to sit among the elders, you need to be initiated among the Karamojong male by spearing a bull and killing it. The women according to the Karamojong culture are like the property of the men. They are usually exchanged for cows, and they do all the work in the home including building the houses or huts, digging, looking after the children etc.

Currently Karamoja is split up in about 7 districts which include Moroto, Nakapiripirit Lapak, Kotido, Abim, Amudati and Kabongo. Each of those districts though they are all inhabited by the Karamojong have independent clans. In Amudat are Pokot, Nakapiripiriti are piem, in Lapak those are Bokora. They don't mix easily and are usually fighting amongst themselves. This is one of the origins of the long standing traditions of insecurity and cattle raids. Up to now there are clans which have never forgiven the other. There is thus an immense need for reconciliation and social harmony building.

The Karamojong are all nomadic pastoralists. When one group raids another they deprive them of their livelihood. This has led to cultural disjuncture between what they were used to and the new situation. They cannot easily cope up with the new wave of modernization and globalization. They cannot easily switch to agriculture because the men are either going to raid or sit home and drink. However, today they have been organized to settlement areas—9 settlements to begin a new form of community reorganization. GIZ works in settlements of returnees that have been resettled.

**KB: Tell about your work with GIZ-FBN project.**

**AB:** We started a theatre group called Rafiki Theatre Company limited. Its work mainly relates to participatory theatre and community based development aspects and causing intervention in communities. Our initial engagement was in peace building. It is from the performances we held relating to peace building that people recognized what we were doing and became interested in our work of engaging theatre as a participatory tool. FSN Karamoja project only identified us after they had seen our work and that is how we got involved with the GIZ- FSN project in Karamoja.

We have been contracted to use theatre as a tool for community outreach in advancing development goals in areas that GIZ operates i.e. livelihood, infrastructure, nutrition and conflict management. We use theatre as a starting point. We have coined a word that is now common at GIZ—the ‘software of the entire project’. We call it the software of the project because we aim at changing the attitude and behaviour of the community and adjusting them so that when the physical input comes in they are able to utilize them effectively and optimally.

We go out to consult four partners at the initial stage and we draw experiences and situations as it is on the ground. We register that from the elders for cultural aspects, from the community looking for the issues that are affecting them, and from the politicians especially the local councils, LCII, LC III, and LCV. At the district level, we normally consult the CAO and line offices. If it is about livelihood and nutrition, we go to the agriculture department. If it is about security, we usually go to the district security offices such as DISO, RDC. That is how we get to know what is on the ground and how we approach it. After this process, we come home and discuss it with the GIZ. We pick the priority from GIZ.

Ideally the priority should come from the community but for us we depart from that. Then we go down to write a script, which we then preview with the major stakeholders, the elders, the district people / leaders and GIZ, to test the appropriateness of the communication strategy. We ask ourselves: Is the approach effective? Is it representing the voice of the district? Is the dialogue appropriate? Sometimes we have found out that some words are not appropriate. So that semantic part of the process is attended to.

The plays are factored in the local language. After that, the LCV identifies an officer to go with us to the communities. The elders as well identify a person to move with them to the communities. We also go with the representative of GIZ. After performance in the communities we ask the people whether what they have seen in performance happens in their communities.

When it comes to change /action points we choose those points and identify also the people who will implement them with deadlines. We keep communicating with people on phone including physical meetings. At the end of it all we go with the team to measure the outcomes.

There is a time we implemented this process and after performance we found out that in one settlement community two latrines had been constructed. The process had resulted into action. In some communities, some community members reported that they had stopped feeding the children on residues—remains of local brew because they had participated in the performance about malnutrition. They reported that they had started giving them vegetables. Some communities were feeding on treated seeds meant for planting. They would wash them and prepare them for food hoping that it was okay. But after participating in the performance they realized that it was dangerous and they stopped it. They also requested for a play to sensitize them about hygiene. In some communities, the people requested for hoes. They said we want to begin digging but we do not have hoes.

Our intervention has had two outcomes namely; it has created a realization of their situation, a demand for a change physically by requesting for a change. This means that they have got the software. Since they have already constructed latrines, we want to focus on empowering them to use the latrines.

KB: What is GIZ-FSN?

AB: GIZ is an abbreviation for German agency for International Development. It is a German government body put in place to spearhead development in other countries and promote cooperation. It replaces GTZ which is commonly known. GIZ is an acronym in German. FSN stands for food, nutrition and security project which aim at establishing /moving the communities in Karamoja towards food security, so that they may have enough food for sustainable lives.

That is why GIZ has the department of agriculture and livelihood, department of nutrition covering feeding and health; department of infrastructure since roads had become impassable, department of conflict management because of the long standing history of insecurity in the area, characterized by roadside ambushes, cattle raiding. The plays we make initially were focusing on conflict and peace building. But now we go in others issues. We now have a play being prepared for nutrition and livelihood, water, sanitation and hygiene. We have also tried to respond to the behaviour of the people whose behavior is simply drinking and alcoholism.

**KB: What was the broad aim of this project?**

**AB:** It was to enable the communities in Karamoja to build capacity so that they are able to sustain themselves, in terms of food security. These people have lived on food funded by World Food Programme (WFP) for a long time. The area has been grossly affected by drought. The other aim is supporting the community to develop their own lifelong security strategies so that there is peace. So it is about peace building.

**KB: How did the FNS project try to fit the above social organization? How did you try to fight your theatre work in the above organization?**

**AB:** GIZ has created a parallel structure in the communities; it has created what they call settlement development committees. These are structures parallel to local council administration and are directly linked to GIZ. The chairpersons to these committees submit reports to GIZ on what they have achieved in the communities. There are also other structures that are on the ground—they are called farmer field schools. These link directly to agriculture and livelihood departments. They have created other committees such as energy saving committees for energy saving stoves, village health teams for health matters GIZ works in that framework. We work with both the chairpersons of settlement development committees and the local councils to link up with the community.

**KB: How do you fit theatre in the general cultural background of the community?**

**AB:** In the process of using theatre we work in framework of the project that is, in the context of the departments of nutrition, infrastructure, conflict management sanitation and hygiene. If for example we are working on nutrition, we usually start by talking to GIZ attempting to find out their opinion on the major problems confronting the community. We then talk to the council of elders and opinion leaders, seeking their opinion of the key problems and cultural inclination, they also talk to the politicians and other community leaders and finally the communities. From the discussion with the major stakeholder, they develop a script. The script is then preview by discussing it with elders, GIZ and politicians after performance. It is then performed before the communities who are a very important stakeholder in this process. The outcome of the performance is monitored and evaluated.

**KB: How is your TFD work different or similar to the usually TFD process?**

**AB:** I borrow a lot from Boal in my work. I love to see people talk about their problems. I also borrow from the training mainly from Clause an adviser for GIZ. He has long standing experience with the student of Boal. We differ from conventional TFD in terms of the aspects of improvisation, and the idea that the community should perform the drama. Whereas TFD relies on improvisation, for us we use prepackaged scripts. We started with using improvisation but later changed to scripted drama because improvisation would yield so many different words with different shades of meaning and yielding different reactions. So we discovered that reactions would shift from one to another, making our performances to lack focus. This would also make it difficult to measure the outcome of the process. We also use the charrette approaches to community participation which involves selecting people you have to deal with from different sections of the society. We also sometimes use the Delphi approach where we can choose to work with one category of people. This has not been applied as yet. The other aspect we have been using is building bridges participatory theatre involving other approaches such as stepping stones.

**Appendix 14: international engagement awards expression of interest form  
Project team (must include biomedical expertise)**

**Name of project leader, role and organisation**

Mr. Keneth Bamaturaki will double as project convener and leader. Keneth Bamaturaki taught community theatre for development at Makerere University, Uganda from 2003 to 2010. He then received a commonwealth scholarship funded by the UK Department for International Development to pursue a PhD at the University of Exeter, in the UK. He is currently in the final stages of submitting his doctoral thesis. His doctoral research focused on examining Theatre for Development as a tool for community engagement and dialogue in Uganda. Keneth has extensive experience in devising performance and the application of theatre in community settings. He will use this experience in facilitating the community performance processes ensuring that the members of the community are engaged as veritable partners in the process of building healthier communities.

**Details of project partner(s)**

Dr. Miph Musoke holds a PhD from University of New South Wales and is a Professor at Nkumba University. He has a long-standing experience as a biomedical science practitioner. He served in the Ministry of Health in Uganda for about 25 years holding positions such as Scientific Officer and Acting Director laboratory services. At the ministry of health he led several projects dealing with viral infections such as HIV/AIDS, Ebola, Marburg and other dangerous pathogenic microorganisms. He was recognised by WHO for his contribution in combating the Ebola epidemic which hit Uganda in 2000. Over years he has served on a number of research projects including those under United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), World Health Organisation (WHO), World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, and also Third World Academy of Sciences (Italy).



Mr. Rusoke Taddeo holds a MSc. in Environmental Health and teaches community health at Nkumba University, Uganda. His expertise in environmental and community health will be pivotal in guiding the project team on environmental health issues. He has a deep experience in socio-cultural programmes in health promotion, research in Health Services Management, and has participated in advocacy for the right to health in Uganda.

Mrs. Grace Mary Mbabazi holds an Msc. Investment and Banking from Makerere University and teaches at Mountains of the Moon University. She has deep interest and experience in participatory research processes for community development. She will bring to the project this experience to help in community mobilising and sustainable group building.

#### Background information and location of activity (max 200 words)

Please provide brief background to the project and the geographical location of the engagement work

This project will be located in Masese Division, Jinja municipality an urban area composed of a host of fishing communities. These communities are known for innumerable health problems such as HIV/AIDS, sanitation related diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery. These communities are exposed to multiple health risk factors such as binge drinking, sex trade and poor sanitation and hygiene. The communities are centres of illegal sex trade where sex workers target men who are assumed to be involved in a lucrative fishing business. Recent biomedical research indicates a drastic increase in new HIV infections in fishing communities around Lake Victoria. For example, Opio & Mulumba, (2013) discovered that HIV prevalence was high among respondents reporting 3 or more lifetime sexual partners (25.3%) than in those reporting less numbers (10.8%) and that HIV prevalence was higher among uncircumcised men (27%) than in circumcised men (11%). Kiwanuka & Et'al, (2014),

biomedical scientists from Makerere University and Uganda Virus Institute discovered a higher risk of HIV infection among young people 25–29 years and 18–24 years relative to 30 years. Their study also indicated that HIV incidence increased by frequency of alcohol drinking. Kiwanuka and colleagues concluded that HIV-1 incidence in general fisher folk population along L.Victoria, Uganda, is high and is mainly associated with young age and alcohol drinking necessitating urgent HIV prevention and control strategies this population. The aim of this project is to facilitate a forum in which the communities can dialogue on these issues through participatory performance processes.

**Who do you aim to engage and why? (max 200 words)**

**Describe who your target audience is and what you hope to achieve**

This project aims to engage peri-urban fishing communities in the process of collective analysis of health issues so that they may collectively strategise for action to engender a healthier population. The project is envisaged to be intergenerational on one hand and intra-gender and inter-gender on the other. It will be intergenerational in that it will privilege the participation of various age groups in the community namely; young children 10-16years, young people aged 18-30years, middle aged people 30-40years and the elders. The project will be intra-gender because in the initial stages females will be engaged in their own workshops while the males will be engaged in their own. The aim of this is not to create a sharp division between sexes but to create a free atmosphere in which individuals can dialogue and tell stories relating to their unique health needs.

In the advanced stages however, the project will become inter-gender as all the sexes and age groups will come together to collectively share their needs and strategise for collective action. The goal of the project is to provide a community collective learning forum where the people reflect on their health needs, a process envisaged to foster individual and group empowerment and/or transformation.

**Details of method (max 200 words)**

**Please describe *what* you will do and *how* your project will engage people with biomedical science**

Our project will deploy participatory performance processes such as Community Theatre for Development (TfD). In doing so, the project will adopt a community workshop approach involving a series of meetings with the various age groups where the community will engage in participatory research techniques such as body mapping, body imaging and image theatre, storytelling, literary skills such as letter writing, role play and participatory film to collectively explore not only the health problems affecting their lives but the plausible opportunities available to remedy them.

Having identified the problems, the project will then engage the community in deeper analysis of issues which will culminate in a democratic process of prioritising the health problems and opportunities. The ethical underpinning of the project will to give voice and engender agency among the people to choose what they consider their most pressing health needs and the opportunities. Community performances will then emerge out of the process of analysing, synthesizing and making performances around the prioritised health problems and opportunities. The thrust of the project will be to privilege the collective participation of community in all the stages of the process in order to foster community reflection, dialogue and ownership of the issues at hand. The process is expected to result into an awakening of critical consciousness which will hopefully lead to collective action for healthier communities.

For further information please contact:

International Engagement Awards

The Wellcome Trust

Gibbs Building

215 Euston Road

London NW1 2BE

**T +44 (0)20 7611 5757**

**[EPGrants@wellcome.ac.uk](mailto:EPGrants@wellcome.ac.uk)**

**Appendix 15: Feedback on the expression of interest for the Wellcome Trust International Engagement Awards.**

Gill, Sarah <S.Gill@wellcome.ac.uk>

To

Kenneth Bamuturaki Public Engagement

08/21/15 at 12:53 PM

Dear Keneth,

Thank you for your expression of interest. We would like to invite you to submit a full application form. The International Engagement Award application form is now available on our new grants system, Wellcome Trust Grant Tracker. You will need to register before completing the form. To register please follow this link <https://wtgrants.wellcome.ac.uk/>.

Once registered, please follow the link provided under the heading 'New Application.' This will take you to a list of all current open funding rounds. Please navigate to the 'Public Engagement' tab where you will see the International Engagement Award (small) application form listed. Click 'apply' to proceed with your application. If you have any problems with registering or accessing the application, please contact +44 (0)20 7611 8383 or [gtsupport@wellcome.ac.uk](mailto:gtsupport@wellcome.ac.uk).

The deadline for submitting your application on Wellcome Trust Grant Tracker is Friday 11th September 2015.

I would like to add it is fantastic you have such a diverse project team and are aiming to strengthen capacity within the community to conduct future community engagement with biomedical research and health. I think it will be important in your full application to be clear on what success looks like and how you measure the impact of your project. For instance, how will you know and measure "an awakening of critical consciousness" within the communities? You also might want to ensure that your evaluation looks at everyone involved in the project, not just the community, and also that you capture your own learning as an organisation.

In addition I would recommend you consider how you might engage and facilitate the group when all sexes and age groups come together and discuss health risks you outlined such as binge drinking and the sex trade, especially as young children will be

involved. Finally, as you are targeting different audience groups, it will also be important to understand why the different public engagement methods you have outlined are the best ways of engaging your chosen audiences.

I hope this is helpful. Please do let us know if you have any further questions as you complete the form.

Best wishes

Sarah Gill Grants Adviser – Culture & Society

The Wellcome Trust 215 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

## **Appendix 16: Details of the proposal for community health engagement TfD project in Masese.**

### **Why: Aims and Objectives of the Project**

The goal of the project is to provide a collective learning forum where the people will reflect on their health needs and opportunities, a process envisaged to foster individual and group empowerment and/or transformation. It is aimed to facilitate a process in which the communities can dialogue on their health needs and opportunities through participatory performance processes. The thrust of the project will be to privilege the collective participation of community in all the stages of the process in order to foster community reflection, dialogue and ownership of the issues at hand.

The process is expected to result into an awakening of critical consciousness which will hopefully lead to individual and collective action for healthier communities (conscientisation). Critical consciousness is expected to be evidenced by change in behaviour and attitude in issues related to healthy living such as HIV counselling and testing, decision to adopt responsible sexuality, boiling drinking water, responsible use of alcohol, and regular deworming and stool checks for helminthic infection including Schistosomiasis (bilharzia).

### **Method of Delivery and Strategies of Public Engagement**

#### **Project Design**

The project is envisaged to be intergenerational on one hand and intra-gender and inter-gender on the other. It will be intergenerational in that it will privilege the participation of various age groups in the community namely: young children 10-16years, young people aged 18-30years, middle aged people 30-40years and the elders. The project will be intra-gender because in the initial stages females will be engaged in their own workshops while the males will be engaged in their own.

The aim of such a project design is not to create a sharp division between sexes but to create a scare-free atmosphere in which individuals can dialogue and tell stories relating to their unique health needs. Due to Africa's patriarchal society, women are groomed into a culture of silence and powerlessness, which makes them lack voice on

issues affecting their health. For example, one of the reasons responsible for high new HIV infections is the acute lack of voice among the women on issues such as sexuality, economic rights, choosing a marriage partner and HIV testing and counselling. It is hoped that engaging with them in their own groups will empower them to exercise their voice in respect to these and similar issues and finally engage in a big dialogue with the general community.

In the advanced stages however, the project will become inter-gender as all the sexes and age groups will come together to collectively share their unique needs and strategise for collective action. In the initial stages, because of logistical considerations (we shall pay transport and refreshment); we intend to mobilise a maximum number of 10 participants for each age group. In brief, the groups will include young boys aged 10-16, young girls aged 10-16, young men aged 18-30, young women aged 18-30, middle aged men 30-40, middle aged women 30-40 and the elders. It is hoped that the elders will find it easier to work together in a combined group of males and females. Hence, in total, there will be 7 groups which will give us 70 initial participants. As a desirable health development gesture, the participant groups will have subsidised medical charges to be arranged at clinics of their choice. Periodic free health education will be given to non-participants.

All our engagements will be scheduled on the weekend. We prefer the weekends because this is when most people have time to attend community meetings after a busy working week. We shall be working concurrently with two groups and our diverse team of four facilitators will facilitate this.

The schedule for the community engagement will be discussed and agreed upon with the people during the introductory workshop arranged through village chiefs- Local Councils. For the purpose of this proposal however, we suggest a schedule similar to the one in the Table 1.

Day of the week	time	Peer group
Saturday	2-4pm	Young boys 10-16years
	2-4pm	Young girls aged 10-16years
	4-6pm	Young women aged 18-30
	4-6pm	Young men aged 18-30



Sunday	2-4pm	Middle aged women 30-40
	2-4pm	Middle aged men 30-40
	4-6pm	Elders combined men and women

In the advanced stages of the process, after fifteen weeks of community engagement, the project will expand its scope of mobilisation to target a larger population for health education in particular. It is hoped that by this time, the participants will have analysed their health issues, created artistic pieces and now working towards sharing the output of their engagement. Mobilisation strategies for an expanded audience will be discussed and implemented by the participating community members including leaders at parish level.

#### Methods of Community Engagement

Our project will deploy participatory performance processes such as Community Theatre for Development (TfD), Participatory Film and Stepping Stones. In doing so, the project will adopt a community workshop approach involving a series of meetings with the various age groups where the community will engage in participatory research techniques such as body mapping, body imaging and image theatre, storytelling, literary skills such as letter writing, role play and participatory film to collectively explore not only the health problems affecting their lives but the plausible opportunities available to remedy them.

Having identified the problems, the project will then engage the community in deeper analysis of issues which will culminate in a democratic process of prioritising the health problems and opportunities. In the process of community research, we shall not only be looking at what the people consider their health problems but also the available opportunities to transform the situation. Opportunities could take the form of: 1. Free education health policies designed by the Ministry of Health and the local government department of health, and how the people can exploit them to improve their health. 2. What the people themselves think they can do to cause a fundamental change in their attitude to solving health problems affecting them.

Peer theatre performances will then emerge out of the process of analysing, synthesizing and making performances around the prioritised health problems and opportunities. Having developed the performances, the age groups and genders will perform their pieces to other age groups and genders in what will be dubbed the intergeneration performance. Following the intergeneration performance, the project will gear up to a wider audience in which the community participants will perform to their wider community.

## **Strategies of Implementing the Project**

### **Preparation and Planning Meetings**

This project brings together practitioners of community health research with diverse professional experience. This is not being interpreted as a drawback but an opportunity which has seen different experts bring together ideas to engender effective and professional public engagement working closely with local village chiefs and associated health officials. This has been and will continue to be achieved through facilitators' preparation and planning meetings. In the build up to the project, facilitators will hold meetings closely working with stakeholders such as Local Councils and District Health Officials to galvanise ideas, develop a deeper working relationship and plan the first sessions of the engagement. Facilitators will do informal research on community health and collate information during the meetings. They will work towards implementing a unified concept of community engagement.

### **Negotiating Entry into the Community and Community Mobilisation**

We plan to use the window of the existing cultural, civil and performance groups as our entry to the community. We are already in contact with one community based group, Youth Legacy Africa, a community based group specialised in doing peer education for the youth.

We also plan to work in partnership with the local political leadership, especially the established Local Council (LC) structure at the village level. Being opinion leaders in the community, the LC chairpersons and councillors will find it easy to attract members of

the people to join the project with a view of building a community ready to alleviate their health problems.

In the Ugandan health management structure, every village has a Village Health Team (VHT) composed of persons of integrity elected by the people and respected by the village community as opinion leaders. The VHT receive training from their local government health department and help in giving the people essential health advice on subjects such as reproductive health, malaria control and primary health care. We hope to seek the involvement of these VHTs in community mobilisation process. Interaction will also take place through interacting with office of District Health Office, as alluded to above.

### **The first Community Workshop/Introduction Workshop**

There will be a first community workshop or introductory workshop. In the first community workshop, the community will be briefed about the nature of the project, its aims, objectives and structure. It will be incumbent upon the project facilitating team to succinctly explain the project to the participants so they may make informed decisions. This workshop will be crucial as it will facilitate the following aspects of the project:

1. Making an 'engagement contract' between the project facilitating team and the participants; agreeing on the aims and objectives of the project. In this workshop the participants will exchange ideas and agree on plans for the first few engagements.
2. It will be a forum where potential participants will be allowed to make informed decisions on whether or not to continue with the project. This means it will be a time to create a 'coalition of the willing'. It will be the time for the participants to think about the commitment they be making relating to their availability on the specified days and times.
3. There will be a one-to-one informal interview of about 15 minutes with one of the facilitators where individual concerns will be discussed.
4. On a whole, the aim of the introductory workshop will be to interest the people in the project and as such it will be as informative as possible so that potential participants can make informed choices.

## **Key Milestones and Expected Outcomes**

The key milestones of the project will be deciphered from the quality of the process of engagement throughout the project. This means that any choices and decisions made by the facilitating team should be properly reflected upon as each action will be critical in the empowerment and transformation of the community in solving their health problems.

So, as a way of ascertaining whether the goal of the project is being achieved, we shall be asking ourselves these or similar questions:

1. How enthusiastic are the participants in telling the stories concerning their health needs?
2. What is the quality of engagement? Do we have participants who joined the project with little interest but have shown increase energy with the progression of the project?
3. Is the process building towards a general consensus of what the community considers its key health problems and the desired action to be taken to remedy the situation?

In order to be watchful of the emerging milestones of the project, the project facilitators and the participating community will engage in continued sessions of reflection—reflection in action.

Nevertheless, whereas we envisage the milestones of our project in terms of continued transformation enabled through collective learning, we also foresee tangible results of our project evidenced through the people's commitment to take action and manage their health appropriately. We hope that from their learning, participants will make important choices such as responsible use of alcohol, practicing responsible sexuality, boiling drinking water and going to lab checks for intestinal helminths. We will ascertain the extent of these outcomes through reflective interviews with participants in a post project evaluation.

## **Facilitators' planning and reflective meetings**

Facilitators' planning and reflective meetings will be frequently held during the course of the project. These meetings will be held outside the community engagement (during the team's own time) and will always consider the quality of the process of engagement, areas that need improvement and strong points which need to be re-emphasized. Such planning and reflective meetings will be at the centre of anchoring our learning to ensure improved practice in the project at hand and in future engagements.

## **Appendix 17: Our funding application to Echoing Green for the TRAWOCA programme.**

### Short Answer Questions - Worksheet

This document is a list of the short answer questions from the Echoing Green Fellowship application. We encourage you to use this worksheet to draft and refine your answers before pasting them into the appropriate fields in the application website.

Take careful note of the character limits for each essay question, and be sure you don't exceed this number in your response. (Character limits *includespaces*- you may wish to use [wordcount.us](http://wordcount.us) to help count characters.) Keep your responses concise and focused—each word should be important!

### **Section 1: OVERVIEW**

#### **Briefly describe the problem your organization will address. (250 characters)**

TRAWOCA will address the problem of gender disparity and lack of voice among women and girls in Uganda in socio- economic development programs such as education, participation in economic activity and human rights by transforming people's attitudes.

#### **Briefly describe who or what your organization will help. (250 characters)**

Through collective dialogue with communities, we aim to transform the potential of women and girls and increase their voice in matters pertinent to development and empower communities to understand the central role of women in social development.

**Briefly describe how your organization will solve the problem described above. (250 characters)**

Our approach will centre on mobilising and building groups to provide forums for dialogue and critical analysis of the problems that impede women's and girl's prospects. This will foster collective empowerment and communal strategies for change.

### Section 2: The Problem

Describe the problem your organization will address in detail. (750 characters)

Ugandan grassroots women and girls remain in margins in terms of participation in education, the economy and decision making. They are about twice as illiterate (43%) compared to men (26%), and dominate (74%) in the informal non-waged, unskilled and drudgery technique-based labour force. Only 29% of the girls complete lower secondary education. They produce 70% of the total agricultural output but ownership and control over land, their labour and above all the benefits thereof is minimal. While 97% of women have access to land for farming, only 8% have leasehold. This denies them collateral for credit in the formal banking system. 41% of women endure domestic violence and their participation in community activities requires men's approval.

**Explain the causes of this problem and why the problem still exists. (500 characters)**

Women remain in the margins because of cultural perceptions which second rate women and girls. Patriarchal traditions uphold the interests and needs of men over those of women. Society holds that women should not own property since economic power makes them uncontrollable. Girls are educated so they know how to read and write or be better mothers rather than fostering their empowerment. Such attitudes persist because little effort has been made to transform and foster grassroots understanding.

### **Section 3: The Solution**

**Describe the specific product(s) or program(s) your organization will implement to solve the problem. (1,000 characters)**

While TRAWOCA intends to focus on women, we believe the voice and potential of women can best be amplified through collective dialogue with men. We plan to facilitate community based and school based programs to foster a sustained engagement with people. The community based program will mobilize men and women into groups in which the people shall engage in participatory theatre based processes such as storytelling, image theatre, body mapping and drawing to identify the problems that hinder the potential of women and girls. Through dialogue, people shall engage in

problem analysis and prioritization, collective theatre making, performance and strategizing for action. The school based program will target young people who have been socialized by the patriarchal system to marginalize women and girls. We shall work with partner schools on a theatre in education program in which boys and girls will collectively analyze their problems and participate in theatre making and performance.

**How your idea is innovative compared to others addressing the problem?  
(1,000 characters)**

Contemporary approaches to social empowerment by gender focused NGOs in Uganda are mostly top-down adopting a diffusion of innovations or trickle down model. The NGOs have mainly focused on top down activities such as advocacy at the national level. While advocacy is vital, the major problem is lack of linkages between advocacy at the top and community initiatives geared at the empowerment of women. Lack of engagement with the grassroots women makes the advocacy to lack the heartfelt needs of the women. Our approach is novel because we plan to adopt a bottom-up cultural process where the very victims of oppression will be engaged in analyzing their needs in dialogue with one another and with the oppressive structures. We aspire to adopt the unique tenets of collective participation, critical reflection and dialogue enabled by our theatre making/performance and Stepping Stones program. This will prompt a process of cultural synthesis and transform women into agents of their own change.

**How will the lives of the target population be better because of your organization's work? (1,000 characters)**

Our collective engagement practice will foster human transformation by helping the women and girls feel and exercise their human potential (power within), the very essence of empowerment. By participating in dialogical encounter with their communities, the women and girls will be empowered to exercise their muffled voices in issues that affect their lives—making choices concerning their sexuality and reproductive health, participation in income generating activities and girl child education. We hope to change attitudes and increase girl child enrolment and retention in school, reduce violence against women and enhance their right to participate in economic



development. Our work will enhance concrete positive change through creation of women savings and cooperative groups, demonstration livestock projects and collective income projects such as piggery, horticulture and poultry. In the long run, we hope to establish a girl child education centre for formal and vocational training.

**How will you measure the success of your organization? (500 characters)**

We shall reflect on our work and measure success by asking: how critically engaging is our process of work? How far is it challenging the status quo? To what extent are we raising women and girls' voices? How many men are now willing to support women in income activities and uphold their right to own property? How far have the attitudes to girl child education changed in the communities. What is the level of girl child retention in school? What is the level of collective action among the women?

**Section 4: Budget**

**Describe how you expect your organization to grow over the next two years. (1,000 characters)**

The first two years will be an establishment phase. We envisage a fully established organization with well equipped and furnished office space by the end of two years. We need 5 motor cycles and 2 vehicles to help us reach the communities. Initially we plan to engage ten different communities but expand our work to 25 communities by the end of two years. We plan to break the ground by engaging the local and opinion leadership who include the cultural leaders, the local councillors and women leaders in various communities. These will help in connecting us with the communities, mobilizing and building collective empowerment forums. Initially, we shall employ full time field staff (5 community mobilisers, 2 credit and savings officers and 2 agricultural officers) who will work closely with us to mobilize and build sustainable groups. They will help to put in action the decisions made in collective learning forums. We shall employ more field staff as we expand to other community settings.

**Section 5: Fellowship Specific Questions**

Black Male Achievement Fellowship Applicants ONLY: Why are you dedicated to improving the life outcomes of black men and boys in the United States? (500 characters)

**Climate Fellowship Applicants ONLY: Why are you dedicated to the issue of climate change? (500 characters)**

### **Section 6: The Applicant**

**When and how did you come up with the idea for the organization? (500 characters)**

In 2014, Grace and I co-facilitated an eight weeks project in a community school using participatory theatre to empower children to explore the major child rights abuses in their community. The children's pieces showed us that prejudice against girls and women was endemic. Their plays tackled issues such as parents' refusal to pay girls' school fees and violence against girls and women. This compelled us to consider an organization focusing on women's concerns to transform community attitudes.

**Explain why you are so passionate about the problem and the population you described above. (1,000 characters)**

We believe that women are the cornerstone of community wellbeing. We envision that empowering women and girls by increasing their participation in education and the economy effectively translates into transformation of whole communities. Our slogan is: empower women and transform whole communities. We trust educating girls is one of the most important investments that any country can make in its own future. Studies show that educating girls helps to make communities and societies healthier, wealthier and safer, and can also help to reduce child deaths, improve maternal health and tackle the spread of HIV and AIDS. Women with at least a basic education are much less likely to be poor. An infant born to an educated woman is much more likely to survive until adulthood. In Africa, children of mothers who receive five years of primary education are 40 per cent more likely to live beyond age five. Children who have been to secondary school are four times less likely to be infected with HIV.

**What skills or experiences demonstrate that you will be able to attract money, people, and other resources to your organization? (1,000 characters)**

I am a recipient of the government of Uganda scholarship for first degree studies, the UNESCO/Keizo Obuchi fellowship for young scholars for research on the efficacy of participatory theatre in post conflict peace building, the British Institute in Eastern Africa research award and the prestigious Commonwealth Doctoral Scholarship. These awards testify to my ability to make well conceptualized and plausible funding proposals. The expected development impact aspect of my commonwealth scholarship application was very strong that the commission sought my permission to use it in workshops as an exemplar of effective applications. In our ongoing theatre research project with fishing communities on Collective Performance for Improved Health, Grace and I have shown that we can attract people and institutional support to our cause. We have attracted to our team a biomedical sciences professor and a community health scientist which brings a multidisciplinary flavour to our work.

**Describe an example of your entrepreneurial spirit. (750 characters)**

In 2010, Grace and I got concerned about the surging heat wave in the rift valley region of Uganda. Energy intensive activities such as tobacco growing threatened the survival of natural forests. The catchment areas had been completely denuded. Using our savings, we started a green project aimed at mobilizing communities to participate in mitigating the adverse impacts of environmental degradation. The ongoing project involves tree planting and encouraging environmental friendly income activities such as coffee growing, bee keeping, fruit farming and swine production. We implore people to plant indigenous trees to provide sheds for the coffee and bee hives. We have planted 3000 trees and hope to plant 10000 trees in the next five years.

**Provide one or two examples of your ability to overcome adversity. (1,000 characters)**

Keneth: In 2012 while on my doctoral studies in the UK, I became ill suffering from appendicitis. The procedure on the appendix indicated that the appendix was very bad and I was hospitalized for 10 days. I took long to recover and lacked to support of my

family who were in Uganda. I did not know how I could cope with being ill away from my family. The illness almost compelled me to abandon my studies. I sought the support of my doctoral supervisor who invited me to her home until I recovered well. I also sought emotional support from the University of Exeter. Grace: I faced adversity in my Master's Degree course. I used to work during the day and study in the evening. I did not have my own car and by the time the lectures would end, it would be late to get a commuter taxi. This put my pursuit of post graduate training in great peril. Instead of abandoning my vision, I sought the support of classmates who would drive me home and then proceed to their homes for our entire coursework period.

**Describe one past experience or accomplishment that demonstrates your leadership potential. (1,000 characters)**

Keneth: From 2010-2012, I was the coordinator of all the commonwealth scholars from South-western England involving universities (Bath, Plymouth, Exeter and Bristol). I was responsible for organizing region events - research workshops and cultural shows with a view of developing academic and social networks. This was not always easy as scholars had unique academic engagements. I would engage the scholars via email and face book to seek their input in our planned event and present the agreed program to the Regional Networks Officer in London who would then communicate to scholars. Grace: As a lecturer, I work diligently to engage and motivate students so that they learn, think critically, become creative, and ultimately become life-long learners and leaders. I have continuously worked to develop and maintain positive relationships with students by establishing mutual respect, trust, and a safe environment for learning. I motivate my students by being committed, flexible, and innovative.

**Section 7: Previous Applicants**

Since you have applied for an Echoing Green Fellowship before, what has changed about you as an applicant since your last application? (500 characters)

## **Section 8: Partnership Questions**

**Please note: this section is only required for those applying with a partner.**

**How did you come to start this organization together? How long have you known each other, and in what contexts? (500 characters)**

Since 2005 when we first met at Makerere University, we got interested in one another's career plans. I was interested in applying my applied theatre skills in social empowerment processes. Grace had the vision of using her business skills to foster financial literacy among rural women and youths. We have since collaborated on various professional and social activities in child rights, health and agro forestry. We have equal stakes in this organization stemming from our shared career visions.

**Describe your individual roles within the organization and the nature of your working relationship. (500 characters)**

I will be the Executive Director responsible for the overall leadership of the organization, chairing executive committee meetings and promoting effective communication with shareholders. I will in conjunction with Grace develop proposals and programs for valuable community mobilisation and engagement. Grace will be the Associate Executive Director in charge of the financial and program administration of the organization. Both of us will work with the field staff to foster organizational goals.

## **Appendix 18: Description of some games and exercises used in the child rights TfD project**

### **1. The hunting a lion game**

Essentially, it's a journey in which a leader leads the group through an African landscape in search for a lion. The leader explains the mission to the group and urges everyone to follow him or her.

On the journey there is a thick jungle, a swampy river, heavy rain, holes in the ground, desert, dangerous animals, hunters etc. On arriving at each new landscape, the leader instructs how to move across it or otherwise cope with the challenge. Heightened physicalisation is the norm, using where possible the spatial characteristics of the real environment: the room. What happens when a lion is finally tracked down is up to you, but animal lovers will probably balk at anything than a happy ending. This game is marked with playfulness, physicality, a reckless spirit and a sense of connectedness between players. (Adopted from Johnston, 2010: 47)

### **2. Act the Fact**

Ask the group to move around the room. Ask people to get into groups of a certain number: twos, threes, fours etc. In their group they have to decide on something they have in common with each other and then act it out, without saying it, for example they all enjoy football. When all the groups have finished preparing something, ask them to 'act their fact' for other groups to guess. Repeat with different size groups (Adopted from Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 42).

### **3. Bomb and Shield**

Ask everyone to decide on one person in the group who is their 'bomb' for the purpose of this game. When you say go, everyone must try and get far away from their 'bomb' as possible within the room. Call out 'freeze'. Next, everyone decides on a 'shield' who must be between them and their bomb for protection. On 'go', everyone must try and stay protected and when their bomb or shield moves, they must move to keep protected. Call out 'freeze'.

### **Feedback and discussion**

On freezing the game again, ask the people to look at where they are in relation to their bomb and shield. If the bomb explodes now, would they be protected?... (Adopted from Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 47).

#### **4. Blind Leading**

Ask everyone to find a partner and label each other A and B. A closes her eyes and B gently takes A's hand so that there is a point of contact between them. In silence, B moves A around the room taking care not to bump into anyone or anything. Only if B feels that A is OK, should he/she speed up, and explore the possibilities more, always putting A's safety first. After a few minutes, B brings A to a halt. Change around so that A is leading B. Using his/her experience of the game, A can now lead B around the room.

### **Feedback and discussion**

Allow the pair to feedback to each other and their experience of the exercise. Bring the whole group together. What was it like to be led? What was it like leading? What did participants feel more comfortable with? Why? (Adopted from Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 53).

#### **5. Small Group Trust**

Get into groups of at least five participants, standing in a circle. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the circle with their eyes closed and their hands either by their side or across their chest. The rest of the group stand with one foot behind so that they can support the body weight of the volunteer. When ready ask the volunteer to let themselves fall, pivoting from their feet, allowing the group to move him/ her back and forth around the circle. If the volunteer feels relaxed and confident, then widen the circle, if the volunteer is nervous, come closer in, swap after a few minutes. Give everyone the opportunity to be in the centre.

## **Feedback and discussion**

Offer the participants the opportunity to voice out their experience of the exercise (Adopted from Clifford & Hermann, 1999: 56).

## **Tug of War**

Divide the group into two teams. Explain that you are going to stage a tug of war between the teams. Only you have forgotten a rope. So the tug of war will have to be staged as if the rope was really there. It does not matter who wins, what's important is to see the tug of war played in such a way as it looks real with two sides moving back and forth ( but without the rope of course). Almost always the desire to win will come to the surface and the two teams will instinctively move backwards—even though a 'win' proves nothing. Usually the exercise has to be run for two or three times before a convincing illusion is achieved(Adopted from Johnston, 2010: 40).



## **Appendix 19: The playlets emerging from the two weeks creative process in the school child rights TfD project**

### **Play 1**

The first performance was about a family featuring father and mother and their two daughters. One evening as mother is travelling back home, she is short dead by armed assailants. After sometime, dad gets married to another woman who comes to the home with her two children. The woman subjects her step children to immense suffering by flogging them. She gives special favours to her own children. For example, she exempts them from doing house work. They are also given a special privilege of playing while the orphans are forbidden from playing. When the children report to their dad that they are being mistreated by their step mother, he does not help them. He instead becomes complicit in their suffering. It was clear from the performance that the participants wanted to articulate the rampant problem of child torture and discrimination.

### **Play 2**

The second performance was about denying children the right to education. It featured a family of father and mother, their son and daughter. Dad is very lazy—he does not want to find work and earn a living. Mother admonishes him, “go out and find work so that we are able to find bread and school fees for our children.” Instead of hiding mother’s advice, father resorts to sleeping even during the day. The result is that the children are sent home for school fees which the family cannot provide. The family is seen going out to seek counsel from grandfather on whether to keep the children in school or not. Grandfather wrongly advises them saying, “Do you see us here? We did not go to school, but we have everything we need. We have land, buildings and animals. Let the children stop going to school. Let the boy begin to provide manual labour at construction sites and let the girl go and find a man and get married.” After three days of absence from school, a concerned school teacher goes to their home to find out why the children are no longer attending school. She later informs the relevant authorities—the police inspector who arrests the parents.

### **Play 3**

The third performance explored the issue of discriminating children based on sex. It revolved around a father who is disgruntled that all the children in his home are girls. He is worried that even the child his pregnant wife is expecting could be a girl. He takes his pregnant wife to a hospital scan to ascertain the sex of the baby. On finding out that the expected baby is a girl, he divorces the woman. The woman leaves behind two girls who are subjected to untold suffering by their dad on account of being girls who cannot be rightful heirs. He denies them food and tortures them by flogging. Because of hunger, the children use some of his money to buy something to eat. This is interpreted as theft by their father who responds by whipping them and burning their hands by forcing them into kitchen fire.

### **Play 4**

The last performance treated the problem of child sacrifice. The play featured a married woman who has failed to conceive for nine years. This woman laments that most of the newly married women in the neighbourhood have given birth to children. In her misery, she seeks the counsel of a woman in the neighbourhood who advises her to consult a witch doctor. The witch says he will help her conceive on condition that she brings a child to the shrine for sacrifice. With the help of the men in the shrine, the woman kidnaps a child on his way to the shop and takes him to the shrine. The body of the beheaded child is later found in the forest which throws the whole village in confusion. At the end of the performance, everybody is confronted with the question, "what should we do to stop this evil practice of sacrificing children?"

## **Appendix 20: Some field notes**

20 May 2014

Today I had gone to IATM's offices at Makerere-Kavule. My aim was to find out if IATM had any on-going programme of forum theatre in which I would take part as a participant observer for my PhD research. There was not any on-going programme since the organisation was in recess waiting for funding. But they were planning a short programme in Kitgum where they would use forum theatre to educate communities about epilepsy. I enquired whether they would involve the community in making the play. I was told that it was IATM which would make the play—the community would not be able to make a good play treating such a serious issue since they were amateurs.

8<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Today, during the house-to-house mobilization, we talked to a lady and introduced to her our idea of a collective community project. In response, the woman expressed fear concerning anything related to community action. We are tired of such community efforts which do not materialize into any tangible gains. Just recently officials claiming to be from the State House (official home of the President of Uganda) came and mobilized us to form a Savings Credit and Cooperative Organization (SACCO). They registered us at a membership fee of Ush 35000, approximately 7 pound sterling. We were in addition supposed to save 20% of any amount a member wished to borrow. At the end of it all, the SACCO unceremoniously closed down resulting into heavy losses for the members. To allay her fear, I informed her of the immediate benefits of her participation by explaining that the aim of our planned community effort was to dialogue and discuss issues similar to the one she had pointed out and that she was welcome to share them in our community forum. Finally, she said 'go and begin, we shall join you later'

10<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Today, I approached the head teacher of St Kizito Primary School, a community school in the area. My aim of meeting her was to make a formal request so that she would allow us to hold our community workshop meetings in the school yard. Before I

could make the request, I shared with her my intent to work with young people in the community so that together we would analyze issues that affect them and find appropriate solutions. I explained to her that the young people would create a play or plays revolving around the issues identified which would finally be performed to the whole community culminating in further community dialogue and action.

She welcomed the idea observing that this provided an opportunity for the school to demonstrate its relevancy to the community. She went on to explain how the Ministry of Education measures the performance of schools observing that, “when the education office is rating school performance, they look at the school’s performance in national examinations and also at the impact the school has made in its immediate community”

December 26 2014

Today I met one of the practitioners of TfD in the GIZ Karamoja projects. We discussed a wide range of issues regarding TfD practice in Karamoja. He noted that one of the factors impacting on their TfD work was that everything—all the major decisions has to be endorsed by the Kampala German office. I asked him why my emails to the programme officer regarding my desire to participate in their field programmes was not answered. He replied that most likely the head office in Kampala did not endorse them.

May 21 2015

Today I was moving around Walukuba Sub County using the *bodaboda* local transport. I came across two first class amenities: A state of art hospital and a school. I asked the cyclist who was riding me what these were. He responded, “those are the Nile International Hospital and Galaxy International School. Parents who take children to Galaxy International School pay over 4 million Uganda shillings (Ushs), approximately 1500 USD per term and a day in Nile International Hospital costs 1million Ushs, approximately 350 USD’.

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