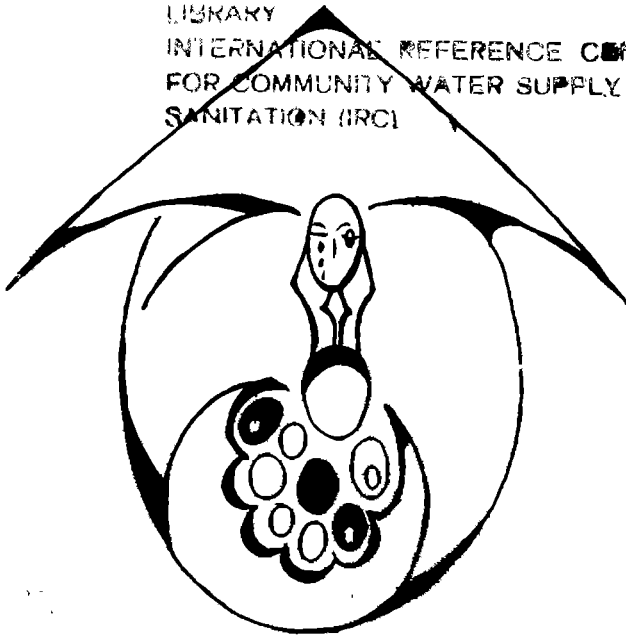


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Drama and Theatre

Communication in Development

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Experiences in Western Kenya

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Edited by Lottie Levert and

Published by:

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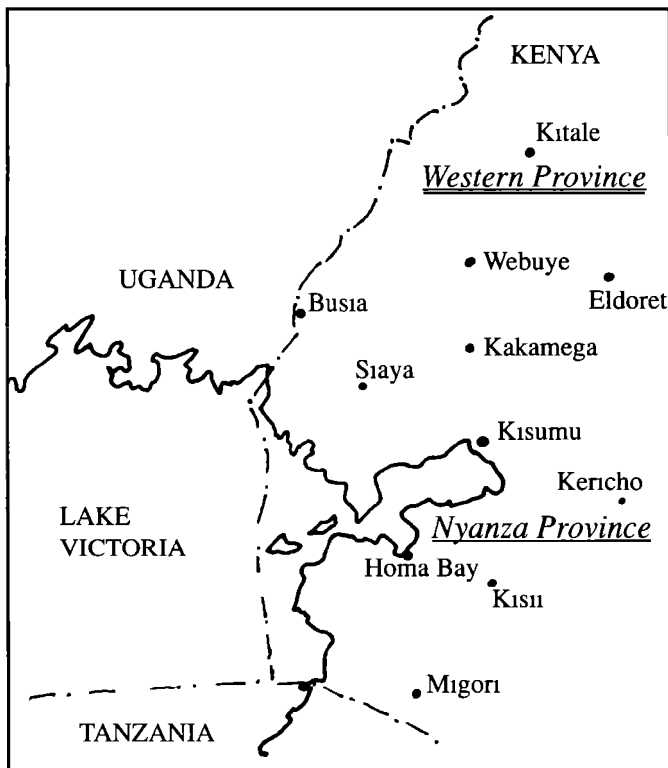
Communication in Development: Experiences in Western Kenya

Edited by Loukie Levert and Opiyo Mumma

Illustrated by Akelo



Kenya Drama/Theatre and Education Association



Map of Western Kenya (Nyanza and Western provinces)

Districts: Bungoma, Busia, Homa Bay, Kakamega, Kisi, Kisumu, Migori, Nyamira, Siaya, and Vihiga

Population*:

Province	Total Area	Population 1989	Population Density
		millions Km ²	millions
Nyanza	12.50	3.5	280
Western	8.30	2.6	317

Major income sources: farming, small scale enterprises, fishing

Major development problems: low income, health (malaria, acute respiratory diseases, waterborn diseases, AIDS and STDs), protected water sources, infra-structure, unemployment.

* Source: Children and Women in Kenya GOK/UNICEF 1992

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Abbreviations

CRUSH	-	Communication Resources for Under 18's on STD's and HIV
DIE	-	Drama in Education
DFM	-	Drama Festival Movement
ECAC	-	Esiapala Community Arts Centre
FTT	-	Free Travelling Theatre
GADECE	-	Kenya Women Literature Group, now Gender and Development Centre
IDEA	-	International Drama and Education Association
IEC	-	Information Education & Communication
KCC	-	Kenya Cultural Centre
KCECC	-	Kamirithu Community Educational Cultural Centre
KDEA	-	Kenya Drama/Theatre and Educational Association
KNT	-	The Kenya National Theatre
MCH	-	Maternal and Child Health
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
NTA	-	Nairobi Theatre Academy
OLD	-	Oral Literature For Development
PCAL	-	The Performing and Creative Arts Centre.
PET	-	Participatory Educational Theatre
PETAC	-	Participatory Educational Theatre
RDWSSP II	-	Rural Domestic Water Supply and Sanitation Programme II
STG	-	Sigoti Teachers Group
TFD	-	Theatre For Development
TIE	-	Theatre In Education
VRP	-	Village Resource Person
WSSC	-	Water Supply and Sanitation Committee
YPT	-	Young Peoples Theatre

1. Introduction



This is a booklet with experiences of drama and theatre practices in Western Kenya. Practices that have in common that they were — in one way or another — aiming at development at a “grassroots” level. Something else they have in common is that these experiences are only known by a limited number of people. Performers are mostly concerned about the now-and-how and not so much about recording their experiences. Literature about these types of experiences is difficult to find.

History of the booklet

However, these experiences can be of great importance to people struggling with communication in development. As more and more institutions become aware of the possibilities of using drama and theatre for development communication, Kenya Drama/Theatre and Education Association (KDEA) realizes the importance of filling this documentation gap. They contacted a number of people to write about their experiences of drama and theatre in Western Kenya. Every one of them became enthusiastic, and so the idea of publishing a booklet was born.

As funds were the limiting factor, the KDEA approached the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Nairobi for financial assistance. They, as well, were very cooperative and, within one month of submitting the proposal, the request was willingly granted: a timely move that made it possible to launch the booklet at the Brisbane World Congress of Drama and Theatre in July 1995. It was even more appropriate after it became known that Kisumu, Western Kenya was selected to host the 1998 World Congress of the International Drama and Education Association (IDEA).

Aim

The overall aim of this booklet is to expose the potential of drama/theatre as a learning medium, a working method and a communication-tool. This could inform grassroots NGOs, educationalists, drama teachers, theatre workers, animators, youth groups, community leaders, development organizations and policy makers.

Contents

The content of the articles in this booklet reflect the views of the writers. It is their experience that they share with the purpose of adding some further development ideas to the already existing ones. The Chapters in the booklet focus on different perspectives of communication, drama, and theatre for development.

The introduction presents the history of this booklet.

Chapter Two, written by Opiyo Mumma, gives definitions and background information on concepts in development communication, drama and theatre.

In Chapter Three Opiyo Mumma presents a model of Theatre For Development and experiences on which this model is built.

Chapter Four is about Oral Literature for Development. Ochieng Anyona describes the experiences of the OLD team.

Chapter Five reveals the history and experiences of the Theatre Festivals held in Western Kenya, in which Opiyo Mumma had a part to play.

In Chapter Six Asenath Bole Odaga discusses Theatre and Women's groups.

Chapter Seven — written by Winnie Oilo-Ogunde — describes the experiences of utilizing indigenous knowledge through folk media and theatre as a resource to promote child care

Chapter Eight is about a drama and theatre methodology in Siaya District in Western Kenya, concerning child labour and adolescent fertility. Opiyo Mumma recorded these experiences.

In Chapter Nine the focus is on the possible impact of theatre for Development in relation to Hygiene Messages. It is authored by Loukie Levert.

Chapter Ten reveals a drama & education environmental experiment by the Sigoti Teachers' Group. Donald Okola and Joyce Colijn were the writers

In Chapter Eleven Roger Chamberlain and his colleagues report on a participatory educational theatre approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Chapter Twelve lists the theatre groups in Western Kenya. Chapter Thirteen gives the background of the writers, while in Chapter Fourteen a glossary of Kiswahili and Luo words can be found

2. Concepts and terms

by Opiyo Mumma



Major consideration in facilitating effective communication for development among various communities lies in relevant definitions relating to the task. In this regard, such operative words as “Communication”, “Development”, and so-called “Grassroots” need to be placed in the improper perspective. This way, the “Development Communicator” would acquire the necessary knowledgeable framework and informed conceptual outlook regarding, for example, how and what to communicate, to whom to communicate, and for what purpose is a given communication effort being undertaken.

The concepts of Development and Communication become especially crucial, as gross misrepresentations about them have tended to yield ineffectual communication strategies, resulting, in turn, in the unsuccessful implementation of development goals.

Looking at “Development”, for example, it becomes clear that several interpretations have accompanied varied attempts at understanding what the concept actually means, or should mean — whether in a generic or in a particularistic sense.

In such a situation, folk media or traditional forms of communication become a bit easier to adapt to local needs. Indeed, there can be no doubt that traditional media can be used effectively in traditional communication as the travelling storyteller, the village crier, folk dramas or theatre, music, song, and dance.

The theatre or drama form can be particularly suitable for grassroots communication because of its self-sustaining potential, its entertainment function, its flexibility in overcoming language barriers, and its huge capacity for popular participation in message design and planning. Like other folk media, folk theatre can be used along with the newer channels and recording techniques for educational programming and replication in other situations

However, to turn theatre or drama into an appropriate tool in communication a number of aspects should be looked into:

- How the qualities of participatory drama/theatre programmes can be observed and measured in the interaction between theatre groups, facilitators in the interaction with audiences or participants.
- The audience/participants perception and interpretation of the theatre/drama programme and the immediate emotional response to it.
- The increase in cognitive and emotional experience that the programme would cause and the change in the audience/participants' opinions and attitudes the programme
- The developmental aspects and how they can be achieved.
- How Theatre For Development (TFD) as an art form may be an agent of change, and what groups of people are likely to benefit from it in learning and developmental solutions in the long term
- Suggestions of techniques and strategies that could inform the theory and practices of those involved in participatory processes in Kenya based on past and current TFD and Educational Theatre Practices.

Definition of Terms

In coming to terms with the topic of participatory drama/theatre there are obviously problems with definitions, as the term is perceived differently by practitioners and theorists. Therefore, before discussing how drama and theatre function as learning mediums and as educational and development methods, definitions of terms are necessary. They are based on usage of terminology and practice.

Educational Drama

Educational Drama is understood to include the study of literary dramatic text, the teaching of drama and theatre skills in the classroom, experiential learning using drama, and the performance of plays, dance dramas, and dramatized poetry by students and community groups. It also incorporates oral literature, theatre for and by children, and theatre and drama practices in schools. What links all these together are the learning elements in the teaching and performances of drama.

Drama In Education

In a school situation Drama In Education (DIE) is both a method and a subject. As a subject on the curriculum, it uses various dramatic elements of movement, voice, concentration, improvization and role-play to aid the personal development of the pupil. As a method it utilizes role-play and acting to teach pupils through experience I take a very distinct view of drama in education and

educational drama: the former I consider be only a small segment of the latter. DIE is understood to be one of the educational drama practices.

Theatre In Education

There are considerable overlaps between DIE techniques and Theatre In Education (TIE) workshops. In TIE a professional group of trained and experienced actor-teachers or teacher-actors prepares relevant material to be presented in schools as programmes. These programmes often involve more than one visit to the school and are researched and targeted for small groups of one or two classes of a specific age. The aim of the programme is essentially educational and uses theatre, drama, and teaching techniques to gain this end. The programme provides an educational aid, resource, and stimulus for both teachers and pupils. This varies from total participation to performance with workshops and discussion, and it requires strong and continuous liaison with teachers and schools. Theatre in Education (TIE) is a method of work used by some theatre companies all the time and by others only occasionally. As a starting point TIE teams act as outside questioning, exploring ideas and values in society through theatre.

Children's Theatre

Children's Theatre involves actors performing plays to children in a theatre or a school. The aim is to entertain and to introduce theatre to children. There is very little physical participation by the children because the groups tend to be large. It is usually associated with 5 to 12-year-old children.

Theatre by Children

Theatre by Children can be for children or for adults. This takes the form of oral performances in the initial stages, which, with the help of the teacher, culminates in performances at Drama Festivals and for the school community

Young People's Theatre

Young People's Theatre (YPT) is an overall title for a range of forms of professional/amateur theatre for children and young people, including TIE. The distinction is that this kind of work is more theatre oriented than TIE/DIE and is normally for an older age range, between 15 and 19 years. Like Children's Theatre, they perform for large groups of young people.

Youth Theatre

Youth Theatre involves groups of children or young adults who get together doing dramas for themselves or for adults, normally in a community or a social hall. Their work can be anything from improvisation to rehearsal and performance of a scripted play.

*Community
Theatre*

Community Theatre involves actors working in and performing to a particular community. The work is normally performance based and, in the Kenyan scene, community members often perform for themselves for entertainment or learning purposes. The product is normally folk culture through song, myth, or dance. Community Theatre has no individual author, and is presented in oral, aural or visual form. The link between TFD and Popular Theatre is located within community performance. Community Theatres in Kenya do not tour much, but perform very much in their area of residence.

Popular Theatre

Popular Theatre as currently practised in Africa involves the participation of amateur players and the whole community and what are seen to be their problems. Problems are analysed in individual and group discussions and are then made into concrete theatrical performances using artistic forms popular or familiar to the community. Public performances for the community are staged to present the problems and invite suggestions for solutions. A post-performance discussion by the performers and audience then charts out what action is to be taken by the community. Popular Theatre is unique in that it uses popular traditional art forms. It transcends Community Theatre by the very nature of its process and overlaps with Theatre For Development (TFD), a theatre movement in its own right.

*The Drama
Festival*

The Drama Festival is understood to mean performances by primary, secondary schools, teacher training and tertiary colleges, non-formal education institutions, and communities. These are at the community, zonal district, provincial, and national levels. Their celebratory nature and their diversity in the use of art forms bring together children, youth, and adults, who express themselves through play, creative dance and dramatized poetry. The principles underlying the Drama Festival are entertainment and education.

*Theatre For
Development*

Theatre For Development (TFD): This movement, like Popular Theatre, recognizes the characteristics of indigenous African performances. Where TFD exists, it is facilitated by a team of theatre experts who work with various types of development and extension agencies, helping them create theatre that will carry a message on such themes as nutrition, literacy, health environment, sanitation, and agriculture around the communities. This kind of theatre varies from straight drama to song and dance. The songs are

usually simple, catchy tunes with a clear message, composed and sung by the extension workers together with the audience. TFD workers fall into groups. government agents and autonomous practitioners They are sometimes animators or facilitators

Nature of Theatre For Development

In this booklet we look at Popular Theatre and TFD experiences in Kenya from educative and developmental points of view. Different critics will come up with different definitions of such terms as “theatre” and “drama”. But for our purposes of explaining what Theatre For Development (TFD) entails, it is important to first underline the differences in the two commonly confused terminologies: “theatre” and “drama”

In the narrower sense of the word, a theatre refers to a building or a place — even in open air — where plays are performed and watched by a live audience. But the term “the theatre” (with the definite article “the”) is not limited to the physical viewing place.

It includes the multiple techniques required for the organization and projection of the dramatic presentation, the numerous and varied personnel, both artistic and technological, engaged in the application of these techniques, and the audience.

Theatre

From the above definition, the term “theatre” therefore connotes a collective enterprise. It includes the place of performance, the actor, the audience, and the technical crew. It is the whole group of people, performers and audience, who come together to create a dramatic function that is termed as theatre.

Drama

On one level, drama refers to the written text consisting of a playwright’s imagined characters and their actions This only at the textual level and therefore strictly exists as the transformation of an individual’s imagination into the written word. On a second level, the dramatic text contains within it the dramatic situations conceived by the dramatist. Therefore, drama can be experienced on an individual level through a reader’s perception while reading a dramatic text.

The point at which theatre and drama merge is when the dramatic action indicated in a script is re-enacted on a stage. Here, drama is transformed into theatre by becoming a collective, social function on a stage before an audience.

Performance Venue

The concept of developmental theatre renders the place of performance imperative. A developmental theatre projected should, of neces-

sity, take place within an “open-air” atmosphere. The presence or absence of a structure is immaterial. What is important is that the place, walled-in or open-air, should be transformed into an “open-air” atmosphere for the purpose of free and easy interaction between the performers and the audience. Open-air space, however, gives the best alternative for a developmental or community theatre project. It enhances the “circuit” relationship between performer and audience that makes Theatre For Development a very unique medium of communication. It is only developmental theatre projects that afford the performer and audience a complete circuit relationship. As we shall see shortly, theatre for the purpose of entertainment or commercialization lacks the give-and-take dimension where the performer and audience are both teachers and learners at the same time. With a TFD project, the aim is to complete the circuit of communication over and over again in a discussion session in which the artiste-audience boundary dissolves to make for a didactic theatric forum.

*Target Audience/
Participants*

Turning to a deeper examination of the aspect of “development” the “theatre”, the question that arises is what form of development and for who. The form of development that theatre promotes is the enhancement of a people’s social awareness on issues affecting them; current political, economic or legal issues that often sound remote and far removed from rural life, yet implying affect the people’s well-being. The people targeted for such projects are majority people in the rural areas and the urban poor, the lower classes so to speak, because of their obvious low degree of comprehension of modern social issues of governance and livelihood which are largely controlled by the upper class. For instance, the nature of statutory law and its effects on the rural people, the social impact of modern family planning methods, the currently ranging gender equality debate, environment, health, sanitation among other issues. This awareness aim at giving the people the right weapon to confront their social problems and know how to solve them and create a better society.

Purpose

Theatre also takes the form of reinforcement machinery for developmental projects that are already underway. Programmes usually include increasing social amenities such as schools and hospitals. A developmental theatre project in this case is instrumental in making the aims of such “high -profile” projects, understood and acceptable to the people. Theatre, in its unique way, penetrates the barrier of turgidity and dullness that comes with other forms of

formal communication. The animator performer is able to bring himself or herself to the level of the participant's understanding and aesthetically impart knowledge that the latter would have remained ignorant of were he to depend on newspapers or speeches from the more enlightened local authority or elite.

A live theatre in the village centre allows for an impromptu discussion of a development project affecting people themselves. The aesthetic dimension of drama makes it essentially easier to assimilate and question the aims and nature of "foreign" projects. For instance, it would allow for the discussion of the instalment of a family planning clinic that wants to give contraceptives freely to all villagers, subsequently bringing the people to an understanding of the social and moral gains and losses resulting from such a project. Developmental theatre gives the people power of opinion and influence on issues affecting them.

3. A Theatrical Development Model

by Opiyo Mumma



A theatrical development model

Development drama/theatre usually uses indigenous art forms but must be designed with great imagination and care. The Theatre For Development programmes aim at instilling a cultural awareness and transforming people to facilitate progress and human growth

The possibility for development drama/theatre programmes that carry an impact can be easily based on our past experiences and existing resources. Our concept of theatrical development model takes cognizance of the specific needs of the development communicator, who relies on theatre and its techniques for achieving educational and development results. Here it is aimed at sharing artistic and educational experiences upon which a future strategy can be adopted.

The concept of a theatrical development model — which is, since the past couple of years, generally excepted in Africa — derives from the two informing bases: namely, its reliance on theatre-style approaches in communicating the desired message and secondly, its deep cognizance of the pre-eminence of culture. Its most informing characteristic is to be found in Paulo Freire's educational philosophy that he designed for dealing with the Brazilian masses. He asserts "*The education our situation demanded would enable men to discuss courageously the problems of their context — and to intervene in that context, it would warn men of the dangers of the time and offer them the confidence and the strength to confront those dangers instead of surrendering their sense of self through submission to the decisions of others*" (Freire. 1974 33)

Freire's Educational Methodology is well known; he relied on some of the most imaginative theatrical and educational strategies to get learning and change objectives achieved.

A development theatre imparts important educational knowledge. It recognizes that this knowledge is of vital importance to the process of production and reproduction in a community. To achieve these aims, the theatre educator must aim at an educational strat-

egy that imparts a critical mind on the part of the recipients. Such an education is dependent upon a life and life's experience.

In the development theatre, within the approach that puts emphasis on the immediacy of situation — from identifiable circumstances known to the community — five elements can immediately be identified.

- Language - What is the appropriate language?
- Environment - How immediate is the environment in terms of venue; is the problem being addressed, etc ?
- Participation - Who is doing what? This is a key question for the project co-ordinator himself.
- Culture - Here attention is drawn to the latent expressions of culture, which are never apparent in a casual impatient contact with a community. The adaptation of an appropriate indigenous art form can be included here.
- Time - What is the appropriate time for working with the community?

Considerations The first thing to consider is that society transformation is a painfully slow exercise. If an animator/initiator does not have the time she/he had better wait until she/he can spare some six months in the field. Otherwise it will be another exercise in wasted time and money.

The animator will know that people must be befriended and a **rapport** created if a researcher/animator is to get any meaningful information. In other words, what I have called the latent expressions of culture — the deeper values that make one decide to adopt a new knowledge or not — depends very much on time. For the theatre communicator/animator, this means that the entire creative process must begin from within the community, with the initiator only acting as a **motivator**. He is like a guide on a journey ensuring that reasonable limits of discourse can be maintained. Yet to be able to **guide** a community this way, one must gain acceptance. To gain acceptance, the animator/facilitator needs time. The theatre communicator who is seeking to advance a message on the need for, say, family planning needs to know well in advance that this is a contentious issue that can either be violently rejected or a false promise of acceptance be given.

In practical terms, a theatrical-cultural model approaches people in their own language. People are talked to in idioms and sentences that invoke their own experiences of humanity. They are approached through

people they know and, finally, the theatrical construct must be devised in a manner that permeates familiarity.

In this model, the people are approached and talked to by people they know and can listen to. Even if you are an outsider, learning a few cordial words (greetings, thanks etc.) helps. It is an important step in getting anywhere. We recognize the inevitable task of transforming people culturally, hence the need to understand the deepest codes of these community's cultural attitudes. The core of the matter, however, is to devise plays in as many local languages as possible to suit various contexts.

Nature of Theatre For Development

Theatre by its nature encourages many "unholy alliances", some of which are unpermissible among various communities. It is quite essential for the initiator of the project to know this. For example, age relationships must be respected even in a play situation; people in a rural setting recognize relations much more deeply than is done in the city. It is extremely important that a development theatre initiator/ animator assesses the various inhibitions, even taboos, that are likely to arise. It would be suicidal to expect a programme situation to take off if the inner obstacles afflicting the characters is not understood or resolved. To engage people in a participatory situation that compromises mutual respectability as it is known and understood is to ask for defeat.

In a theatrical development model, these little cultural indicators are stressed because experience shows that they are by far the largest impediments against change. The only way out is to have enough time, as we have said, and rely as much as possible on persons and resources drawn from within the community. Freire's "*culture circle*" concept is illuminating: instead of lectures, dialogue, instead of pupils, group participants, instead of alienating syllabi, compact programmes that were "booked down" and "codified" into learning units (Freire, 1974:42)

Proposed methodology

As an amplification of our theatrical development model, the proposed "methodology" in, say, introducing child health and survival messages in Western Kenya is below summarized:

Introduction: Before going to the stations earmarked for the project a rehearsal and preparation period for a 30-minute play for general entertainment. This will attract people for curiosity's sake.

Venues: Chief's "Baraza"; after a church service; market place/hall; national days, etc. Use local opinion holders to explain basic meaning of play, such as issues like breast feeding. Invite those willing to participate/work with you.

Week 1

Hold workshops and improvise a health/population play. Involve some villagers at this point. They serve as useful links to other homes, and also can be relied on to spread the **rumour** of what is being done. Establish good rapport and public relations. Disciplined behaviour is stressed on the part of those involved to avoid premature loss of confidence.

Week 2

After establishing good **rapport**, polish the play up, involve locals as much as possible in performing and decision-making roles regarding the script. Give them leeway to be the experts in **explaining** the message.

Week 3

Stage performance at various strategic venues — convened at the request of the local officials. The idea remains entertainment. **Discussions and interviews** which can follow later, should not be seen as the **conscious** purpose of the project. Follow-up and evaluation **must** be reserved for a very later date.

Note: There should always be room for improvement and for new ideas drawn from the local areas. Particular attention is required for the **unexpected**.

**Lessons from
Case Studies**

Kifo Cha Ujinga (1983) — A TFD Programme presented in Western Kenya: Homa-Bay, Kendu-Bay, Asembo Bay, Maseno, and Butere.

Kifo Cha Ujinga is a play script that evolved from the theatre arts Theatre For Development Project at the University of Nairobi in 1983/84. The task for the performers/facilitators/animators — who were intervenors from outside (Nairobi University) but had researched the above communities at length — was to improvise a stage play that could indicate the value and importance of adult literacy. The experience of the project lends much credence to the assumption so far, that unless the attitude of those changed, and their methodology thoroughly revised along the models we have suggested, then the entire project is doomed. It is no surprise that adult student numbers are not only perpetually declining, but it is with much strain and effort that the government is even keeping the Adult-Classroom Centres functional.

The play was created through a series of improvisation sessions, which also acted as the rehearsal sessions. For two or three hours every day, there was a first discussion on a plot — it always remained tentative. What characters to involve, what language to use, how long the play should take etc. Perhaps what needs to be added here is that there should have been a debate about an actual Kenyan context for that play. For instance, it should have been necessary to consider adult literacy as an agent in securing specific literacy skills for a given community, which can only be determined by the actual circumstances of a particular village. In other words, literacy is not an end in itself, but a tool for achieving a certain target. Miracles do happen, and by some accident the play did foster two goals: emphasizing the value and importance of having a working knowledge of arithmetic and other basic literacy skills; as well as the need for the utilization of modern agricultural know-how, including fertilizers in order to step up farm production.

*The Creative
Process*

Language English was out, but so was standard Kiswahili. We struck a mixed code of English, Kiswahili, and Dholuo. Special stress was given on accents — Kalenjin, Dholuo, and Gikuyu. These served to foreground the multi-lingual character of our society more convincingly for urban audience. However, the language chosen was more wide-oriented.

Characters were urged to approximate adults in their speech mannerisms and dress. Along with accents, a reasonable measure of hilarious authenticity was achieved.

Entertainment component in the play: A straight jacket lecture was to be avoided in the script. The message had to come out in an easy, funny, and relaxed way. The audience was expected to be able to see themselves in the play and laugh at themselves. The press dubbed it “a hilarious comedy”, and rightly so.

To enhance **authenticity and spontaneity**, the lines were simply improvised on stage by the actors. The play quality was improved upon as time went by. A secretary took notes for the following day to avoid fresh starts. Eventually a compact plot evolved in three scenes.

Scene I. A government officer addresses villagers, urges them to enrol in the classes. Various levels of acceptance/resistance are manifest. Some men even swear to beat their wives if they go to school.

Scene II: In the classroom. A simple Maths/English lesson was designed. Poor answers enhanced the comedy. As a whole this scene could have been improved by fewer answers that appeared to undermine the men before the women. Perhaps it suggests the need for a deeper understanding of the community before co-education is introduced — even in adult classes.

Scene III: An agricultural officer addresses the village through the sub-chief, but the latter is semi-literate. It leads to a farcical break in communication. But the need for at least some learning dawns on everyone

Presentation

Although the play was intended for adults, it was decided to perform it for schools and youth groups as well. The focus was on three of the major characters: the farmer, the mother, and the agricultural officer, who represent the play's concerns. The group concentrated on one particular scene, giving the audience a chance to watch the performance and **hot-seat** the characters.

The **hot-seating** method was very popular with youth groups, who were neither school children nor adults. The **role-on-the-wall** drama convention was very popular with adult community audiences. This involved making a rough outline of the characters on a large piece of paper on the wall, and members of the participants group wrote or drew pictures of certain characters or things that appeared important to them arising from the session. Inspired by this, the group suggested that the participants chose a ritual from their own community that would parallel Adult Education. The talk of vows, pacts, and oaths were common and functioned as insights for them to understand the performance.

In schools and with youth groups the concept of the **teacher-in-role** was introduced. One of them volunteered to function as an **organizer, co-ordinator**, or even **narrator**, and they reminded the participants of the central plot of the play and controlled the direction of the inputs. **Improvisation** seemed to work quite easily with several of the groups. The performances and workshops experimented with properties, costumes, and sounds from different communities. The availability of a local musician in most of the venues they visited, gave an added element to the event.

From the interviews thereafter, it appeared that the **Kifo Cha Ujinga** project worked effectively as an educational drama piece. It broke the top-down notion of delivery and involved the participants in an active

process of learning. It also influenced the view of delivery and involved the participants in an active process of learning. It also influenced the view of formal schooling of teachers and students. The techniques used in the community did not differ very much from those that the group used in the schools: both audiences and participants seemed well versed with the devices.

Action of the play

The text of **Kifo Cha Ujinga** was structured into brief eight-minute scenes focusing on such themes as identity and modern society, the schooled and non-schooled, employment, and self-sufficiency. The language was to create curiosity and enhance the effect. The minimal props used were to make the communities respond creatively. **Kifo Cha Ujinga** toured several community venues in Kendu-Bay, Homa-Bay , Asembo-Bay , Maseno, and Butere for 23 days. Each performance was preceded by an **historical presentation** about that particular community by the **narrator figure**. Most of the communities were composed of people who did not have formal schooling. These communities are characterized by occupations such as farming, fishing, and contract work. Prior to the performance, the group toured the areas, making contact with members of the community to help make links. They put on brief skits in the open spaces of the community and played drama games of various types. The musical band played popular and familiar tunes during the performances to create variety and enhance interest amongst the community members.

All the performances were done in community spaces and there was one big performance to which several of communities came; two hours before this performance, the group walked through the streets announcing the performance. Since they were on days when people did not go to work or to school, children joined the procession, then the women, the men were at first reluctant to join but eventually came too. After the performance the **programme facilitator** encouraged discussions that made clear that the people had identified the issues in the play and were willing to consider some solutions.

The language, the environment of performance, and the problem being addressed; the participatory nature of the event; the use of song, music, costume, and mime; and the appropriate time to engage the participants in the performance made for an immense educational and entertaining event. The creative process went on very much within the community, the performing group having

gained acceptance in the community. Although the issue of literacy is a contentious one when both female and male members are involved, in most of these communities there was a general willingness to watch the performance and engage in discussions.

In the communities

The group learnt about issues that touched on the deep codes of the community's cultural attitudes. For example, age relationships had to be respected even in play situations and role-playing or participatory actions had to recognize existing social relations within the community. The group became very aware of various inhibitions and taboos, which had to be addressed with caution. Such cultural taboos are by far the greatest obstacle to change.

To sum up, the first thing that the group did was to put on a **spectacle** that aroused the curiosity of the people and promised to be entertaining. For instance, at the Chief's Baraza and open-air performances the show was introduced by a brief **workshop** that indicated the aim.

After the performances as many local members as possible were enlisted in the post-performance workshop and in decision-making roles; this gave them the chance to act as **experts** in explaining the message.

This succeeded to a large extent, because the topic was so immediate that the people ardently got involved in the discussions. Scenes from the theatre programme were sometimes represented by community members and proved to be very provocative but productive. The search for some kind of compromise between the "literate" and "illiterate" showed that the role of drama is not to provide a finished view of the world or to provide the answers, but to engage the audience itself in the production of meaning.

The TFD programme discussed here has a link in education, development, and communication. It points clearly towards aspects of human progress in the language and the traditions of their performance. The significance is that it indicates towards change that is **people oriented** and asks fundamental questions of the participants, which are indicators of development.

Evaluation

In assessing whether the TFD programme described was worthwhile, it is considered the objectives of the team and whether these were achieved, the theatre strategies used, and their impact as learning mediums. The research period and the collection of material is extremely beneficial to the team, in the sense that the range of material is broad

and diversified. This enables the team to structure the narrative, allowing for personal bias, which attests to the team's democratic principles in choosing material that is appropriate, without letting subjectivity get in the way. This indicates the integral role the research phase has on the impact of a TFD programme.

Improvisation and simulation are used regularly as dramatic devices during the devising and this manifests itself during the warm-up games conducted by the TFD team for the participants.

The Narrator

The decision to have a **narrator**, to merge the sequences, and the **facilitator/joker** figure to guide the session is significant, for it clears up the confusion that can be created by the multiplicity of roles that members of the **team play**. The symbols used during the storytelling sequences are quite strong. Narration and storytelling are used to give background information and the use of flashbacks as a device provides the suspense and moments of reflection on the present.

The characters who tell the stories should be capable of both telling and dramatizing the story. The added technique of song and dance does a lot to make accessible the key dramatic moments and lays to a strong theatrical base. In the stories ideas should not be simplified, and the ambiguity inherent in them was a good way to challenge knowledge being examined.

Roles

It was a well-judged decision to have the participants take various **roles**, for it is practically impossible to get the participants to attempt to live authentically, by the minute, the lives of the characters in the programme, responding in character to the changing turn of events. In a nutshell, the team has to play several roles: as the artist to transform the events, as the critic to interpret the event; as reporters to tell about the event, as recorder to encode the event because it occurred, as authority responsible for the event, as demonstrator to re-enact the event so as to be understood by the participants' as guide to show how it was, and as participant in the events. All these determine the theatrical frame of the **two-part TFD programme**, which is essential for full participation.

Devising

The period of **devising** for a TFD programme is devoted mainly to the creation of specific characters with very definite roles and requirements for the programme. The **less able character** is normally depicted as a positive character, whose handicaps do not

limit other capabilities, and the perception of ideas and vital information always becomes a point of reference for the participants. The thinking behind this is that the participants meet the less able character who is not able to say, speak nor hear and so they have to take the mantle on themselves. In so doing they discover how much they already know. In many cases, there is also the **positive role reversal** from being a participant to being, in effect, a **teacher**.

Theatre Devices

It is through characters in the programme that the action of the programme runs as the participants are led through ideas, events, and the characters they meet. The **hot-seating** device enables the participants to question the characters directly and, in the process, thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed. It is through such devices such as **simulation** that both the **team** and **participants** take on the roles that are representative of the real world, and in the warm-up games make decisions in response to their assessment of the setting in which they find themselves.

The use of leaflets and posters/placards at public meetings, with the participants in groups, acts as educational stimuli. These participants can write on and read them, and associate the written and spoken word. The leaflets plus the photographs are used as part of the image theatre technique. These enable the participants to get involved in some activity and empower them to action.

Using Boal's technique of **image theatre**, the participants, through a workshop at the start of each programme, are shown how to use still-images, freeze frames and tableaux in re-enacting a scene. The pupils/participants find image theatre easy to work with, and many of the groups used it with the photographs, which provides some fascinating dramatic moments, bringing together both the team and the participants in a period of full participation.

During the TFD process the team members attempt to function as **actors/teachers** or animators and are guided by both **aesthetic educational** and **communication** theories. The desire to meet the needs of this particular community is central to the devising and production work; the structure of the programme does not allow for long periods of performance. Emotion is used as creative input to gain an emotional response from the participants and also to stir feelings, which lead to thought. Educational elements used to structure the programme are intended to motivate the participants' actions and decisions and channel this experience towards the affective and cognitive domains. The **team**

as **actors/teachers** have to be sensitive to the various responses from the participants, being clear and specific as to when they are **in and out of role**.

*Actor/Teachers,
Animators/
Facilitators*

The indirect objectives of a TFD programme are intended to put participants at ease, provoking thought and discussion. Once they have established a stance, the participants are ready to challenge the characters within the **role-questioning** groups and in the **forum**. There are times when the participants take the initiative and make some very complex decisions. Added to this, from the list of comments the participants make, it is notable that the judgments in the long term are not just concerned with immediate solutions. The extent to which the **image** mechanism as a reflection of their observations is controlled by the participants can be amazing. It confirms their belief in the TFD programme, their recognition, and that some of the issues occur in real life and need changing.

The creation of a **fictional context** for the investigation enhances the development of characters, the situation, and the exploration of a number of issues without the constrictions of pace, time, and space.

The TFD programme puts in a nutshell the fact that, through the work they do as facilitators or communicators, people, working artistically with communities, provide an opportunity for these people to see the world, to see themselves as human beings, and, as human beings, to find their connection with the world.

**Concluding
remarks**

Drama happens inside a **fiction** using **metaphors** that draw upon what we know of the real world, and therefore allows us to understand other events with common characteristics. The **animators/facilitators** draw on their knowledge of real-life situations to build the programme's content. Drama happens in "now" time, so that whatever task the participants are engaged in, they always behave as if the fiction is their real setting.

The strategy of the teacher-in-role by the facilitator provides the best learning moments when the TFD programme is presented. The facilitator works alongside the participants, but this does not mean that he/she fully takes on the characteristics of a **role**, but takes on the powers, responsibilities, and concerns of a **role**. In many cases during the programme, the facilitator is in the role as the guide who takes the participants towards their destination. This

3. Theatrical Development Model

gives the facilitator the power to pass on instructions, clarify, and question the participants. Also, to demand for example, that they participate in the community's activities to emphasize the importance of such task and the facilitator has the responsibility to ensure that the tasks are done well and with enthusiasm.

In TFD programmes, the facilitator guides the participants through the community's concerns and problems, making sure that they get the resources that they need — although these, of course, are limited by the fictional setting. In parallel to the roles like the one given above, a facilitator-in-role should always be responsible to a higher authority — i e the participants — for the whole task, rather than in charge of it. This way, the participants are empowered to take on responsibility for decision-making and problem-posing

4. Oral Literature

Oral Literature for Development (OLD)'s Strategy for Change by Ochieng Anyona



The project in Kenya's East Uyoma Location, Katweng's Sub Location, Kasiri and Wayaga villages, was geared towards integrating the various verbal art forms into the process of development, social-economic-political development of the people in this fishing community and to show the unbroken continuity in verbal arts from interacting oral genres to theatrical productions as the plays.

OLD was composed of performing artists, oral literature theoreticians, practitioners, and local teachers who taught literature and performed in Uyoma location in 1989/1990. OLD as a concept arose after an Oral Literature Research Project was held in the area about oral performances involving storytellers, instrumentalists, and musicians from this division.

OLD as a group felt that if people were to participate actively in development, they were first to have an awareness of the need for that type of development-change. OLD saw in Kasiri and Wayaga villages a problem in communication brought about by the "new administrative system", in the form of a one-way information flow decrees from above. This impersonal communication led to the alienation of the people it was supposed to influence. a form of invasion from above that had swept aside the meaningful roles of the traditional participatory method in deciding the affairs of the people.

The aim of OLD was to redress that situation and to initiate a process in which people would reassert their roles as subjects rather than objects of development-change. OLD aimed at making the people use the various verbal art forms as mediums through which they could participate in initiating, discussing, analysing, and evaluating their own cosmos and development process. The verbal arts as social forms provided a forum for exchange of views and information; empowering people to exploit their own popular forums-proverbs, storytelling, tongue-twisters, songs, jokes, riddles, mime-drama, and dances, - as mediums through which they could communicate issues of concern to their well-being. OLD recognized that through this process the people's consciousness would be aroused to come to grips with the problems of development and to move to action to solving them.

The OLD team spent a week in the two villages. The programme started with ice-breaking activities: a participatory song that also marked the acquaintance stage. The song, either from the OLD team or the villagers, melodiously urged every participant to be part of the occasion. In the song each participant responded to a lyrical tune by saying his or her name in response to the Luo Nyatiti chorus: *Nyinga enga nying-nying-nying, Otoro wuod wuod Okumba, nying -nying-nying*: This was followed by an official opening by the area sub-chief and a story by the OLD team in which narrators told the following story and a Nyatiti performance.

1st Narrator *Long, long, long ago, when the world was very young, there was a very great famine in the country. A long time there was no rain, and all crops and plants and omuna dried up*

2nd Narrator *And so people moved away with their cattle to look for water and grass for their animals. The wild animals, too, went away to look for food, and those who ate meat in turn followed the other animals so that they might feed on them*

3rd Narrator *Soon there was no one left in that country except one Ondiek Otoy jawuoro-Hyena He did not move away with the others Instead he tried to follow the other animals, but he could never see which way they went, and he always got lost.*

4th Narrator *Still, he was quite content to stay behind and eat the bones of other animals who had died before they could find food and water. The Hyena lived like this for some time, and soon became too lazy to try to follow the other animals*

1st Narrator *He was too stupid to realize that the people and other animals had gone off to find food So he stayed where he was, eating whatever he could find*

2nd Narrator *But after some time he found fewer and fewer bones and he began to feel hungry He did not know what to do He went from one bush to another looking for something he could eat But for a long time he could not find anything. He was getting very hungry and very weak, but still there was no sign of anything to eat*

4th Narrator *Then he remembered that long, long ago, when there were many people in his part of the country, the people communally used to go to a certain tree, yago, which was the only green thing still left and make a sacrifice to Nyasaye-were Nyakalaga*

- 3rd Narrator** *The Hyena decided to go to this tree alone, himself and ask God to give him something to eat. So he went and said*
- 1st Narrator** *“God, I’m very hungry. Please give me something to eat”*
- 3rd Narrator** *But no answer came from the tree, and the Hyena said*
- 2nd Narrator** *“Maybe even God has gone away, and I’m the only living thing left behind”*
- 3rd Narrator** *He was very worried He had not eaten anything for a long time and was getting too weak even to hunt the few rats that could still be found in their holes*
- 4th Narrator** *And so the Hyena began to walk He did not expect to find anything to eat, but he was afraid of being idle.*
- 1st Narrator** *But then, all of a sudden, he came to a place where there was green grass*
- 2nd Narrator** *And there, there was a cow tied to a tree!*
- 3rd Narrator** *You can imagine how surprised he was*
- 4th Narrator** *He could hardly believe how lucky he was He walked round and round the tree looking at the cow He wanted to be sure it was a real cow*
- 1st Narrator** *he had not seen one for so long that he thought he might be just imaging it*
- 2nd Narrator** *He went up to it, touched it, to be certain it was really alive.*
- 3rd Narrator** *“Maybe,” he thought, “God is playing a trick on me yawa?”*
- 4rd Narrator** *Had the same God—yes, the same God— not refused to give him food under the tree?*
- 1st Narrator** *But it looks and feels like a real live cow “This is my lucky day”, Hyena said as he sat down.*
- 2nd Narrator** *“I’m going to eat, eat, eat, and eat until I cannot eat any more”*

- 3rd Narrator** *The I'll sleep, and sleep and when I wake up, I'll eat, eat, eat and eat again until I'm fully full up "*
- 4th Narrator** *Then he went back and began admiring the cow again He could not believe how lucky he was He wondered*
- 3rd Narrator** *"Did God really give me this cow, or did I find it by myself?"*
- 4th Narrator** *Ah! He decided that he had found it all by himself*
- 2nd Narrator** *"Well, God, you claim you are the one who gives people food, if you are the one who gave it to me, take it away (pause) So you take it away What are you waiting for?"*
- 4th Narrator** *But the cow was still there So he decided to begin his meal*
- 1st Narrator** *You know, the cow was tied to the tree with a dry skin, and now when the Hyena came to begin eat he thought*
- 2nd Narrator** *"Perhaps I should eat the skin first Then the cow afterwards — we should never waste, you know!"*
- 3rd Narrator** *So Ondiek Otoyoto cut off the skin which was holding the cow and began to chew it He chewed and chewed and cut*
- 4th Narrator** *Pushuw sshvee He looked up*
- 2nd Narrator** *Oohwee the cow ran off as fast as her legs could carry her*
- 3rd Narrator** *Oh! Ondiek ran after the cow tip top but as he was still very weak*
- 4th Narrator** *For he had not eaten anything — just the bit of dry skin.*
- 2nd Narrator** *He was slow. Too slow for the cow Mayo the cow escaped*
- 1st Narrator** *And Ondiek Otoyoto jawuoro ta suddenly began to cry*
- 3rd Narrator** *"God, Nyasaye were Akumum Nyakalaga Oh yaayee, it was you who gave me the cow. Please yayee bring her back to me I beg of you please yawa return her to me wuololo "*
- 2nd Narrator** *Poor creature, he had forgotten where the tree was He looked and looked and looked for it a long time But he couldnot find the tree again*

1st Narrator

*Brothers, Fathers, Grandmothers and Fathers, Sisters, Mothers
The Hyena was so weak that he hadn't even the strength to walk
So Thump! he fell down and the ants fed on the remains commu-
nally Tinda*

A participatory discussion followed the Nyatiti performance with the participants identifying and drawing meaning from the story. Through the discussions OLD realized that the story and Nyatiti unfolded the community's rhythms of nature. That is, they became familiar with the story as one became attuned to the natural rhythms of surrounding life and they achieved a sense of self-identification through seeing themselves as a part, or at least an extension, of the story. Through the analysis of the story, the people learned about their culture, their history, their problems — not as a thing(s), apart from themselves, but as an integral part of the manner in which they experienced their everyday world.

In the story and Nyatiti performance, OLD and the community participants enthusiastically identified the moral of the story. The evil metaphor or motif was identified as “Ondiek - Jawuoro” This of course served as an eye-opener to the main objective of the project, which hinged on an identification and ranking of problems that were prevalent in the two villages and the way information could be communicated at the community level to address such problems.

OLD's contribution in facilitating a discussion on alleviating the various problems facing the Kasiri and Wayaga communities was based on the premise that the people are responsible for their own development, which could be affected through proper communication. The role of oral literature (verbal art) was to perform a parallel service, to draw attention to the sources from which people gained their identity.

In OLD this was achieved through direct, aesthetic participation in the experience. But in order for oral literature to remain vibrant and meaningful within a given culture, OLD realized it could remain a conservative force. The contemporary world moved too quickly and was more complex, thus the challenge was to maintain the tradition forms of verbal art — for this is what provided the sense of immediacy and personal meaning. This experience had real educational value. Most of the “new administrative system” was concerned with “information” about the world. OLD's expe-

nience, through the arts, provided experience of the world. It countered the sense of removal of the self from the object of study, which traditional communication emphasized.

The arts, OLD realized, had the potential to provide an avenue to understanding through personal experiencing of an otherwise increasingly abstract world. The mediums that could tackle these were storytelling, proverbs, songs, tongue-twisters, parables, riddles, legends, drama — the verbal arts.

**A review of
the art**

In this experience OLD realized that verbal art distills the essence of human experiences, shaping them into memorable, readily retrievable images of broad applicability with an extraordinary potential for eliciting emotional and intellectual responses. The art in verbal performance recontextualized the historical context into an artistic form: organized, examined and interpreted the audience's experience of the images of the present.

Both as comment and record, it is a way of observing a society; it revealed the way the community feels about itself. It preserves for posterity important moments in a cultural movement through time, and it does this by means of images that are often found in imaginative tales, songs, and poems. This is because those images embody aspects of tradition that can be expressed in no other way.

The OLD experiment revealed that verbal art categories are interwoven. a common internal structure characterizes them, each with a rhythmic ordering; an image and motif that controls the ties between the art tradition and the real world. It is by means of this common structure, because of the metaphor or its potential (the organizing factor in each of the genres), that vital links are established with the visual arts. Each form nourishes the other. For instance, a Nyatiti poet partakes of the riddler's art and the tale song operates according to the principles of the riddle in all the metaphorical core controls expansion and development into more complex forms. Verbal art is never simply a spoken art; it is an enactment, an event, a ritual, a performance. Patterning imagery is the most visible artistic activity, involving the blending of the contemporary world and the fanciful fabrication of the tradition: the combining of the images and their transformation into dramatic ritual is the result of metaphor.

"The deliberate conjunction of desperate items which we call metaphor is not so much away of understanding the world but a perpetually exciting way of reacting it from its own parts. It is a way of causing the items of the real world to act upon each other to recombine, to

suffer and learn from the mysterious value system or value making systems, of the individual, both in his socially conditioned and in his inmost, wild, and untutored mind.” (Dickey:1968)

**Dynamics of
verbal arts: the
metaphore**

When the realms of art and reality are brought into contact and, that relationship is caused by metaphor, the audience is in the presence of “myth”. Metaphor takes an audience’s routine experiences and in the performance, links them to the past, often through fantastic images from the art tradition. The combination renders contemporary experience comprehensible and roots the member of the audience in history. Metaphor implies transformation, from one set of images to another, but without giving up any of the original meanings or perceptions that an audience might have of them. Real world images may be cultural, historical, or personal; their blending with fantasy, the movement from one state of being to another, may be coupled with a re-enactment that is ritualistic. The drama of performance is an effort to captivate both the ritual, the graphic images of transformation, and, more important, the pierce focusing of venerable emotions on contemporary change

The purpose of verbal art is to harness the intellect and emotions of the members of the audience, trapped as they are in the images of past and present, then — by divining paradoxes and resolving conflicts — to move that audience into a new perception of reality.

**The riddle/
song as
performance**

The riddle, for instance, is a figurative form comparing “two otherwise unrelated things in a metaphorical manner”. In the comparison the problem is fathomed, but perhaps more importantly the attributes of each set are transferred to the other. When during OLD’s experiment the riddler utters the poser: “A chief who only sits among horns”, the answer “The Tongue” reveals a description not only of the tongue but also the chief. Because the riddle involves paradox as well as imagery, it exercises both the intellect and imagination of the audience in its attempts to find the answer. It becomes a part of the metaphorical transformation. The delight in discovery is evident in the more complex coupling that occurs in the tale and song narrative, which is reflected in two modes — one literal, the other figurative — with a tension and an interaction between them.

The single most important characteristic of verbal art performances is the patterning of images. A community learns to organize like images, establishing a model for the comprehension of more

sophisticated forms, in which unlike actions of a single character as fantasy and reality are linked in linear movement from conflict to resolution. At the same, the metaphorical structure — not unlike that which governs the movement in song-narrative, poetry, and song — controls the patterning, providing the possibility for complexity, for meaning, and for the revelation of the mimetic relationship. The song-lyrical core assures that the potential for expansion development are not loose; out of a triangular relationship a basic movement is developed. The narrative at this stage is not necessarily metaphorical, but may simply bring images into contact with one another for no purpose other than to move the tale effectively to its resolution. But possibilities for metaphor are a part of the form because of the existence of patterning.

The tales/ proverbs

Many tales have a built-in capacity for linkage to other tales, a number of them, when placed in a narrative frame, produce a complex story. When two or more tales are thus joined and the parts harmonized by the metaphorical process, an epic matrix — if not an epic — is created. It is at this stage that organizing activities similar to those found in the proverb assume importance. In the shorter tales, a process like that of the riddle and poem have been sufficient, but as organization and theme become more involved, the metaphorical movement found in the proverb becomes crucial because it supplies the structure necessary to carry the complex theme. The proverb-type activity establishes the ties between past and present, the type found in the riddle and lyric can then continue to supply the internal ordering of the larger forms. When the number of tales develops to a complexity no longer supportable by the simple structure of the story, and when the set of tales is brought into a context that includes history and the hero, epic is the result.

The poetry

In non-narrative poetry and the lyric, the only relationship available to the bard (*Nyatiti*) is a metaphorical one, it binds images. In the tale, metaphorical union is not necessary to the sense of the story. But when it does occur, when both narrative and metaphor are present, the tale assumes the form of the lyric. In the trickster tale, for example, the relationship is between the trickster and his dupe. There is seldom a helper. All is illusion as the trickster creates a deceptive world to approximate the real. This linkage between the real world and an illusory realm contains the possibilities for a metaphorical relationship, a set of worlds controlled and manipulated by the trickster. While figurative movement is seldom a consideration in such trickster tales, its structures are evident. In the elaborate tale, metaphor becomes dominant. In fact, a reciprocal relationship exists: metaphor is a crucial compositional device that holds such tales together at the same time that the unified narratives generate metaphor.

In heroic poetry, the relationship among images also seems obscure at times. The images are connected, a discourse is initiated by the poet and the panegyric assumes lyrical form. As the lyric poems, the rhythm of the poetic performance, its single subject, and the thematically designed boundaries bind the diverse images of all the art forms. Heroic poetry is the closest to history in its choice of images. It frequently concentrates on historical figures. The creator of such poetry usually ignores repertoires of tantrum selecting instead images of animals and land-forms to accompany the many historical allusions. The poetry examines heroic aspects of humans — positively, in the search of pleasure in recounting the affairs in the lives of authentic culture heroes; negatively, in the comparison of the flawed contemporary leader with the great heroes of the past. While the raw materials of this poetry is by and large realistic, it is history made discontinuous and then placed in “ordered” frames. Within this context the hero is described, then judged. Because contemporary events are thus routinely measured against cultural values, history is constantly being revived and revised. The poems depend on this enhanced narrative, reproduced atomized and redefined. It is a subjective accounting, but the poet, using all his magic to convince his listeners otherwise, contains these as yet unchannelled bursts of energy and gives history and new gloss.

In conclusion we quote Walter Benjamin (1973: 87), who says “*The storyteller takes what he tells from experience — his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to the tale*.” History is constantly made theatrical, it is dissected, its images wrenched from a normal environment and placed within new, frequently fabulous, contexts. The poet establishes a predictable rhythm in his line and succeeding lines are measured against it. The audience is thereby led to a new experience compound of familiar images. The experience has warmth because of the constructed images reflecting the known world; it has depth because, partaking of imagery passed on through an ancient tradition, it redefines those familiar images. Verbal arts have as their central aim the work of transforming the order prevailing in reality. The Verbal arts and the contemporary theatricals are thus part of a single unbroken tradition: there being many echoes, strains, and dialogues connecting them.

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5. The Drama Festival Movement

Practices and Practitioners in Western Kenya
by Opiyo Mumma



Different theatre writers, practitioners, and theorists have put the Drama Festival under various labels and categories. These include the festival performance in the community, the schools and colleges drama festival, the universities drama festival, non-formal educational institutions drama festival and the district and provincial cultural festival.

Here we are concerned with the Drama Festival in Kenya from 1959, which started as a secondary school event, but has expanded to include primary, secondary and college festivals outside the school setting. The assimilation of the **proscenium arch theatre** tradition in the Drama Festival has influenced models of performance over the years. This event, which touches on the aspects of **celebration** and **competition**, has flourished in many parts of Kenya. We are concerned with this piece of history because 36 years later, the Drama Festival has become an event that provides a range of performances and techniques that constitute an important element of Kenyan theatre. It is part of the Kenyan tradition in the contemporary sense and has provided a breakthrough in forms or idioms of performance writing and it is an event where alternatives are explored and have been sustained. The experimental nature of the movement is significant.

The early days

The Drama Festival, from its onset in 1959, was an aspect of a much broader group of educational and cultural activities which were expressive of the colonial education and used to reinforce the interpretation of existing social and political relations. Although, initially, the event shared most of the characteristics of expatriate theatre groups, the lay-out and structure of the festival, the administration, and performance modes were strictly modelled on a typical British Drama Festival for Higher Education. Its social base lay with the expatriate teachers, inspectors and staff of the British Council, and the students in the all-white and all-Asian schools in Kenya in the late 1950s.

Leaps and Shifts

Our concern here is with various theatre practices and practitioners with a focus on Western Kenya, this necessitates a leap in the history of the Drama Festival movement. Initially, it did not con-

sciously seek to intervene in a wide range of educational institutions, but the performances in the schools themselves during Speech Day, Sports Day, and other important occasions were starting to make a popular educational appeal to an expanding audience. In 1975 the Ministry of Education incorporated Teachers Training Colleges and polytechnic and tertiary colleges into the Drama Festival. This became the Colleges Drama Festival, which would take place in the third term of the academic year (September-December), with the Secondary Schools Festivals taking place during the first term, January-March

The impetus for a Colleges Drama Festival came from Professor Joe de Graft, who ran the Drama in Education course at the University of Nairobi. During the Secondary Schools Drama Festival in 1974 he argued. *In order to get drama well established in schools it is necessary to train teachers in the skills of the theatre and drama theory. It is with this view that we train teachers to go and teach drama and work with theatre skills. This can only be complete if drama teaching is introduced in the colleges culminating into the Colleges Drama Festival* (De Graft, 1975: 33)

This was taken up by the organizing committee of the festival, who made a recommendation to the Ministry of Education and, in 1975, the first Colleges Drama Festival took place at the Kenya National Theatre (KNT).

Key figures

Two prominent figures, who contributed to writing and producing Drama Festival plays for schools and colleges during this period, were Felix Osodo Osodo and Otumba Ouko, whose plays shaped the Drama Festival style and themes into the 1980s. Osodo Osodo had a hyperactive approach to theatre, according to Wasambo Were (in Kasigwa, 1991: viii), who argues that this approach made his plays less wordy and more action-packed. The trademark for his plays was the Majitu series written in Kiswahili: this was a complete shift from the very tradition and the language of theatre that Osodo grew up in. In an interview he said: *“In the late 1960s under the tutelage of Philip Jones, an American who taught English, we performed naturalistic plays tailored towards Ibsen, Miller, Pirandello. In the early 1970s with Tirus Gathwe, a Bristol-trained theatre director, we were influenced by the theories of Brian Way, Richard Courteney and Dorothy Heathcote and relied a lot on the work of Joan Littlewood on account of this background but, by the mid-1970s I drew material from folklore in terms of content”* (Personal Interview with Osodo, 1992)

Osodo's work influenced many young playwrights within the Colleges Drama Festival, where debates after the performances centred on technique. In the mid-1970s Osodo taught at Siriba Teachers College, which became a launching pad for future teachers of drama.

In liaison with Joseph Dianga, a Fine Artist with a keen interest in drama, and theatre practice, they rehearsed the Majitu plays in the space that was to become Esiapala Arts Centre in the Maseno Hills in Kisumu District. Many teachers have used this space to rehearse their plays, some of which toured Nyanza and Western Provinces in this period. Esiapala has combined the Fine Arts and The Performing Arts in this most picturesque venue.

Otumba Ouko is one of those who, during this period, worked with Osodo at Siriba Teachers College and then moved to Kisumu Teachers Training College, where he soon established himself as an accomplished playwright and director. He shifted from Osodo's reliance on **traditional folklore** for content and **group improvisation** to the use of the **commonplace** in his writing and as a starting-point in his rehearsals.

Unlike the dominant **ghost figure** (Majitu) in Osodo's characterization, Otumba used the **everyday idiom** to make subtle, critical comments on the social, economic, political, and spiritual side of contemporary life. Symbolism in costume, set design, and stage properties were a major feature of Ouko's theatre. The 45-minute scripts made an impact not only in colleges drama, but were also very popular with secondary schools and some amateur theatre groups. I have singled out these two playwright/producers and theatre practitioners because their work competed for performance space in educational institutions and established their productions within the Drama Festival Movement, and these shaped other theatre activities in Western Kenya. These productions established Esiapala Arts Centre, Maseno, as an educational and cultural centre. Esiapala Arts Centre consisted of an outdoor theatre and a craft centre for the community. It can be argued that the Vihiga Cultural Festival and the B A T, which sponsored cultural festivals in Western Kenya, were influenced by the works from the Drama Festival movement and practitioners of this period.

Community drama/theatre influences

The Kamirithu Community Centre, which by the mid-1970s had got into full gear in educational and cultural activities, indicates that community theatre was flourishing in Kenya in a very con-

ventional sense. Both centres found a link in educational drama. The influence that the Kamirithu and Esiapala ventures had was tremendous on the part of students and communities watching performances in local languages using familiar idioms in their own environment. Confidence in writing plays in Kenyan languages gained pace amongst teachers and students, and this was very recognizable in the Drama Festivals at the closing stages of the 1970s. Kasigwa asserts that "*many more teachers and students wrote in various languages for the Festival and the quality of the writing manifests in the performances at the Drama Festival in the last decade*" (Kasigwa, 1992: 5)

This populist impulse, combined with the oppositional intentions of the Drama Festival Movement and the community-based theatre movement, caused a response from the Ministry of Education, who then appointed Wasambo Were as the first African Organizing Secretary to the Schools/Colleges Drama Festival in 1979. It is significant to note that it took ten years to appoint the first African Adjudicator to the National Festival, 12 years for an African play to win the National Festival and 20 years to have the first African Organizing Secretary to the festivals.

Significant changes

This was a momentous event and, in 1980, Wasambo Were introduced the Primary Schools Drama Festival, to complete the educational spectrum, thus established a forum in which the primary schools could celebrate their drama at different levels. **Theatre for, by, and with children** had been ignored for all this time but now their performances have been a major feature of the Drama Festival. There was no doubt, whatsoever, that it was possible to play for and with primary school children, so that the teachers who had been part of Osodo' and Ouko's drama classes at Siriba and Kisii became the pioneers of drama in primary schools and also the Primary School Drama Festival. It was structured to fit into the second term of the school year between May and August.

With the inclusion of primary, secondary and colleges into the Drama Festival and all the finals taking part at the Kenya National Theatre (KNT), it became imperative that an audience for the Drama Festival was established. The questions theatre practitioners and drama teachers were posing was whether the KNT was the right place for this venture, although it was a prestigious event looked forward to by the students, and ten days in the city of Nairobi was a big enough incentive for many a pupil/student.

However, the whole aspect of getting all the best plays from different corners of Kenya to the capital city was described by a theatre critic as “*cultural tourism*” parallel only to rural-urban migration “*The attitude of looking to bring performances to the city year in, year out, has to cease. If we have to share our drama let us move the national finals to all parts of the country*” (The Standard Newspapers, 14.4.81.17). This observation gained credibility with the narrowed-down scope of the event in hosting the finals at the KNT. Another observer complained of “*all the nation’s expression being exploited by Nairobi every year — what undue advantage!* This is an indication of how a small group of people wanted to keep ahold of the Schools Drama Festivals as their elusive reserve” (Sunday Standard, 19.5 81:32).

This dilemma was not to be resolved in a hurry from the point of view of the KNT, so organizing secretary Wasambo Were, pre-empted the issue by starting a new venture. In 1981, after the National Secondary Schools Drama Festival, he organized a tour for the winning schools to community and social halls, open spaces in different parts of the country. This was very much modelled on the Free Travelling Theatre (FTT) tours which had become a feature of Kenyan rural life and gave Kenyans an insight into the cultures of other communities. Reinforced by schools from different parts of the country bringing their performances to different peoples, it marked a major landmark in socialization amongst different races and ethnic communities. This warmed up relations between teachers who, over a two-week period, had come together and exchanged notes on their work. They met up with youth and community leaders and drama teachers who moved to start youth and community theatre groups in their environs.

A major shift

This initial DF tour, in 1981, was a major success in an administrative sense and made a major impact on the audiences to which the students performed. Huge audiences turned out in the urban and rural areas to watch performances in English, Kiswahili, and various Kenyan languages. This effectively moved the Drama Festival out of the Kenya National Theatre, where it had been for 21 years. The new organizing committee of the Festival had set a precedent that would be difficult to turn back, proving that there were real audiences for the festival elsewhere than the Kenya National Theatre and that it was capable of organizing for this potential audience.

The Organizing Secretary and Committee then decided that, from now on, the Schools/Colleges Drama Festival would rotate around the eight Kenyan provinces, being located in suitable educational institutions. The argument for this was that theatre technology would be improved in the provinces, as well as the cross-cultural exchange across the country, which was uppermost in the minds of many who saw the Drama Festival as a first step in realizing artistic/cultural diversity in the Kenyan communities. It would provide an incentive for the hosting school, district, and province to make as many entries as possible but, most importantly, it empowered the teachers and students to be able to organize and host the festival in every sense. This is something the KNT could not do for 20 times. Over the past 12 years the organizing committee has maintained the rotation of the event to all the provinces of Kenya, except North-Eastern Province, largely due to logistic problems and distance.

Elements of the Drama Festival Movement

At the moment institutions can enter a play, a creative dance, and dramatized poetry. The play category constitutes a dramatic production between 15-45 minutes in Kiswahili, English, and/or a Kenyan national language. An institution can enter two plays and the theme of the play is open to choice as is the technique of production.

The creative dance involves a dramatic piece of dance, music, and mime. What is looked for is the drama in the music and dance, and creativity is a major catchword towards making a meaning clear through the art forms of dance and music lasting between 5-15 minutes.

The dramatized poetry is a short piece of poetry enacted using skills of the theatre in its rendition. It should take up to five minutes.

The movement in the provinces: Mukumu

In comparison to the first Schools Drama Festival, 23 years earlier, in 1959, with eleven schools taking part, the well-publicized event in 1982 at Mukumu Girls High School in Western Kenya “*had a total of 25 plays, 33 creative dances and 40 dramatized verses involving some 431 teachers and about 5,000 students over an eight-day period. There was for a start a big audience for the festival.*” (Drama Report 1982: 6) as Mukumu was part of many other institutions and not too far from Kakamega town in a densely populated rural area.

This festival will be remembered for the enthusiasm with which theatre practitioners expressed the feeling of being able to operate away from the Kenya National Theatre: there was a sense of liberation and emancipation, which were expressed in the artistic pieces. What is cru-

cial is the recognition of the potential in Western Kenya by choosing Mukumu to be the launching site for this artistic experiment. Therefore, from the very small detail of how to convert an empty classroom or dining hall into a rehearsal and performing space, to the *grand endeavour* of gradually putting together a full production, the Drama Festival has been in an especially broad educational and cultural exercise. To underpin the concept of the Drama Festival movement, it is essential to describe some of the plays, dances, and poems that are representative of these cultural and educational practices.

Texture of The Drama Festival Performance

Over 20 years, I have observed students and drama teachers grappling with material for the Drama Festival movement, and we have seen the gradual evolution of new idioms of writing and new styles of performance specifically based on Kenyan environments. The plays, dances, and poems are always made up of inputs from different backgrounds; but all join together in what becomes their event. It is not possible to identify distinct cultural collisions, but most of the time these tensions are expressed and manifested in the artistic performances.

Many Drama Festival plays are performed in English, but an even bigger proportion are done in Kiswahili and some Kenyan national languages. I am convinced that there should be many more performances in Kenyan languages, which can provide an added dimension to the impact of the language. The students are involved in several language systems and performance conventions — English, Kiswahili, and their mother tongues — but these do not appear to cause unnecessary tension nor become a source of confusion. This was a major justification for the Drama Festival performances. The diversification is a major feature of the artistic and educational process.

Over the last two decades the festival has developed its own pattern of sensations, gestures and rhythms in its plays, creative dances, and dramatized poetry. Many voices contribute to the festival and many elements are represented. This makes the events difficult to describe. The singers and dancers — with their accompaniments of drums, jingles, and whistles — are at the very centre of the performance. The movements and gestures of the actors are also greatly influenced by the dance rhythm. Thus ultimately the performance text has little to do with the dramatic text. About 60% of the scripts are either individually or collectively written by the stu-

dents and teachers while 65% of the choreography of the singers and dancers is done by the students and teachers themselves

A teacher who had participated in the festival for many years emphasized that the performances are not meant to follow the text because improvisation and spontaneity are crucial all through the devising and performance periods

**The Creative
Dance
Performance**

In two creative dances at the 1993 Drama Festival — **Mlidala** by Kaimosi Girls and **Reconciliation** by Koige Girls School, in Western Kenya — there was an underlying social message about age differences and economic status. The singers in **Mlidala** performed in the **esekuti tradition** closely associated with the esekuti drum, where the singers vibrate and stamp on the ground to the beat of the drum; their gestures, movement, and tableaux are based on cues from the words of the narrator and from the **esekuti player**. Through the rhythmic beats of **isizizi** and the **esekuti** the dancers create their choreography.

Reconciliation was a constituent dance of a large epic performance. The students danced and sang the text about a mythical heroin — Mora of the Abagusi — who resisted colonial domination of her people. The dance performance, a 15-minute theatrical piece of immense stature, introduced the audience to a merging of different conventions and the songs, dances, and instruments were used to communicate the message. In later performances, the audiences established a participatory bond with the dancers. One woman from the audience was so overcome with emotion and the need to get involved that she took over playing of the **Orutu** instrument for the rest of the performance.

Yet none of the drama teachers or students I talked to from the school could exactly recall the integration of the **orutu** and **kipkandit** instruments into the dance. One thing they agree on is that as the dance evolved and there was incorporation of costume, make-up, and backdrops to visually enhance the impact of the performance, this helped them place the instruments in context. The hand and other simple gestures and the choral parts helped some of the students to master the different languages in which the songs were rendered.

The **orutu** and **kipkandit** conventions of dance performance have a detailed choreography and the performers have to be alert to the emotions of the piece. **Reconciliation** proved to be a rich learning experience for the 50 pupils who participated.

One of the strengths of the dance was that it did away with divisions

between themes, entrances of characters, and solo singers so as to create a strong sense of continuity. The piece can be recalled for its delicate choreography, its intricate blending of the **orutu** and **kipkandit** and all the resounding variety of traditional strings instruments from different communities.

Performance Modes

Plot development in many of these plays moves along the lines of the analytic story, with the economic differences serving as a point and all the complexities as the target towards which the plot is directed. The plays tend to plant the middle part of the plotline with a maze of mystifications, intrigues, and counter-intrigues. They have also used the technique of investigation, so that there are sidetracks and asides to distract the audience's attention at various points of the play

Institutions based in urban areas often use foreground characters who are sharp-witted, full of tricks, some in the upper-class, as well as professional and business career people, juxtaposed to characters from the bottom rung of the social ladder. These are characters from a rural background — such as servants or traders — mainly developed for their humorous potential. **The Ladder** (1992) by Bungoma High School, and **Mzalendo** by M P Shah Primary School, Kisumu, have used such plotlines and characters in their plays

The play **Mobile Grave**, by Sega Girls Secondary in 1984, deplores the carnage on roads. The play's logical development allows dancers or sometimes musicians to make an appearance and present an *interlude in the action* to make a relevant comment. The lyrics of these songs are composed to fit the plotline. The mix of characters from different social groups give an opportunity for social comment and satirical criticism

The apparent complexity allows for the simple design and intent of the plays to come through the performance. They consist essentially of a montage of themes and structural elements well-known to Kenyan audiences. Music and dance are used to bridge the temporal gap between scenes or to transfer the audience from one locality to another. But most of these plays promise more on the level of content and meaning than they could deliver on the level of technical presentation. The technical influence **Mobile Grave** had on plays in Western Kenya in the 1980s can still be recalled. In **The Search** by Ulanda Girls High in 1991, substantial parts

occur in public places; the police station, the hospital, the office, while the crucial scenes of the plot take place in private homes: the living rooms or bedrooms of well-to-do people. The scenes in the public places very often depart from the plotline in order to accommodate social criticism. **The Search** opens with a beggar arrested on a minor offence being beaten up by the police. The search that follows by the market women gives an opportunity for social comment and satirical criticism.

The production of **Mwana Mpotevu** by Maseno National School 1985/1986 was a combination of divergent traditions and conventions. Forms of biblical drama, dance, song, and mime were combined with the presentational style of the electronic media. It opens with an extended musical prelude in which the performers introduce themselves to the audience through songs. These songs, which seemed unrelated, helped to create the atmosphere for the ensuing performance.

In **Mwana Mpotevu**, the call and response pattern and the interplay between all the characters, emphasizes that the individuals in the play are firmly embedded in the collective production. The songs and tunes are familiar and designed to draw the audience into the tonal atmosphere created. The musical prelude does not aim to create a **Brechtian alienation** type of effect, but rather to create a solidarity between the performers and the audience. Its most important function is to be seen in its appeal to, and its affirmation of, a common cultural tradition. These folk tunes and songs and folk instruments have been largely transplanted from the rural schools and merged with those of the urban contexts at the Drama Festivals.

The scenes and the overall plot structure are simple and facilitate improvisation and interaction with the audience, which has had experiences of similar stories. This kind of didactic social comedy aims not only at comic relief but also at providing experiences for the students themselves.

Festival Themes

In the last six years, health education — in particular the prevention of AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases — has become a prime theme in Drama Festival performances and educational drama. In Kenya, poor sanitation and high infant mortality rates have always affected the urban as well as the rural populace. The killer diseases of malaria, diarrhoea, measles, and cholera have been major concerns in schools and communities at large. Teachers and health authorities have sought to instruct people about the most acceptable solutions. Health education programmes differ from the usual topics at the festi-

val because it involves people with expertise and knowledge. Educational institutions have taken the lead in using their plays to propagate health issues. In the late 1980s students put on plays dealing with the cleaning up of wells, the digging of pit latrines, and other such topics.

Lessons from two productions

In the KISU Teachers' College's play **Majuto Mjukuu** in 1987, the aims, procedures, and methods of health campaigns were spelt out clearly and simply. The medical facts are presented in the language of drama with *vivid imagery appealing to the eye and ear*. The dramatic structure was simple and tended to be repetitive. Through song and action it presented information about the identification of the symptoms of diseases and their transmission and prevention.

The main thrust of this performance was to make the audiences aware of the health risks. It is significant that after the Colleges Drama Festival, the KISU Teachers' College decided to tour this play as a project-oriented educational theatre piece aimed at specific audiences in the semi-urban communities of KISU, Migori, Homa Bay and Kendu Bay.

They performed in the open air between houses in the shopping centre with the auditorium and stage designated by a simple wooden fence. At the far end of the yard, loose earth was piled up to form a slightly raised stage, from which the performers could easily step down to extend the performance into the audience area. These arrangements were not derived from any dramatic designs, but from what was possible. A piece of cloth strung between two fence poles served as a curtain for the changing space. The audience sat on benches or on boards placed on empty crates. The atmosphere was one of improvisation and informality.

The play succeeded in getting the message across to the audiences, for it became a talking point in the community for the three weeks of performance, the venues were always filled up and the follow-up workshops by the performers were very well attended. The play addressed both young and old people and the dialogue-based theatrical action conveyed the lesson that one can learn from the personal experience of others.

Plays about AIDS, like **Ukimwi** by Eregi Teachers College in 1989, use personal testimonial to carry dramatical conviction, as well as the convention of allegorical drama where vices and virtues are

identified. The use of masks and cartoons particularly appeal to the young. Both the students and adults understood that they themselves would play an important part in checking the spread of disease.

Ukimwi is at the same time a projection into the future and a depiction of the present: at the start a placard is carried across the stage with the inscription "In the Year 2005" followed by a question-and-answer dialogue between the representative antagonists of "good" and "evil". There follows a flashback into the past, using a mime dance sequence to depict the consequences of AIDS.

This dramatic exploration of AIDS borrows from the strategies of biblical plays in which human sin endangers salvation. The sense of having arrived at the edge of life, physical and spiritual infuses both forms. Since the AIDS epidemic has grown into such proportions that it has become a moral issue, these plays naturally resort to traditional moral forms of character representation and plot development using didactic dialogue and the demystification of these issues.

Concluding remarks

In discussing the Drama Festival Movement, I have concentrated on practices and practitioners from Western Kenya. This provides some insight into what it is that has influenced various theatre practices in this region. Educational drama practices in Kenya have had a large impact on content and form of Kenyan drama and theatre. What is apparent is that the content and form are authentic to the Kenyan context and audiences. The philosophy of the Drama Festival Movement as a whole has been to combine the complexities of tradition with the historical ever-changing truths in Kenya today through drama, dance, and poetry. Western Kenya has contributed to this through its practitioners, and this has so permeated the educational/cultural landscape that it is emphasized that the writing and production of performances is a cultural and educational intervention.

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6. Theatre and Women's Groups

by Asenath Bole Odaga



Group and community participation as a concept self-help is very much part of Africans' cultures and tradition. As such almost all African communities have, well woven within their cultures and traditions, some form of group self-help activities. For example, among the Luos of Western Kenya, when a community recognizes the need for a bridge over a river to avoid some dangers, say crocodiles, or drowning, they hold meetings to discuss how members of the community would contribute skills and labour to build it on voluntary basis. The Luo women also have an informal women's groups — **saga** — which perform agricultural work and other activities such as weeding collectively during labour shortages to facilitate or cope with the work. The Luhya of Western Kenya also have such group activities.

Before independence, Europeans, mainly farmers' wives and missionaries, encouraged formation of women clubs/groups for the same reasons. The aim was to train the African women informally on new skills such as sewing, cookery, knitting, child care, etc., to enable them to perform their domestic responsibilities more effectively and to improve family welfare and their nutritional status. Thus the colonialists exploited the African traditional concept of coming together for a common cause. It is this initiative that later inspired some African women to start a group called **Maendeleo Ya Wanawake** (Progress for Women), an NGO. The Hon Pheobe Muga Asinyo, M P for Karachuonyo, was one of the Maendeleo founding members and its first Chairperson.

Self-help concept

As we've already briefly stated, the self-help group concept is an old practice in Africa. In Kenya we call it *Harambee*. And in the last three decades, Kenyans have held Harambees for all sorts of self-help projects. On the attainment of Kenya's political independence, the government used the self-help concept to mobilize and rally the entire population behind the first President of the Republic, the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, giving rise to what became known as the Harambee — pulling together. In fact, Kenya has become known as the Harambee country. We have collectively built hospitals, schools, roads, colleges, and churches, and also sent thousands of students for further studies, with funds collected through Harambee.

As of today, there are over 30,000 women's groups spread all over the Republic, engaged in all kinds of projects, founded and run on a self-help basis. A good number of these groups are meant to generate income for the members, many of whom are rural and urban poor women. But there are also groups with special missions that have been set up to create awareness on gender issues and to sensitize the women on basic matters related to their rights, while others — like the literature and drama ones — aim at promoting women dancers, singers, actors, writers, and storytellers: thus creating forums through which the grassroots women and women as a whole may freely share and express their views.

Apart from self-help projects initiated by the government through Harambee, individuals — mostly women — have also come together and founded viable groups that have embarked on various community-based self-help projects often addressing themselves to particular common women's and social needs. But the main objective of the majority of these groups, including theatre and drama ones, is to generate income for the members, to assist them in improving quality of life for themselves and their families. This takes into account the fact that the groups are often made up of grassroots women who are some of the most deprived illiterate individuals in Kenya and Africa as a whole. Such groups often try to utilize commodities and products which are readily available locally to make items for sale. Thus we have women's groups weaving baskets from sisal, palm leaves, and various types of grass; staging simple plays, dances, and songs; making pots, engaging in farming activities, making tie-and-dye cloth, keeping poultry etc.

Theatre and drama

Originally, most of the cultural theatre and drama groups, especially women's, were formed to entertain politicians for free or for very little payment. The groups entertained state guests and also sang and danced during state functions and anniversaries. With time, more and more cultural groups sprang up, as it was exciting to entertain dignitaries. But soon the glamour wore away. The reward was minimal in comparison to their effort. Thus the concept of self-help was absurdly abused by those in authority and it came to be regarded that one of the functions of women in development was song and dance for the politicians and their guests, while the number of women in important government jobs and decision- and policy-making bodies stayed as low as it was at the time of independence! Even women's groups engaged in other money-generating projects were not spared. Sometimes money donated

to them for improvements of projects through the authority didn't reach them as women fell easy prey to the corrupt unscrupulous leaders. In fact, few of the 30,000 women's groups, including drama ones, have made any substantial progress at all from the time they were formed.

**Need for
drama/theatre**

Women's groups are important nuclei of development activities which our communities require. Drama certainly accelerates the dissemination of information and knowledge to the community; especially on matters of health, diseases, and ignorance and can be used to combat faster development. In this connection it is expedient to organize more women's groups for drama and theatre activities, even in churches where women are the majority. These need to become as active as school drama and theatre annual events. In this way the message of development is likely to reach a wider community and have better impact on overall development. The theatre that is performed belongs to oral tradition and has its roots in the African culture and heritage. Part of this is epic in form and is very popular with women's groups theatre. Most actors here are illiterate, but they confidently rely on their memory and are able to master and retain with accuracy all that they need to perform satisfactorily. All this falls within African oral tradition, especially in regard to the community songs, dances and chants. And the oral form has been found to present no hindrance to the creation and development of new theatre activities, which deal with current issues emanating from peoples experience as they go about their daily activities.

"Real life is drama and does not consist of handy statements, which nicely, and at the right moment, fit into a script. Real life is dramatic in the sense that it revolves around personalities who don't deliver a 30 second answer for the "farmer corner" programme, but bring in what makes real life in African societies, what causes village palaver, what makes the atmosphere at a market place, or the settling of a case in a co-operative, the meeting between an extension officer and a farmer. In other words, the mixture of characters. The facet of human expressions — sadness and happiness, emotions and feelings, prejudice and opinions, steadfast arguments or weighed up compromises. Real life is dialectic, people of different opinions and interest clash together, they sometimes fight over their position, they sometimes compromise. The screams, the shouts, the laughs and the crying. There are so many tears, all over Africa, and so much laughter" (African Radio Play Ed. Wolfram Frommlet, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden Baden, 1991). Be that as it may, women's groups and their activities, such as drama in general, still lack some empowerment to enable them utilize their full

potential. The legal status of some of them should be strengthened to enable them acquire land so as to qualify to get or borrow money for their projects. The groups also need to improve the functional literacy level of their members in order to be more effective in their many development ventures. In addition, there is a need for the women's groups to encourage and recruit younger members who currently seem to be indifferent to join. This is not withstanding understandable reasons which may be limiting their interest in women's group activities, such as having young families or being better educated, hence looking down on older, poor, less educated or uneducated members. Men may now also become members of women's groups, especially the drama ones, but not as office bearers (officials). This empowers the women to be fully in charge of their groups and not blame men in cases of failure, which incidentally are much fewer than those of men's groups.

Participatory theatre

In this scenario of women's group and theatre, it is necessary to rethink and seriously review African cultures as a whole in terms of people's participation and emancipation: even appreciation of views and ideas that have been ignored for so long. And apart from developing an authentic African theatre where women's groups participate fully, we also need to look at traditional medicine, agricultural techniques, and educational reforms. We must find new culture of dialogue and development: a new orientation for integration. We have virtually lost what used to be, and now find ourselves unable to understand correctly the modern styles or fashion, such as those of democracy and liberation and requirements and autonomy for women through group and individual participation. This calls for full involvement in theatre as an important media for education and information for development.

Within these perspectives of change theatre can play a major contribution to the women's groups in bringing to the forefront some realization of what our society needs during the process of transformation. These include language, characterization, sensitivity, decency, and respect towards our people, culture and feelings. Plays need to be performed in local languages since they aim at enhancing self-esteem of the audience (grassroots community, the majority of whom are women). For example, "credible and authentic language has proved to have extremely scintillating results within play groups, and women's groups usually in new cases indulge in role play and use language to convey messages"

Theatre provides a voice to the people who are usually denied this natural right by the self-appointed avant garde who claim they speak for the majority. Members of the women's groups fall into this category and so must be assisted to come out and assert themselves through drama and plays. In fact, at the end of a good play the audience should argue about the authenticity of the story. Indeed, drama should stimulate peoples's imagination about their collective efforts towards a better future. I venture to suggest that women's groups should do this loud and clear in their programmes of development using theatre and drama, among other methods.

Theatre plays

"Play, for example, with characters and a story extremely close to the day-to-day experience of a certain audience — a peasant population or youngsters in a township. The characters provide a maximum degree of authenticity and, consequently, a maximum of identification on the part of the audience. The audience takes sides, laughs and suffers with their respective 'favourites'. Naturally, the characters in such a play keep very much in line with the habit and behaviour of their real images, and so does the story. The climax does not digress much from what would be possible in reality [] The effect they might have is the support of cultural identity. Marginal groups of a society, people who have been deprived of their pride and dignity, can hear their equals on radio, in dramatic and literary form. 'They are just like us.' and therefore they are proud that they are regarded as worthy enough for a radio play" (African Radio Play Ed. Wolfram Frommlet, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden Baden 1991)

The play *Ndahika Ndeda* — *I'll marry when I like* (Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Ngugi wa Mirie, Ndahika Ndenda, HEB, Nairobi, 1983) with a mixed cast, aimed at the rural Kikuyu men and women, is a popular play in Kikuyu that has brought a new meaning to African theatre. The play creates awareness through the writers use of language, sensitizing the rural communities by depicting common daily occurrence. Women's groups need such plays, because drama and theatre are part and parcel of social change, which has an ability to produce a continuous flow of transformation of the individuals and groups within a society. In this continuous process creativity is a natural contributor. Plays, dances, and other forms of art provide the audience with new interpretations of the events of social change. Theatre has been used to transfer information and knowledge and as a useful instrument for instruction and entertainment.

As a non-formal education, theatre attracts attention and interest. It is in this context that women's groups can make use of drama to spread their messages of development faster: using oral medium, imitation,

Theatre as non-formal education

signals, and other forms of communication are familiar in the community. Drama can also be used for awareness, creation, and problem-solving in the community by way of observation, simulation, and case-studies as techniques for collective analysis and removal of personal biases. This can best be done through conducting drama and theatre workshops in local languages in which the women's group actors and audience are comfortable and use with confidence.

Women's groups theatre and drama activities are important catalysts in the bottom up approach system in development. The groups make a ready platform and entry point for the introduction of grassroots development. Women involved in drama/theatre realistically depict issues that concern and make attempts to address their felt needs. But they need assistance so as to be able to benefit from their activities and to meet challenges and get ready to carry their performance beyond their villages. The level of theatre activities, performances, and current productions by women's groups are lacking proper co-ordination and professionalism

Women's theatre groups

Women's groups theatre often entails singing and dancing, but they also use role-play to pass messages to the masses on development, moral, religious and socio-economic issues. In this category there are many grassroots women theatre groups both in the rural and urban centres. One such group is the **Sese Women's group** in Seme, Kisumu District in Western Kenya. The group is made up of old and young women and is usually hired for a fee, but they also insist that the person hiring them must provide them with transport since they live in an area where transport is a problem. In fact, at one level almost all women's groups in Western Kenya and the Republic as a whole, carry on some stage and drama activities and are involved in theatrical performances at one time or another. Thus theatre is very much part of the women's groups activities.

GADECE

The formation of the **Kenya Women Literature Group, now Gender and Development Centre (GADECE)** as a national NGO based in Kisumu has made a commendable effort in trying to encourage women to become actively involved in drama, literature, and literacy as part of all development activities that seek to assist them in improving the quality of life for themselves and their families. *In its effort to promote drama as part of literature — both oral and written — GADECE's women's group affiliates hold Reading Days, to which the public is welcome. The audience members pay*

a small entry fee to assist the groups with the organization. As part of the women's groups literature and literacy programmes, the women's groups and their members read or tell stories, recite poems, dance, sing, chant, and pass messages through role-plays and short plays. This is a very important occasion for the groups. The last two we held were at Simbi near Awasi and Masaku near Machakos. It began with women only, but by the evening men, who had come as audience, had also become performers. This, I believe, is one of the characteristics of free African theatre. There is a very thin line dividing the performer and the audience.

In all this, the purpose is to promote the African theatre drama activities through women's groups. Another characteristic of these groups is that they emerge spontaneously, operate informally, are village- or urban-based, are small and well integrated in the larger tradition of self-help for collective action. And, as we've stated, the groups help each other to earn some money through group action and mutual social responsibility and accountability.

Conclusion

In conclusion we may state that drama as an educational media is relatively inexpensive but effective because it uses the language of the people. Women's groups and theatre use local languages and drama in promoting health care, hygiene, agriculture, birth control, and even political lobbying. Indeed, its informal character has given it a wide use in NGO institutions with women's groups. Much use is made of drama for education in both rural development and urban programmes, like those dealing with literacy and bookkeeping where credit facilities are provided through small loan schemes, etc.

We also note that theatre is particularly important in its ability to create emotional impact based on existing social relevance, such as the epidemic of AIDS, ebola, and the pressing need for democratization and its accompanying sacrifices and constraints. And, of course, its potential contribution against system of oppression; especially in developing countries.

We may also state that theatre is an educational instrument and effective contributor to social change and development in the historical cultural context. The women's groups theatre aims at putting the audience or target group on the right course by delivering to it relevant messages in the change process. Therefore, theatre and the women's groups can be used by all development agencies to effect change, and to pass information faster than any other media. It uses oral communication

and usually deals with issues that are familiar to the audience. It is therefore a most suitable media for women in Western Kenya, most of whom are illiterate, poor and cannot have access to other media such as television, video, etc.

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7. Child Care: Folk Media and Theatre

By Ms Winnie Olilo-Ogunde



This chapter presupposes that every society or community has existing structures and set-ups established to care and provide for the needs of its members. When this fails, a close scrutiny has to be made to find the causes. The article highlights initiatives taken to strengthen people's knowledge as an essential foundation for sustainable development. Attention is directed on the effectiveness of folk media and theatre as communication tools to promote development. The use of folk media and, in particular, theatre was intended to provide information and knowledge while laying emphasis on what people can do for themselves and not on what "others" can do for them.

Special reference is made to children as a vulnerable group that indeed needs special care and yet are sometimes left due to preventable diseases and inadequate nutrition.

This chapter explores how a UNICEF-supported programme in Kisumu, Kenya empowered people to tackle this problem using the power of the traditional media. The programme was started in 1984 to reduce infant mortality rate, which was at that time considerably high. It also gives a historical background, the purpose, strategy for development, people's participation, and experiences. The pioneers of this programme were **Obat Masira** and the writer. However, without the enormous resource and support from the people the programme would not have seen the light of the day. The main focus is on child care as a role of the family that is influenced by peoples indigenous knowledge to provide care to the family — in particular children as a vulnerable group. It is a process that cannot be achieved merely by campaigns. Great emphasis was laid on communication as a necessary means to propagate information and solicit support from the target group to participate in the programme based on informed decisions and choices.

In order to achieve the objective of better health child care practices, mobilisation of all the available resources had to be done. It was vital that in all stages power sharing with the target group was included.

Folk media and Theatre For Development, which have gained popularity in Kenya, evolved in Kisumu, 11 years ago. Kisumu town is strategically located on the shores of Lake Victoria. The area is 417 square km of which 260 square km is water.

Background of information

Sometimes Kisumu is referred to as a rural town. This is because the expansion has absorbed the indigenous people, unlike other cities where expansion is attributed to migration other than existing residents. The dominant ethnic group is Luo.

The town is divided into three segments: the town proper, semi-urban, and rural. The town proper can be described as the inner city with all types of urban activities going on. Facilities and basic urban services are available. The residents in this segment are immigrants. It is more heterogeneous.

The semi-urban segment is slightly different. The majority of its inhabitants are the indigenous Luo people. They actually live in their ancestral homes and have been absorbed by the city. Consequently, traditional practices and beliefs are still quite prominent.

The third sector is commonly known as rural Kisumu. It is purely rural, with almost no external residents, other than the indigenous people. Homes are still structured in Luo traditional structure and position, which is chronologically arranged. The head of home is the elder, who has a distinguished house that you cannot fail to spot. In the event of any misfortunes or celebrations, rituals tend to follow established practices of beliefs. Immigrants are very few, and if they do live in this sector they have to conform with the norms.

Project Purpose

It was on the basis of this background that it was seen fit to employ folk media and theatre to promote child health care and development. The programme, initiated in 1984 when UNICEF realized infant mortality was high, decided to build on people's existing or indigenous knowledge.

In both semi-urban and rural areas, literacy levels were very low. Hence print media was not suitable for them. To realize a reduced infant mortality rate — which in 1984 stood at 199 out of 1,000 children dying of preventable disease — information dissemination was a prerequisite to enhance child survival.

UNICEF together with the Kisumu Municipal Council embarked on a Child Survival Programme to reduce infant mortality. The contributing factors were mainly preventable diseases such as malaria, measles, and diarrhoea and vomiting. In drawing up an Action Plan for Child Survival, communications, information, and education were recognized as essential to reach the goal of reduced infant mortality rate. It was also important for the communications experts to identify appropriate channels of communications to propagate the relevant messages. Folk media and theatre were subsequently selected as instrumental tools to facilitate the process. The rationale for the two tools was mainly due to familiarity, existing human resources, cost effectiveness, and the multiplier effect of reaching a wider target audience beyond the actual performance. It was our belief, for example, that reaching a group of 800 people during a performance would multiply. People who participated during performances could not fail to share with others back home. Folk media actually looked promising. It was later discovered that it went beyond information, education, and communication. Both women and youth groups involved discovered their interests in acting and creative arts. This did much to boost their confidence.

Strategy for development

Apart from this, the reflection and analysis of problems process made the people visualize the problem better and therefore sought for better solutions. As is commonly said, “Drama is the mirror of the society” indeed it appeared to be so.

People’s participation is crucial for development to take place. It is necessary to involve people in community diagnosis, analysis, Action Plan, and implementation. In developing people’s participation in folk media the biggest challenge was their involvement — especially in problem identification as opposed to international research methods of data collection. It was our belief that “The people do know their problems — after all, the problems are theirs’, they live with them. How can it be that they do not know them? If they do not express their views openly it is because they have no power of an organization behind them. They know they are weak and their frankness will mean further exploitation ”

Various possibilities were looked into on how to involve people fully. For their participation we took into account existing structures such as organized women and youth groups, who were already mobilized and would easily be trained to enhance their roles as change agents.

Stages of development

To develop the programme using folk media and theatre, several steps were taken, in training both youth groups and women's groups.

Community Diagnosis

Through a workshop, groups came together and diagnosed problems in their communities, listing them as they are in the respective villages. Every participant was involved in the session which used brainstorming and group dynamics techniques. Numerous problems affecting children's health were identified. Among them were:

- Malnutrition
- Diarrhoea and vomiting among
- Drunkenness in the family leading to family instability
- Polio and measles
- Malaria

Discussions

After problem identification, the workshop stressed that the people reflect on the problems critically to be able to come up with practical solutions. The discussions were lively as problems were analysed in relation to causal factors. For example, it was quite evidence that polio leading to disability could be avoided if immunization services were sought in time. Breath measles was a leading killer. Other causes were non-immunization, malnutrition especially among babies, and mothers failing to breast feed giving bottled milk instead. Many times the milk was diluted and also contaminated so the food value was negligible — but worst of all it, infected the infant, leading to diarrhoea and vomiting, and hence resulting in malnutrition.

Tackling problems

Having understood the problem and the situation, analysis was done on what possible solutions would be identified to tackle these problems. For example, why do diarrhoea and vomiting kill infants? What can we do to arrest the problem? Emphasis was laid on the people taking action, and only where they were unable could the external support come in.

For instance, the already affected children needed medical care, such as oral rehydration to control the diarrhoea. Apart from mixed oral rehydration, the mothers at the Maternal and Child Health (MHC) clinic were instructed on how to prepare the mixtures. The main problem was prioritized as a theme for the a drama festival.

Productions

Another workshop was organized to develop messages and compose them into songs, produce plays, and verses. This was a very

critical stage and it did not end with the one-day workshop. Groups at their village levels — especially the youths were encouraged to prepare scripts. The women's group based their plays on realistic situations, rehearsed their dramas off the top of their heads. In fact, these plays were more natural and enabled them to understand the problems better, while the audience easily identified with the situation.

In developing the play, the participants realized many issues could be included to highlight the situation, as the problems were interlinked. For example, drunkenness precipitated some of the problems as the family was not stable and the mother, in particular, could not concentrate on family affairs. With alcoholism normally came wife beating, screaming children, and total tension in the family

The role of the facilitators was to provide guidance and direction to ensure the messages were well developed and that demonstrations were relevant to an actual situation. Training in theatre techniques and music were sometimes provided by teachers.

Folk festivals To stimulate creative thinking and motivate the groups, plays, songs, and poems were presented at a two-days annual festival and the winners received awards. However, greater attention was paid to the actual messages contained in the plays or songs. The competitions used to strengthen the groups' capacity and skill to develop messages. Apart from that, the forum reached a wide audience — usually 2,000 people per day

Travelling theatre Information education did not end with the Folk Media Festival. The performances were later taken to the villages through a travelling theatre exchange programme. Winning plays went to various places, while other groups also went on exchange visits to reach the people. At the grassroots level, group discussions took place. Mostly the Chiefs' Barazas were used as appropriate forums, especially to mobilize a big group. Depending on the theme, sometimes segmentation of the audience was done to facilitate open discussion, particularly in the case of sensitive subjects. Segmentation was done by gender and age. Women were more open when there were only a few men present. Transport for the groups to the different places were provided by Kisumu Municipal Councils using UNICEF funds. Subsistence allowances were provided to the groups as an incentive

Constraints Most of the groups are faced with major constraints that affect their motivation and sustainability. Many groups are volunteers, with mea-

gre incomes or none at all. They spend a lot of time rehearsing to be able to come up with good performances. However, they feel constrained and demoralized when they fail to meet their basic needs. The youths who have completed school but are mostly unemployed. Their expectation in theatre is to develop a profession with an income to supplement their earnings. When this is not met, they get frustrated. Many youth groups with promising talents have fallen along the wayside. For groups that are still organized, sustainability is a big question as they look for greater pastures. Training to professional levels is equally lacking, as this is dependent on donor funding. A lot of these groups have demonstrated potential and talents worth developing, but the majority loose enthusiasm when their talents remain dormant.

Building on people's knowledge and promoting their ideas creates confidence in them. Participation of the people is the key to their empowerment and an initial step to sustain ability. Without confidence in themselves the participants feel as if they are objects to be used and dumped.

Conclusion

Theatre and folk media are great vehicles to mobilize people and educate them for social change. Our challenge, therefore, is to strengthen the groups to utilize these tools to their maximum capacities and have greater impact. Theatre allows sensitive issues to be discussed without offending an individual person, while at the same time the guilty person feels challenged and can choose to change out of his own will. It enhances people's power to make informed decisions as opposed to giving directives or instructions.

Recommendations

Organization who have recognized the power of folk media and Theatre For Development must think seriously about investing in it as a promising means of creating social change. Investing in the two tools also calls for investing in the talents of the people themselves. Hence, developing people themselves and not only the tools.

8. Child Labour and Teenage Fertility

by Opiyo Mumma



A Drama and Theatre Methodology in Siaya District in Kenya

A sociologist cum researcher came up with interesting findings on child labour and its links with teenage fertility. He invited a team of theatre animators/facilitators and researchers to devise theatre programmes using the research material to create awareness on the implications of child labour and teenage fertility. After a long research period on the two issues in 1988 and 1989 the team concluded that the problem on child labour and teenage fertility was most prevalent in Siaya. The group decided to design a Theatre For Development (TFD) programme and to use some of its methodology to communicate the problem.

Using the findings of the research (see Siaya Profile page 71), certain themes were picked on and the animator came up with a “pilot” play script. It was further decided to use teachers and students in different parts of Siaya District to rework the themes and script to their own needs. There were bound to be changes in the script depending on the needs, possibilities, and limitations in different areas. This was a departure from conventional TFD method of using animator/facilitators to devise and perform. It was a considered decision that the primary school pupils were aware of the child labour problem and the secondary school students were knowledgeable of the adolescent fertility issue, and all are members of their respective communities.

Six primary and six secondary schools from all the divisions of Siaya were consulted and requested to participate in the educational, Theatre For Development project. Further consultations were held between the intervening group, community leaders, teachers, parents, officials in the Ministries of Health, Environment, Agriculture, and other policy makers. It was crucial that these people decided in which language and at what venues the performances and discussions would take place.

Initially the animators group was meant to assist with the direction of the devising and production, but it was later decided to leave this to the teachers, students, and parents. They were to come more into the picture after the performance and during the devising.

The plays on teenage fertility and child labour were prepared over a period of eight weeks in the community halls and schools using available facilities and resources. This gave the facilitators an indication of what the students and teachers were capable of doing artistically.

Themes

The following are the themes that were used in both plays by the schools

- Responsibilities of the adult societies towards children.
- Employers who prefer to hire children because they have no exposure and no bargaining power
- Exploited children overworked, their experiences and the after-effects
- Teenage fertility
- Importance of sex education vis-a-vis parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other factors
- “It could happen to you” as an open-ended rhetoric

Play Synopsis

A brief synopsis of the plays on child labour and teenage pregnancy would be appropriate at this stage. A neighbour visits Sabina’s father to discuss her marriage; Sabina is 13 years old Sabina’s father accepts this proposal, arguing that he has many children whom he cannot support and thereby they experience poverty . Sabina’s mother is opposed to the marriage and prefers that Sabina becomes a housemaid. Soon after this Sabina’s aunt arrives from Nairobi to look for a maid. She promises the parents money and education for Sabina when they go to Nairobi. She manages to convince them, leaves them some money and clothes, and takes Sabina away to the city In Nairobi, Sabina’s expectations are shattered as she is overworked, mistreated, and even sexually molested by the aunt’s sons Sabina and another housemaid plan to leave their employers for the streets because of these woes, and they do In the streets, life is tough and to survive they have to become prostitutes and get involved in drugs. A neighbour from Sabina’s rural home bumps into her in the streets, goes back and informs Sabina’s parents, who are not aware Sabina has left the house of the aunt The play ends with the parents wondering what their next step should be.

In The Teenage Fertility Play, Omondi and Anyango, both teenagers and classmates, become lovers. At Anyango's home, her mother cannot make ends meet, her father is away from home working, and she is putting pressure on Anyango to get married to a rich man. Anyango's dilemma is compounded by the fact that she gets pregnant and Omondi is responsible. There is an exposition on the details of fertility, of which the two are ignorant. Both decided to drop out of school to get married and then realize they are still too young and will not be able to survive economically. The play comes to a climax when Anyango's father bumps into them in town and brings them back to the village. The play ends with both families discussing on what should happen to Omondi and Anyango. This is where the forum with the audiences starts.

I will now proceed to briefly describe on the performances that took place and the discussions that followed each.

Ndere Boys' Boarding Primary School, Yala Division This school opted to perform the "Child Labour" script in English, in which they were competent. The Drama Patron drew the cast from various regions, which contributed to a well-interpreted theatrical piece. The drama facilities are relatively good and this enhanced the performance — hence, the message was well received by the audience. The all-male cast did not hinder portrayal of the female characters: in fact, the boy who played the lead girl character was effective. This performance in Siaya Township gave forth to a very lively debate in the discussion session. The audience was quite big, a mixture of students, teachers, and the community. It was clear the audience comprehended the issues raised in the play and articulated them with good questions and challenges being raised.

Nyadhi (Mixed) Primary School, Boro Division The invitation of parents and the rest of the community to Nyadhi to participate in the school's performance of the "Child Labour" play gave the morning an aura of celebration. It was going to be an open-air performance; an arena-type space. It was apparent good work had been put in by both the Drama Patron and the pupils. The limitations in the English language did not diminish the feeling with which the pupils performed. They identified fully with the characters in the play. The audience reaction was warm as they comprehended the realities in the performance space, a situation they knew so well. The facilitators strongly recommended that the play be performed again by the pupils of Nyadhi in either Dholuo or Kiswahili, which would benefit both the pupils (the performers) and the community (the audience) as these are the languages spoken here and all are at home with them. The issues in the play were debated at length. It must be noted that the women took

a leading role in the discussions. This has led to the start of a Youth Performing Group in the area.

**Maranda (mixed)
Primary School,
Bondo Division**

The performance by Maranda Primary was held in a most appropriate hall between the secondary and primary school; within the community. The audience was sizeable. The acoustics did not favour the performers, who nevertheless managed a well-rounded performance with a very clear message. The Drama Patron and the pupils must be commended for their choice of properties and attempts at establishing character through decor. The post-performance discussion between teachers and members of the community touched on the issues raised in the play. The performance was a constant source of reference, indicative of the effective power of drama. The turnout was most impressive, including parents, teachers, health workers, administrative officials, and policy-makers.

**Sega girls'
Primary School,
Ukwala Division**

The influence of the renowned tradition at Sega Girls' Secondary could not be missed in the Girls' Primary. This is a positive step in spreading drama awareness within the community. The casting, the setting of the stage, the costuming, the decor, and the acting were all very well thoughtout. The script had been talked about by the Drama Patron and the pupils and they all understood the message they wanted to portray. There was rapport created between the performers and the audience in all parts of the script. In the discussion session, it was felt that the community was not well represented. This would require another performance in the future. There have been a series of performances of this nature in the area this one having being the stimulu.

**Rangala Girls'
Primary School,
Ugunja Division**

The teamwork by most of the staff in this school in the production was very apparent long before the performance. There are quite a few teachers who can teach or are interested in drama. The whole school and the community were let in to witness to the performance. The all-female cast gave a well-rounded performance of the "Child Labour" play. A lot of work had gone in preparing the play in all the theatrical aspects. We enjoyed ourselves and learnt many things from the pupil's point of view. There is great drama talent among those who performed. Once again the audience in the post-performance session related closely to the play, and we had a very lively discussion that touched on other aspects of life. In interviews conducted later, a teacher was heard to comment that this performance established a strong link between the community and the

school The area is now treated to discussions after performances by the schools and youth group that operates in the community hall.

Maranda Boys' Secondary School, Bondo Division It was obvious there was a drama tradition in the school The script on teenage pregnancies was well internalized by the students, and this enhanced the impact of the production. Good attempts had been made to create an appropriate setting by the use of a backdrop, while the scenic harmony also fitted in well with the play The introduction of song and dance for scene changes merged the scenes effectively. The all-male cast portrayed the female characters with competency. The theme on "youth reproductive health care" was appropriate and the students used improvisation, when deemed fit, to create rhetorical questions aimed at the audience, this provided the vital linkage This play was both at Maranda Secondary School and Christian Secondary School in Siaya. At a later stage it had become a mature production and provided the audience with plenty of material for discussion, more so because of the students' interpretation, which was an eye-opener. The facilitators recommended Maranda Boys' Secondary for their qualitative input It was attended by a record audience

Sega Girls' Secondary School, Ukwala division Sega Girls' Secondary is well known throughout the country for its drama tradition Mr Kayondo, the Drama Patron, and the students had reworked the script on teenage pregnancy appropriate to their technique of performance This resulted in a very stylized production The all-female cast had no problems enacting the male roles. They were competent in the English language and manipulated it well. The costuming was of a very high standard, harmonized by using adequate stage properties The use of flashbacks, fore-flashes, anterior monologue, and the manipulation of the narrative structure to establish a complete montage of the theme was spot on. The use of gesture, expression, and mime teased out the plot and moved the theme forward. This production needed a bigger audience from the community to witness some inner turmoils created in families from situations such as this The facilitators recommended that Sega performs this production again in the future in both English and Kiswahili It was a very balanced and qualitative production with a lucid message that very often encouraged audience participation

Rangala Boys' Second. School, Ugunja Division It must be said the preparations at Rangala Boys' were not adequate, but for reasons we all understood The Drama Patron and the students had very little time to analyse the script, rework it for their own purpose, and produce it. Having said that, the students made a spirited

effort at performing in a very poor, difficult space; a half-completed building that had very poor acoustics. There was innovative use of the space in determining entrances and exits. The all-male cast pulled at all their resources in performing the female roles. A missing link was the community audience, which would have created the desired atmosphere. This was made up for by the teachers, who stayed until the very end of the discussion.

**Nyanza Christian
(Mixed)
Secondary School,
Boro Division**

The intervenors/facilitators had the opportunity of looking into a rehearsal of this production before the actual performance. This was due to the Drama Patron's interest, which helped the production quite a lot. This being a mixed school, the theme of the play "Youth Reproductive Health Care" was topical. The school does not have adequate performing space, but the atmosphere was conducive because of the diversified audience from all walks of life. In spite of the limitations in physical space, language inhibitions, character types, etc., the cast carried the play well. To say the least very "naturalistic" in setting and character interpretation. After the performance, during the discussion session, some of the students who took part gave an insight into the learning process they had undergone. The lead female character has got a natural acting talent. The facilitators recommended this play to be produced again by the students in both Kiswahili and English. In later performances at this venue, discussions centred on development alternatives in Siaya.

**Sinaga Girls'
Secondary School,
Yala Division**

The performance was cancelled at the last minute because of another function that the students had on that particular day. This could not be helped. Rehearsals, however, had been going on. Even though we did not watch the performance the facilitators want to highly commend the school for taking time off to rehearse the play.

**Ramba Boys
Secondary School,
Rarieda Division**

The tradition of dance drama is very prevalent in Ramba. This was made very apparent by the inception of song and dance in this production. There was a versatility in movement and acting that was difficult to come by anywhere else apart from Ramba. The choice of costumes and stage properties was most appropriate. The treatment of the subject was apt and well recommended. The use of dance and mime was integral to the whole piece. The response of the community was a big discussion that took place after the show.

Recommendations and conclusions

The performances should be presented in a language in which the performers and the audience are most at home with. In other words, the above schools ought to perform the plays in Dholuo, Kiswahili and English.

These performances should go on tour to other areas of the district or even province. This acts as motivation to performers and at the same time the important messages that they carry can be spread far and wide.

The Kenya Broadcasting Corporation ought to record and televise these performances for nation-wide viewing, due to their educational and developmental message.

The presentation of the artistic performances had a vision for human progress and growth in the areas. They questioned the realities of these communities created a forum for discussion of the problems.

The use of students from these communities with their parents as participants and the use of popular art forms familiar to them showed a process of emancipation, which should be furthered by the establishment of performance groups for the future.

The content and form of the dramas draw responses from the audiences that demanded a re-examination of the social-economic situation of these communities. In addressing these concerns through a drama/theatre presentation, it recognized the potential of the same as a communication medium.

The potential of drama as a means to sensitize people and reinforce a process of social change as well as changes in self concept, attitude, awareness, skill, or behaviour is high. This can go further to include other forms of social education and action, including the wide range of performing arts activity related to education and organization among community groups and educational institutions.

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SIAYA DISTRICT PROFILE

The district is located in Western Kenya, some 450 km from Nairobi. It has an area of 5528 square kilometres and is administratively divided into six divisions, each of which is divided into a number of locations and sublocations. It is traversed by the two rivers of Yala and Nzoia. It also borders Lake Victoria.

Population

The dominant ethnic group are the Nilotic-speaking Luos. According to the 1979 Census, the population of Siaya was 474,516 persons, and the projected population by 1990 is 759,582. It reports the sex ratio in Kenya 83 males per 100 females. The household size is also small (an average of five) compared to the other districts. The age groups 0-4, 5-9, 10-14, and 15-19 constitutes 58% of Siaya's population. Population density is 188 persons per square kilometre which is rather low compared to other districts (South Nyanza, 211 persons per km², Kisii, 395 per km²).

Fertility and mortality trends: the fertility rates are low. The average number of births by women of child-bearing age is six. Women marry at an early age in the district. By age two, approximately 136 deaths per 1,000 children are reported in Siaya District, a figure only succeeded by that of South Nyanza in Western Kenya. Life expectancy at birth for males is 41.5 years and 45.8 years for females. This is low compared to the national figures of 53 years for males and 55 for females.

Education level

The 1979 census shows that 58% of females and 51% of both sexes had no education. Drop-out rate is high in the district and is estimated to range between 30% -50%. This is due to lack of school fees, early marriage, and unwanted pregnancies. There is also lack of facilities and absence of discipline on the part of parents as well as, laxity at school on the part of the school administration.

Division	1984		1988	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Bondo	103	12	119	18
Boro	98	10	107	17
Yala	86	10	90	16
Rarieda	104	11	112	16
Ukwala	139	10	14	18
Total	530	53	574	85

Source: Ministry of Education, Siaya.

Bondo division had the highest increase in terms of primary schools while Ukwala and Boro Divisions had the highest increase in terms of secondary schools

**Economic
Activities and
Income Levels:**

Mainly agriculture, fishing, and commerce. In 1988 the total population was 713,312 persons; out of this the labour force was estimated at 294,154 persons. During the period, 80% of the total population was estimated to be engaged in agriculture and live-stock activities. The public sector provides employment for 3.9% of the people, mainly in the government and quasi-government services. In the 1989-1993 year plan, it is expected that agricultural sector would continue to provide most of the employment opportunities.

Siaya District's economy is dominated by small-scale peasant farmers. The main income is subsistence. Monthly income per capita in 1989 was estimated at Ksh. 308/= and is expected to grow to Ksh.409/= by 1993. However, this is fairly below the national average, which is presently at Ksh.630/= per month.

People's participation in self-help activities is reported to be very low.

Welfare

Health facilities in the district are few, sporadic, and poor. They do not meet the peoples' needs adequately and are not easily accessible given the poor transportation and communication networks in the district. Utilization of family planning services is reported low in the district; a large majority of inhabitants being opposed to family planning. However, with intensification of maternal and child health (MCH) programmes in the district, the attitude to family planning is expected to change for the better so that many children would no longer be regarded as insurance against high mortality that existed in the past.

Malnutrition is also prevalent in the district. An estimated 4% of children between the ages three and six months are reported to be acutely malnourished. This situation is due to lack of adequate food, in the sense that much of the food consumed in the district is assumed to be from outside notably Busia, Kakamega and Trans-Nzoia districts.

Literacy in the district is also reported low although school enrolment is reported to be high.

Hospital attendance is very high due to rampant diseases and sickness among children. The major diseases recorded for Siaya include, among others, diarrhoea, Malaria

The major development potential and needs in the district are found in four sectors of district economy. These are productive, social, urban development, and basic infrastructure

Potentials and needs

For comparative analysis questionnaires were administered to teachers and community leaders, based on Control Group and Experimental Group Design. The questionnaires were limited to teachers and community leaders, only because the crowds were so large it made it impossible to fill in the questionnaires for everybody.

In summary we had:

Teachers Control Group	38 Respondents
Experimental Group	54 Respondents
Total	93 Respondents

The Communicators that participated:

Sites	Teachers	Students	Parents	Policy Makers	Total
Sega	27	681	14	-	722
Maranda	35	500	74	-	609
Christian	10	340	6	-	356
Ramba	18	467	10	-	495
Rangala	10	380	7	-	397
Siaya Adm.	24	400	30	60	414
Total	124	2768	14	60	2993

9. Drama for Hygiene Messages

A pilot project to look at impact of Theatre For Development by Loukie Levert



A scene portrayed in a rural village: a man, after stepping in a rather unpleasant surprise in the family compound, chastises his brother for not teaching his children to use the latrine. His brother in turn scolds his wife for putting him in such an embarrassing situation.

Another scene: a mime, because sometimes actions speak louder than words and have the added advantage of being understood by all age groups. Embarrassment and humour proved to be a hit when a man mimed the unenviable task of having to enter a dirty, smelly latrine. To make the mimed message even more clear, audience members were asked to explain and react to what they had just seen. The responses showed that the message was indeed understood, and by repeating it aloud for the benefit of the rest of the audience, it was reinforced.

Scene three: an embarrassing situation arises at the marketplace. Two *mandaazi* (donut) sellers, competing for customers, discover they have different ideas about cleanliness in their business. One of them is proud of his large, inexpensive wares, while the other boasts of his good hygiene practices. A prospective customer appears on the scene. After visiting both vendors, he decides initially that bigger is better. The triumphant vendor, who has run out of paper in which to wrap the *mandaazi*, goes to borrow some from his competitor — but suddenly hears an urgent call of nature and disappears. After seeing that the vendor didn't even wash his hands after returning from the latrine and before handling the food, the customer realized that cleaner is better than bigger, and turned his attentions to the other vendor. A fight ensues, and a market attendant steps in to break it up. To drive the message home, the theatre group relies on audience participation. The market attendant begins to ask women in the crowd if they would buy *mandaazis* from the unhygienic vendor. The end result: the bad vendor is embarrassed into admitting his substandard hygiene practices, and agrees to clean up his act.

People often react more strongly to social implications of a message than they would to warnings of health hazards and technical

details. The power of drama is that it can portray embarrassing situations in a non-offensive and sometimes humorous way. This can make audience members look at a familiar — and even uninteresting — subject in a new and different light.

RDWSSP II At least these were the assumptions of the Rural Domestic Water and Sanitation Programme (RDWSSP II) in Western Kenya

The programme objectives of the RDWSSP II are the implementation of low-cost sustainable sanitation and community water facilities in about 1,000 rural communities within Nyanza Province, Kenya. Their approach is to achieve this through full community participation using Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and other participatory methodologies for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

For hygiene education, the programme depended on Village Resource Persons (VRPs) to “spread the word” about hygiene practices. However, this wasn’t working as well as they had hoped. Involving popular local “folk media” groups seemed to be the next logical step.

But which type of “folk media” would be best, and would it really be effective? The programme decided that a pilot project using two local theatre groups would answer some of their questions.

Pilot Project In April/May 1994 the pilot project started to assess whether Theatre For Development would be a realistic, cost-efficient means to boost the hygiene training portion of the programme. The general focus of the pilot project was on the ten water and sanitation messages that the hygiene training is centred around and on personal responsibility towards community’s own development.

The ten messages were:

- Draw water from a protected source
- Transport water in a covered container
- Store water safely
- Draw water safely
- Use water from a protected source
- All should use a latrine
- Wash hands after using the latrine
- Regularly clean the latrine
- Dispose of children’s faeces in latrine
- Train children two years to use a latrine

From the start it was obvious that in the current set-up of the programme (250 target communities a year, scattered over six districts), the financial and logistic consequences would make it almost impossible to visit every community. The pilot project aimed to see whether the concept of using Theatre For Development would be feasible and whether there were alternatives for visiting every community with an elaborate theatre programme

Therefore, the objective of the pilot project study was to provide answers to the following questions:

- Which medium (drama, songs, mime, poems, live music) seems to be the most effective and efficient to provoke interest and participation in hygiene training and willingness to change behaviour?
- Which media (drama, songs, mime, poems, live music) seem to be the most effective and efficient to achieve willingness to feel a responsibility towards own development in health in particular and development in general?
- What is the effect of different folk media on different target groups?
- What is the effect of involving different groups within the community in different places (school, water point, home-steads, meeting place of women's group, general community place)?
- Is there a possibility of “raising the authority” of Village Resource Persons (VRPs) within the community by folk media?
- Is there a realistic and cost-effective possibility to use folk media to bolster hygiene community responsibility within RDWSSP II?
- Which of the two folk media groups meets the objectives of RDWSSP II for a creative and cost-effective approach using folk media (as mentioned above) the most?

Two theatre groups (the Misango Arts Ensemble and the Kisumu Professional Players) were invited to prepare a theatre proposal. Both the groups were asked to perform on the basis of their proposal in three RDWSSP Programme villages in two districts (Siaya and Kisumu). The villages were selected on the basis that at least 30% of the latrines had been completed. They were in Kokinda, Hono, Sermebe in Siaya District; and Kasangoro, Othith, Kanyajwang'a in Kisumu District

Evaluation

Evaluation was done by: **the theatre-group itself**, which issued a report with its conclusions on the performances, and **outside researchers** in cooperation with the Communication Advisor of the programme. Two outside researchers were asked to carry out and conduct baseline-household interviews, to evaluate the performance of the drama groups, and to have a second household interview after the performance of the drama group. Tools used for this were: observation sheets, pictorial household questionnaires, and focus group interviews.

Baseline-household interviews were carried out one week before the drama group's performance. For this a pictorial questionnaire was used. The pictures in this questionnaire were the same as are used during hygiene education. They were pre-tested in the field and well-known.

This type of pictorial questionnaires is frequently used now in the RD-WSSP II and has proven to be very useful. The respondents are asked to complete the questionnaires themselves or with a little assistance from the researchers. The basis of this type of questionnaires is to involve the respondents as much as possible and to collect some quantitative data.

The objective of this pictorial questionnaire was to gain more insight into reasons for possible change of behaviour if the practice was not according to the hygiene messages. By using the same questionnaire after the performance it was hoped to record different reasons for possible change of behaviour. On the basis of the community members list of the Water Supply and Sanitation Committees, a total of ten homesteads were randomly selected in each of the six villages. In five of the selected villages a female was interviewed, in the other five a male.

During the performance, observation sheets were used to capture the reaction of the audience. The number of people watching the performance at the beginning and the end was also noted.

The day after the performance, focus-group discussions were held with different groups: men/women/young/old/VRPs/WSSC-members

A second homestead interview was conducted in the same homestead which was visited the week before the performance, using the same questionnaire as the week before.

The evaluation done by the theatre groups themselves and by the outside researchers proved to be a useful exercise. It gave insight into

Results of methods audience reactions, observations on which parts of the performance were appreciated and suggestions for future performances Both theatre groups made useful remarks about hygiene education in general and the programme in detail

Pictorial household interviews

One of the questions in the pictorial questionnaire asked who is responsible for health, schools, water point, posho mill etc ? The difference in responses of responsible for school versus responsible for health (dispensary) was striking Schools were clearly felt as a community responsibility, while health (dispensary) was considered the governments concern. This is in line with other findings in Uganda (Drangert, 1993) and seems to be in line with the result of cost-sharing in health, which indicates a refusal of cost-sharing It is regarded to be “the government’s responsibility”

Water messages:

97% of the respondents agreed with the five water messages, 86% of the men claim their practice is according to the messages, and 53% of the women put the messages into practice.

	% men	% women
Draw water from a protected source	70	43
Transport water in a covered container	77	40
Store water safely	97	90
Draw water safely	97	37
Use water from a protected source	86	53

Only two men (one of which did not agree with the message), were not willing to change their behaviour Five of the women said that they did not want to change their behaviour in carrying water in a container, and another five were not willing/able to change their behaviour in regards to always drawing water from a protected source. One woman was not willing to practice message three

Sanitation messages

94% of the men agreed with all the messages and 100% of the women. 76% of the men and 46% of the women claimed to put these messages into practice

	% men	% women
All should use a latrine	87	87
Wash hands after using the latrine	80	27
Clean regularly the latrine	87	37
Dispose faeces of children in latrine	87	53
Train children two years to use a latrine	40	27

The men who did not agree with the messages were also not willing to change their behaviour accordingly. Three women were not willing to change their behaviour in toilet training small children, and one woman did not want to clean the latrine.

*Observations
during
performances*

Audience numbers

In total 1,425 community members watched the six afternoon performances. Group 1 had an average of 291 per community and Group 2, 184. At the start of the performance — with the exception of one community — the turnout was about the same for both groups. In every village children up to the age of 18 were the major audience. This could be due to the fact that there was a school holiday.

Theatre Group 1

According to the observation sheets in the first three villages, both children and women were actively involved and enthusiastic during the performances. Men were less outspoken, but they were very observant. The plays and some poems gave the most enthusiastic reactions.

Remarks on the observation sheets showed children to be actively involved, especially when members of the community participated. Some children were in the beginning a bit afraid of the masks, but after a while they thought them funny. The children and youth seemed to understand every thing correctly and they seemed to be very much interested in the mime. Women of the age group 30-50 were observed to be a very active audience in terms of participation, discussion, and dance. They were excited when members of the community took part in the performance. The younger women in Sirembe and Hono were still a bit shy, although some participated in the performance. Men were a rather passive audience although very observant. If called upon to answer questions they were able to give the correct answers. They didn't volunteer to dance, but joined in if asked. In Hono and Sirembe, the Village Resource Persons and the Water and Sanitation Committee members were very active in participation, organization, and discussion. In Kokinda they were not very active, apart from two women who seemed to be VRPs.

Theatre Group 2

The overall impression of the observation sheet of Kisumu District showed the audience to be somewhat less enthusiastic than in Siaya (where Group 1 performed). The plays and one of the poems were the best appreciated. The other poems scored considerably less. Remarks on the observation sheet showed the children to be rather passive, al-

though demonstrations were much appreciated as well as when the players touched on an aspect of the community life style. They understood the mimes and what the performances were all about. Women in these communities were not actively participating, but weren't asked to do so. Plays that touched on aspects of life style were received with enthusiasm. The men were not active but observant. Older men (and women too) were sometimes embarrassed by parts of the performance. In particular, the older men didn't like the music of the cassette recorder and the content of some of the songs played from the cassette (some people walked away). The Village Resource Persons and Water Supply and Sanitation Committee members were hardly involved in the play and did not play an active role in the organization. (Note: during the performance of the women's group in Kanyaywanga, the audience was very enthusiastic and not passive at all)

Second household interview

To get some indications about whether the theatre group performances made people look at water and sanitation and their own responsibilities in a different way, homestead visits were made to the same persons interviewed before the performance. This proved more difficult than expected. Although the researcher made appointments with their responders quite often they were not available for the second interview (gone to market, working far away). Only 12 of the 30 women were available for a second interview, and the men did much worse because only three of them could be traced. But, although the number of responders was much too low to provide reliable data, the answers that were given about reasons to "change behaviour if practice was not according the water and sanitation messages" indicated some effects of the performance. For the water messages this was mainly in relation to the use of protected sources, covered containers, and drawing and storage of water in a safe way. For sanitation the "new" reasons given were related to social impact. Some of the Reactions given were: *"If handwashing after using the latrine is not practised, one might end up losing customers as shown in Mandaazi, dirty latrine is embarrassing, hates the idea of visitors stepping on faeces in ones compound as shown in the performance, embarrassing for visitors to keep stepping on faeces in ones compound as was shown in the play"*

Focus group discussion

Whether this will lead to actual change of behaviour and retaining that change of behaviour is not within the scope of this pilot project.

In all six villages group discussions were held with the focus on different groups (men, women, youth, local leaders, teachers). Focus group discussions with men gave the most problems. At two villages, men

were not interested in the discussion, in three other villages men were not willing to participate in a group discussion. The focus group discussions were the most effective in getting a cross-section of responses. Response given were.

Is such a performance special to the community?

At least 90% said no, it is not special because they have seen folk media performances before. The only exception is that the drama they saw before was not educative on hygiene and water messages.

With what is it associated?

The following are the most frequently mentioned. *“harambee, funerals, traditional ceremonies, circumcision, weddings, naming a child, school drama/music festivals, parents day, church, when visitors come, i.e. the District Officer”*

The following are mentioned a few times. *“local beer parties, public holidays, World Mental Health Day, community health workers, UNICEF, Youth for Health, women’s groups, family planning association, youth rallies, church, Red Cross, CARE”*

Who informed them about the performance?

The most frequently answers were. *“Water Supply and Sanitation Committee, saw the performers as they went round promoting, heard drums of the performers, the drama groups — both in homesteads and in schools”*

Where did they see the performance? Did they like the place?

In two of the villages (Othith and Kanyajwanga) the performances were conducted next to the water point. The communities concerned said they liked the place because it was their usual meeting place for any activity on water and sanitation. It is also the same place where the slabs and blocks for latrine construction are made. Since the folk media brought messages on these it was very appropriate. In another two villages, the performances were in compounds of one of the WSSC members.

In Sirembe it was in the organizing secretary’s compound, which is not far from the water point and is also the same place where the slabs were made for the latrines. The majority liked the place because it is their usual meeting place for matters on water and sanitation. It is also spacious and has a lot of shade for the scorching sun. Prior arrangement had also been made for the meeting to take

place here. However, a few people, in particular the teachers and some students, said the school would have been a better place because all the students would have been reached. The teachers said in case somebody has personal differences with the owner of the compound, they might not turn up for the performances, hence a more neutral ground should be chosen for the performances.

In Kasangoro the folk media was performed in the chairlady's compound (also next to the water point). They liked the place because it was spacious and also their usual meeting place for water and sanitation matters. The Community Health Workers did not like the place. They would have preferred it to be at the church compound after a service so as to reach more people.

In the last two villages, the performances were in open places. In Kokinda, it was in an open space next to the church compound. The audience liked the place because it was accessible and the majority of the people could be reached. In Hono, it was in an open space next to the trading centre. The majority liked it because it was accessible and had trees for shade. However, a few of the students did not like it because the trees had caterpillars.

There was also a performance at a mobile clinic. This was only in one village (Sirembe). They liked the place because it reached them when they were going to attend clinic. About 150 mothers waiting to attend clinic were reached. There were three performances — two plays and one poem. However, the clinical officer suggested that there should also be performances at the marketplace, where traders do not keep the latrines clean and handle edibles without washing their hands after visiting the latrine.

General impression of the performances:

The most frequent remarks given were as follows: very educative, enjoyable, entertaining, interesting, funny, taught a whole cross section of the community, Good. Other remarks given were as follows: *“relieved community of monotonous household chores, would have preferred the performances in Kiswahili (Kokinda only), the demonstrations made the messages clearer, involvement of community members right from promotion time to performance time was a good idea, simple/local language used understood by all (five villages), would like to be taught drama so as to train communities, reached people in their home areas, starting time was late, women were not able to make arrangements for the evening meals,*

they would prefer the performances on weekends and non-market days, the performances should be held after every three months to act as a reminder and emphasize practices, touched on a variety of things ”

Like to see it again?

YES, all the focus group discussion members would like to see it again.

What was it all about?

At least 70% of the ten messages that had been related in the plays could be mentioned.

Which song/sketch could be remembered and repeated?

At least 70% of the various performances.

Did the performance reflect the lifestyle in the community?

At least 90% of the audience felt that the performances reflected real community lifestyle. Remarks made were *“leaves used to prevent water from spilling, children messing compound and visitors stepping on faeces, Sim seller like mandaazi seller is unhygienic e.g. spitting in hands while, shaping sim sim, dirty latrines a common occurrence, latrines in homesteads, but latrines not made use of by homestead members, stomachache a common disease, use of water from unprotected water sources common, i.e. river, running water (floods), swamp water, rain water, not washing hands after using latrines, storing of water under bed, behind doors, etc. because of small size of house, drawing water unsafely, e.g. using same cup for drawing and drinking, mothers quarrelling over faeces disposed of on their doorstep”*

Are there group members who disliked the performances?

The majority liked the performances. However, a few things that they did not like were pointed out. These were:

- The plays portrayed women as dirty, unhygienic, and having poor sanitation and water practices. The women felt that it was unfair to blame them for all these practices since responsibilities should be shared.
- The plays indicated that women should be shouted at and ordered around and should not be given a chance to explain. They think it is not fair to include such aspects.
- Repetition of actors to take up different roles in the same play tended to confuse the audience.
- Use of impolite language during the performances.
- Dancing with an imaginary lady and caressing her caused a lot of embarrassment to the audience.

- Performances should have included songs, dance, and drumming. It is a very important aspect of drama.
- The language was not understood by all.
- The starting time of the performances late. Some people would also prefer the performances to be on Sundays to reach people coming from the church
- People did not like the mask with a sad face but liked the one with a happy face.
- One of the audience was a saved Christian and did not like the traditional drums
- The students did not like one actor due to his long beard
- The plays portray that we should not use open containers to transport water, but if that is what you have and you cannot afford others, then what is the option — at least as a temporary measure.
- Some members of the audience said they do not use covered containers to transport water because they are heavy and difficult to wash
- The two ladies who were fighting in one of the plays.
- The evils of the society portrayed in the storytelling where a young lady who went to fetch water from a far away place is abducted

Concluding results

Based on the reactions of the audience, and the answers and remarks given during the focus group discussions, there is a tendency to consider plays/drama as the best medium to provoke interest. Messages remembered were indeed mostly based on the plays. However, in general the performance variety seemed to be appreciated the most. It doesn't appear to be an option to focus on one type of performance to reduce the cost of performers

At the main performance children up to the age of 18 comprised the majority of the audience. This was partly due to the school holidays. Children and women appeared to be the most interested groups during performances. There are some indications that children were more interested in songs and drums than adults. There is an impact of involving different groups within the community at different places (school, water point, homesteads, meeting place, women's group, community place). One theatre group actively involved people on their way through the village. They performed at a mobile clinic, schools, and public places. In this way they were able to attract a lot of people to their "main" performance. During the performance the audience (children and

women) was sometimes asked to participate in the play. Throughout the play and after/during demonstrations, members of the audience were asked for their opinion and remarks. This created a lot of audience involvement and was much appreciated.

The other theatre group performed in a school and during the performances — for example after a mime — they asked members of the audience to explain what they saw.

Schools provided an opportunity to reach an interested audience that is still likely to change its behaviour. The results of this pilot project should be compared with the ongoing pilot project of the RDWSSP II to involve schools in hygiene training

At public places — especially at water points — short theatre group performances resulted in lively discussions. The number of people reached isn't very high but the impact could be considerable.

The Misango Arts Ensemble and the Kisumu Professional Players more or less achieved the objectives stated in their proposal, in a professional way. Although the figures aren't completely reliable, it looks like the Misango Arts Ensemble reached about 60% of the community members. Kisumu Professional Players were too optimistic with their target of reaching 80% of the audience (in fact 40% was covered). The messages seemed to be understood by the audience and could be repeated during focus group discussions. The audience stated that they would appreciate seeing the performance again.

Meeting objectives

Based on audience numbers, reactions, and focus group discussions, the Misango Arts Ensemble succeeded somewhat better in meeting the objectives than the Kisumu Professional Players. The Misango Arts Ensemble worked in a more participatory way than did the Kisumu Professional Players, but even with them, audience-interaction was limited. According to literature audience participation is one of the basics of Theatre For Development, and this is still an area where more could be achieved.

The Kisumu Professional Players had a very attractive and efficient staging, which added a lot to the messages. However, they also provoked negative remarks about their language and their portrayal of women.

There is no doubt Theatre For Development has the potential to trigger other/new thoughts about certain subjects. The pilot project indi-

cated that community members have different reasons for change of behaviour after seeing the performance. These other reasons were mostly related to social interaction with other community members and concerning sanitation messages. Whether this will lead to permanent behaviour change is a question that cannot be answered in the scope of this pilot project. Furthermore, it is obvious that people enjoyed the performance very much. This type of medium is perceived as reflecting the lifestyle of the audience so it will be easily accepted.

Limitations

However, there are limitations as well. The cost per person watching the performance was approximately 42 Kenyan shillings, a cost — although for European standards not high — is an amount which people probably would not pay to see the performance.

The aim of the project is to assist 250 communities a year. It is doubtful whether this target is feasible but even a target of 50 to 100 communities will implicate a lot of organizational difficulties.

As suggested by one of the theatre groups, performances should be held *during* the dry season when there isn't a lot of fieldwork to be done, and market days, festivals, and special holidays should be avoided. This limits the time available, and a simple calculation shows the project will probably need a couple of theatre groups if the aim is to visit all the RDWSSP communities.

The pilot project focused on the Luo-language in Luo areas of habitation, but even so there appeared to be some difficulties where not everybody was a native Dholuo-speaker. But in the six programme districts there are at least three other languages spoken, which are very specific for the culture of the concerned area. Performances held in the national language, Kiswahili, will limit the effect of the performances considerably.

Future use

Based on the RDWSSP possibilities and limitations, and the results of the pilot project, it seems to be a sound option to combine Theatre For Development at community level with other ongoing pilot projects which involve schools and other institutions. In one of the communities the local women's group staged their own water and sanitation performance. This was highly appreciated by the audience. At district level Theatre For Development will be used to raise general awareness on hygiene education.

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10. The Sigoti Teachers Group

A grassroots approach to educational theatre
by Donald Okola and Joyce Colijn



The Sigoti Teachers' Group (STG) is a local theatre group situated in the upper Nyakach division, Kisumu District, Nyanza Province of Kenya. The Sigoti zone covers about three square kilometres and lies on the beautiful Nyabondo plateau.

The group came into being in March 1994 in cooperation with Joyce Colijn of Kampen, The Netherlands and Mr. A. Mumma of Sigoti. Joyce Colijn had started to work in several schools, teaching drama. A number of teachers from different schools saw the benefits of drama in schools as an educational tool and decided to start their own group so as to train skills and work on different educational approaches using drama.

Although it is called the "Sigoti Teachers' Group", it also has members who come from outside the Sigoti zone. All members have one thing in common, the love for drama and the desire to acquire more skills. The members teach in either *primary* or *secondary* schools. Most of them have gone through teacher training colleges.

The STG's initial objectives were

- to create an opportunity for teachers to acquire drama skills to implement in their lessons as an educational tool to facilitate learning.
- to use the acquired skills in teaching classes as well as drama clubs

Reasons for starting

The most obvious reason for starting the STG rurally was the fact that the first members lived and worked in the Sigoti zone. In order for us to get any drama training before the start of the group we would have had to go to Kisumu, which is 2-1/2 hours away. This was rather impractical. We also found there were a number of other advantages of having a local group. When we work in the community we stay in touch with what is going on in the lives of the people, what concerns them. This can be incorporated in the theatre work we do as the STG and as individual teachers in the classroom. A local group knows its community and therefore knows how to best present issues and how to get students and the general public involved in creating theatre as

well as using theatre, as a means to perhaps find solutions for their challenges.

The STG members feel that theatre, especially when made locally, has a traditional and cultural place in everyday life in rural areas. It will help to keep history and tradition alive in a rapidly changing world. At the same time it is a helpful medium to aid the introduction of unavoidable changes. Theatre can give people a chance to have a say about what happens in their lives and why. We believe this to be an essential facet of education, not only for schools, but for the entire community.

As a group we are able to tackle issues that are not easily discussed in the classroom or at home. Everyone can get involved, because the aim is to make theatre an interactive experience. In that way people can air their views and find out what other views there may be. They use theatre as a means of expressing their frustrations, fears, and dreams and so get to understand each other better. Finally they may then come to an approach or idea that works for everyone.

If the STG had been based in a town, so that the members were far away from Nyakach, this kind of approach would be far more difficult to use. We would not be able to meet as regularly as we do and would not be as in touch with what goes on every day. Theatre is something that belongs to the people. Wherever you may live, you should have access to it. Therefore it should come from the people and be made for the people. In order to do that effectively we have to live and work where the people are.

The educational approach The STG is mainly an educational group. As teachers we find, as you may have guessed, good education is an essential part of bringing up children. Therefore we seek to create awareness of social, economical, and environmental problems that afflict the immediate society in particular and the world at large. We realize that problems in one part of the world can have a bearing world-wide. The group therefore found it necessary to educate people

A particular approach that the STG finds very effective is Theatre In Education (TIE). The idea is "to attempt to bring the techniques of theatre into the classroom, in the service of specific educational objectives", (O'Toole, 1976). TIE involves a programme that includes a performance about the topic, preceded or followed by a drama lesson and/or discussion on the same topic, as well as materials teachers can later use to give some more (drama) lessons on the topic and so to keep

it alive among the pupils as well as delve into it more deeply. The approach is so different to regular lessons that it allows pupils and teachers to get more involved in it. This in turn can give a deeper and richer learning experience

Programme on the environment

In late June of 1994 the idea arose to set up a continual project involving TIE methods that would accommodate schools in the immediate Sigoti area. When discussing topics we found that the environment was something that influenced everyone and everything, yet only very rarely got any real attention. We believed it to be a broad area of interest and concern, as it is linked to all areas of daily life, from agriculture through water supply to hygiene. Yet, instead of focusing on these topics directly, as is usually the case, we thought environmental issues would show more clearly how they are interconnected and therefore effect one another. This approach would raise the discussion on the importance of the environment to our lives and therefore how necessary it may be to our livelihood in future

The idea

We decided to make a series of theatre programmes about the environment, each with a specific theme. TIE methods would be used. The first programme would be about waste; specifically batteries and plastics. This topic was chosen because as teachers we noticed that children were not always aware of all the dangers as well as possibilities of these materials.

The aim of this programme, as well as the entire environment project, would be to raise awareness about the different issues and the relevance they have to the lives of the students and their families. We want to give the students information that is not easily accessible to them, so that they are more informed and can make choices based on that information. We also want to stimulate them to think for themselves. Other programmes could address issues such as deforestation and erosion, water problems caused by drought or flooding, food-chain and ecosystem links (how one organism affects all others).

Preparations

When Joyce returned to the Netherlands she wrote an extensive proposal for the first programme of the project, the one on waste. With it she approached many organizations in order to get support, either financially or materially. Although quite a number of organizations were enthusiastic, they had either already spent their budgets for the year or felt that the project did not comply with their objectives. Some proposed that we should change the focus of the project to agriculture or hygiene. Even when given the explanation for the difference in approach,

the organizations insisted on the direct approach if they were to sponsor us. Finally some funds came from a private company who had read an article about the project in a local Dutch newspaper. This at least made it possible for us to run the first programme

In the meantime Joyce did a lot of research into plastics and batteries and their qualities and functions, both positive and negative. Information was obtained through books, video footage and interviews with people who research the uses and hazards of these materials. It quickly became clear that there are hardly any regulations on the production and use of plastics and heavy metals in African countries. Yet, the quantities produced in, and imported into, Africa are very rapidly increasing. This is where awareness on the part of the consumer is essential in getting a better quality as well as an environmentally safer product and a better use of the product.

The research stage tends to take up the longest time and also tends to be the part most members find too boring to take seriously. Still, it is probably the most vital part, next to the actual work done while the programme is travelling to schools. We found that those members who decided not to participate in the research phase were not well equipped in terms of back-ground information on the topic and how students felt about it. Therefore they were unable to give the right information in the lesson and/or discussion afterwards. Also, they would very quickly run out of discussion material. If they did not have an eager group in front of them, their lesson and/or discussion usually lasted no longer than ten minutes, with no mentionable results. Although research can be done by one person or a small group, it should be shared with all group members so as to get everyone informed and thus involved. Everyone in the group has been satisfied that they have gathered all the information they possibly could on the topic, so they will be able to extend it whenever and to whoever wants it. Only through thorough preparation can we be sure to make a solid programme that is actually educational as well as entertaining.

Making the performance

We started working on the making of the performance on January 9th. Before starting on improvising and scriptwriting we had to do some more preparatory work. This included working through the research material Joyce had brought and doing some more research in the schools where we work.

*Handling the
research material*

All the research and the dissemination of it was done by all the members of the group that were present at any time. This allowed everyone to go through the process. In order to get all the information about batteries and plastics to everyone in the group, each one of us went through part of the material and made a presentation about what they had learned. After each presentation we were able to ask the presenter questions about things we found unclear and about other uses or dangers which possibly had not been mentioned.

When everyone had presented their bit we discussed what material would be relevant and useful for the performance and which stuff was better dealt with in the lesson and the follow-through material. We made rough lists of those, for even though we did not want to tie ourselves down by being too specific, we did want to get a framework within which we wanted to improvise. Unfortunately not all the members were present at these sessions. Later we found that they really did miss a lot, not only in terms of factual information, but especially in being able to function as part of the team.

Besides dealing with this research material we also made a questionnaire for the students and pupils of the schools where we work. What we wanted to find out was how much they knew about the production, use, and danger of plastics and batteries, as well as the waste they produce. We asked questions as much as possible in a way that did not give them any information about the materials and was also not biased towards any of their qualities.

The questionnaire turned out to be rather helpful in that it gave us a good idea of what students thought and knew about the topic. One of the things it taught us was that the use of certain words, which may be normal elsewhere, could cause a lot of confusion in this area. For instance, we had a few questions about waste, also known as rubbish or garbage. Yet, we only used the word waste. This caused massive confusion amongst the students in all the schools. About two-third of them told us either that they did not know what waste was or they gave us some explanation about how one should not waste time or money. There were also a few students who talked about wasteland, but less than 25% of them were actually able to answer the questions because they knew waste was garbage.

These things showed us that although we could choose to use those words, we would have to make absolutely sure that their meaning was made completely clear.

The confusion over the meaning of certain words that were essential to the project brought about a very relevant discussion about the use of language. Some of us argued that the play should be in the language of the area. In that way any member of the community would be able to understand and take part in the performance. Others said that the Luo language was not equipped to discuss a lot of these new terms and approaches used for describing issues on the environment. On top of that the use of Luo would exclude all students who were not Luo, but were at boarding school here, or teachers who originally came from other parts of Kenya.

As both sides had a point (or two) it was decided that the play would be in English (this is also the official language to be spoken in schools). Yet, if students responded in Luo or Kiswahili, especially if they asked questions in these languages, the actors/teachers would respond in that language and then switch back to English.

It was also found that in secondary schools it depended very much on the subjects students had been taking whether or not they knew anything about the properties and effects of batteries and plastics. We therefore decided to also incorporate very basic information in the play even for the secondary schools, so as to make sure that everyone would be able to follow what it was about and thus get a fair understanding of the topic.

Being teachers, we are around students/pupils all day and so we tend to have some idea of what interests them — i.e. what kind of music, clothing, and activities they like. Still, we observed them a bit more closely for the purpose of getting a good picture of how they communicate with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, so as to be able to use some of their gestures, movements, and expressions for some of the characters in our performance. This worked very well and allowed the students to identify with the characters as well as finding the whole programme entertaining and interesting.

For instance, one character moved in a very smooth way, while he made a complete mess around him, yet keeping himself very tidy. Another was rather aggressive, often making wild gestures, yet not

meaning to harm anyone, just wanting to get his point across. These things, as well as the eventual choice of melody for the song that returned throughout the performance, were all based on observation material gathered at the various schools

Improvising

Now it was time to start working on putting the gathered information into use. Every person in the group created a physical character that would form the basis for his character in the performance. Then everyone wrote a short biography about the character, so as to give him a life, a background. At this point Joyce was supervising the process and no longer actually doing the work, as she would not be in the performance. From here on she would do the directing and organizational work. We worked at improvising scenes based on the research material we had gathered. This did not seem to be the right approach, however. Some people found it difficult to actually improvise from scratch, without even a framework script to work from. Later we found that this was mainly so for newer members, who had not used this approach before.

A different approach was opted for, which was to write a number of framework scenes, (i.e. scenes with a very basic storyline, but without a lot of detail). Initially three such scenes were written. One was based on batteries and a local custom that if you trip on a rock with your left foot it brings you luck. A character known as Man'gan'ga throws batteries out of his torch on the ground, then trips on one and is elated about it. Slack, another character, comes into the marketplace and starts lecturing Man'gan'ga about the hazards of plastics. Man'gan'ga tries to defend his actions and they both try to get the audience on their side.

The second scene was about Man'gan'ga throwing plastic food wrappers on the ground and Slack again comes in to warn him. They then once more involve the audience.

Lastly we wrote a scene about Man'gan'ga walking home carrying polythene bags full of heavy groceries, which cause the bags to tear and all the groceries fall out. As he has no way of carrying them he is stuck. Along comes Slack, who has a basket and who laughs at Man'gan'ga's predicament. Man'gan'ga wants Slack to give him the basket. Slack refuses and starts to leave. Just before he is gone he asks the audience what price he would have to ask for the basket, if he decided to give it to Man'gan'ga.

These scenes were written with two main objectives, a) as much

information as possible should be given about the properties of plastics and batteries, so as to ensure a fair understanding of them and b) the audience really should have as much input as possible, so that they are really made to think about the topic and express how they feel about it.

As the audience was to have a lot of space to interact with the actors, we needed a way to get from one scene to the next without disrupting the actual thinking and response process instigated by each scene. When we started to put these scenes together, one after the other, we found that we could get the discussion at the end of one scene to subside, but still keep the energy going and flowing into the next scene by using a song with a popular melody and a simple, yet relevant text.

We mostly worked outside, using only a few chairs and some essential props, often improvised, for we could get the actual things later. Trees marked the side of the "stage" and Joyce played the entire audience. Where possible others would join her, so that the actors would get more than one kind of response at a time. In this way they were able to practice a little on how to cope with the audience and not lose control of the basic storyline or lose momentum. As none of us, besides Joyce, had ever worked with an audience in this way, we did find it hard to imagine or believe that the crowd would actually get very enthusiastic and might get too carried away. Still this practice did give us some preparation on how to handle the crowd, as well as training us to not skip over some of the information that was essential.

After having tried to use the melody of an old Christian song and finding that did not catch on too well with the students, we decided to use a melody of a song that was popular with them. This turned out to be "Bam Bam" by Chaka Demus and Pliers. The text we used was in both Luo and English. *Par kapokɪ tumogimoro*, or, think before you act. The words to the song also became the theme of the programme and the entire environment project.

Through improvising on the three basic scenes we found where there were gaps in the storyline that needed to be filled. We also had to work at "setting the scene", so that the audience would know immediately where they were and would also understand that it was meant to be an interactive performance and they should feel free to respond.

Improvisation on the basic scenes helped to fill gaps in the storyline. This had a side effect that some interesting new things were intro-

duced which livened up the performance and also blended in some local customs and beliefs, which we had discussed as a useful possibility

For instance, as the battery was a rock, according to Man'gan'ga and it was red in colour, he naturally came to using the local custom of pregnant women eating red rocks as an excuse to "prove" to the audience that batteries were exclusively good.

Two other players who ran a recycling shop in the performance came up with the idea to "sell" their goods to the audience before the actual start of the show. This would immediately set the scene and also got rid of the necessity for any formal introduction to the performance. They also found that they could start the song in between their attempts to sell goods. On top of coming up with this, which was very successful they found ways in getting involved in the scenes by, for instance, gathering materials others were throwing on the ground. During the play the audience could see how they made very useful things, such as ropes and *jikos* out of the gathered wasted materials

From this activity the last scene evolved naturally. In it Man'gan'ga thinks he has finally found the perfect way to make money: he wants to sell his waste materials to the owners of recycling shop. They are not very amused and either tell him to find a use for himself, or only pay him a very small amount and force him to bury some of their goods. The last thing Man'gan'ga brings to the shop is a used battery, and he wants 100 shilling for it. When asked what he thinks they should do with it he tells the shopkeeper to recycle it. They ask him how they should do that and he makes a movement with his arms which does not make sense. He explains that they will then end up with a big red rock. By now all the actors are right in front of the audience and they ask the students if they know how to recycle batteries, ending with the question: "What do you think?" They then sing the slogan "Think before you act" four times and that ends the performance.

Lessons and discussions

In the meantime we also worked on what should be dealt with in the lessons and discussions after the performance. It was decided that we would have discussions in little groups in secondary schools and lessons involving drama in the primary schools. Each teacher/actor would take a small group of students or pupils (ideally no more than 20, although that was not always possible) with which

they would work on the follow-through discussion or lesson. Discussions would deal with two main topics. a) answering any questions on the topic and giving more detailed information where necessary, and b) finding out how students now felt about this aspect of the environment and what suggestions they might have to change or improve on the situation.

The lessons would start with a small discussion on what the pupils had seen and answer any questions or queries they might have. Then they would be split in smaller groups and given some waste with which they would be asked to make a small scene demonstrating what they felt the waste could be used for. They would get five minutes to prepare their scenes, and after the presentations pupils could comment on what they had learnt and how they now felt about the topic. They would also discuss what other action they themselves could take to make the situation more the way they found it should be.

Responses

Much too quickly the day of the premier of the programme arrived. On Tuesday February 7th we had our first performance at Nake Secondary School. This was a much bigger success than we had dared hope. Students really responded to what was happening on the stage and were very free to voice their own opinions (which often changed as the performance progressed and they got more information).

The discussions afterwards were lively. A number of students asked very detailed questions about the plastics and batteries and there were many suggestions on other uses for plastic bottles, bags and the like instead of throwing them away. The batteries posed a real problem. Many students admitted to not being aware that batteries could be hazardous before. Some suggested that they should be made rechargeable or that we should send them back to the factories where they were made.

At Odhong' Primary School the pupils sometimes got so involved in what was happening on the stage that they actually found themselves on the stage, which they would then quickly leave. There was a lot of excitement and the crowd felt Man'gan'ga should buy the basket for one thousand shillings and not a shilling less.

During the lesson some ingenious alternative uses for plastics were displayed. Some pupils made a ball out of plastic bags, while others made a blouse out of them. Pupils tended to feel that there should be a place where they could bring their waste materials so that they could be recycled if they themselves could find no use for them. They also

found it would be a good idea to use more local materials, such as clay pots and palm leaf baskets, as they were easier to get and lasted longer. Similar responses came from the other schools where we took the programme. Teachers were usually also enthusiastic and some wanted to know more about the topic as well as some drama techniques they could use to deal with it.

What's next?

This first programme of the environment project runs relatively well. We need to keep on working on it, so as to get it even more powerful. Especially the follow-through aspect needs work. It takes practice to make a discussion or lesson really have the impact that is needed to get the students to actually start undertaking some action of their own.

It is also essential that the programme should add onto its discussion/lesson follow-through a package of ideas and techniques that they can leave at each school so that the class teacher may continue to work on the topic with his pupils using drama. In that way it is not a one-time event, but rather a continual process that will stimulate youngsters to learn more about the topic and express their opinions and ideas as well as, eventually, putting them into practice.

This programme should be presented at many more schools and we should start working on the second and third programmes, so that we can visit each school three or four times a year. In this way we can create continuity, which is essential if the project is to be successful. This will also add to the work the teacher does on the topic.

The interactive approach has amazing effects. We will work on using it in different ways to maximize the learning experience of the students. Although TIE is a useful way to make and present educational theatre, we will continue to also experiment with other related approaches so as to find one that suits our aims most ideally.

Raising environmental awareness is a slow process, but educational theatre is definitely one-way of doing so. As theatre blends many aspects of life together and does not have to be a one-way process it has a place in helping to spread information and expression of feeling and opinions about environmental topics. It is a useful tool that can be integrated into basically any awareness-raising process.

11. CHANGE IN THE VILLAGE



A Participatory Educational Theatre approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic

by Roger Chamberlain together with Mindy Chillery, Lenin Ogolla, and Ochieng Wandera

CARE Kenya's CRUSH project, utilizing Information, Education, & Communication (IEC) methods for HIV/AIDS, has been working in sub-locations throughout Kisumu District in Nyanza Province for the past three years. CRUSH stands for the Communication Resources for Under 18s on STDs and HIV. CRUSH identified various youth and youth groups in these areas, batches of whom have been working with on a rotating four-monthly basis.

I arrived in Kisumu, on the shores of Lake Victoria just south of the equator, the home of the ethnic group called the Luos in Western Kenya, in mid-June 1994, as the British Council-sponsored Visiting Educational Theatre & Community Drama Specialist. Soon after my arrival I was approached by CRUSH to collaborate with them on developing the drama and theatre component of their project.

Drama, being one of Kenya's most popular and accessible communication mediums, has high potential for contributing to the need for more effective, interactive approaches to HIV/AIDS IEC work. Being the most social of all the art forms, theatre and drama deal in the universal issues that underpin civilization. It questions and challenges the status quo to provoke radical reflection and action for a better society. Its tools are the archetypes of myth and metaphor, which are common to all societies, but are a particularly familiar and real part of the society and cultures of Kenya.

However, many of the dramas produced in Kenya, as with much of the rest of the HIV/AIDS efforts, have consistently assumed a non-participatory, didactic, message-driven approach that has been predictable in nature, hence lacking in attracting and sustaining audience/participant interest.

I proposed that one way of effectively strengthening CRUSH's present HIV/AIDS IEC efforts would be to utilize Participatory

Educational Theatre (PET), which draws upon, and is born out of, internationally recognized participatory educational methodologies such as Theatre In Education (TIE) and Drama In Education (DIE).

PET is an educational theatre methodology that applies participatory techniques, allowing the audience to probe, reflect on, and respond to issues of their concern. Its primary concern is the development of conceptual thinking, through an understanding of the inter-connected nature of social problems. This holistic approach grapples with the dialectical nature of human interaction, posing questions and problems, rather than supplying answers and solutions.

Any PET project aims to contribute towards change in the target community's (whom we would traditionally call the audience) perception of the world and themselves as individuals within it. By changing perceptions, we do not mean simply raising awareness, but allowing the community to examine their attitudes towards the unresolved dilemmas and contradictions in the drama that reflect their lives. We remain unsure as to the extent that behavioural change can be effected through any short-term project. It is a highly difficult matter over which we have many questions that we still need to explore before reaching any conclusions.

My collaboration with CRUSH involved working with two groups — the Kamakazi youth group in urban Kisumu and the Apondo youth group near rural Ahero. My brief was to direct an educational theatre piece for each group to perform in the 14 sub-locations that CRUSH works in. Both projects were required to be in the local language of Dhuluo, they would be performed outdoors during the daytime, mainly in rural areas; the target group was to be young people 12-18 years (this changed once we began touring as we found it virtually impossible to separate the rural youth from the village communities as a whole).

For one month I observed and talked to these groups about the impact of HIV and AIDS on their communities. During this time I also met artists and educators working locally from whom I recruited two local counterparts and an English volunteer. After our discussions with the groups, which involved informal anecdotal research from friends, families, and peers within their locality, we started the two PET projects. The issues to be addressed included child and youth sexuality, sex education, modes of transmission and prevention; barriers to the adoption of preventative measure,

such as peer pressure, traditional customs and practice, religious objections, and other personal and social dilemmas

The starting point for both projects was the imaginative ideas about HIV/AIDS that the two groups of young unemployed school leavers created. From the material they generated, we structured a series of improvisations and other drama tasks. The important aim in developing the material was that it always remained the group's own. Whilst we provided the structure, they provided the content. After working on the material we would always take it back to them to discuss and further develop.

“Red ribbons for you?”

“Red ribbons for you?”/“Sĩgand Tom — Ngĩmanĩ gĩ Thomĩ?”

Kama Kazi's PET project deals with the social, educational, philosophical, and cultural problems and questions arising out of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The above Dhuluo title for this project literally translates as “Tom's story — your life and death?”, and the narrative traces the life story of a young man, Tom Omondi, through infancy, puberty, adolescence, and young manhood up to and immediately following his death at the age of 23. He contracts the HIV virus whilst studying at University, while some other members of his immediate family and friends, whose stories are interwoven with Tom's, variously contract the virus at other points during his life. In fact it is Tom's father, Samuel, who is inadvertently infected whilst being shaved by an unsterilized blade at one of the many local barbers posts under a jacaranda tree, that triggers off the chain of infections in this particular web of people. The play element of the project deliberately deploys both comedy and tragedy in its entertainment of the community.

The Creative process

The creative process — participatory decisions and discoveries.

- To encourage the community, to step back from their **affective** involvement with the characters predicaments in order to **reflect** and draw upon the lessons learnt from their own experience or imagination, thereby taking away a certain amount of their “suspended disbelief”. This was done in two ways:
 - (a) by telling the story from two **Time Frames** — i.e., from the **NOW**, today, when the central character — Tom — is dead, providing an opportunity for the Tom to speak to the target community (whom we would traditionally call the audience) as someone who is himself reflecting on the points in his life when change or decisions took place and their importance in retrospect, as well as the **THEN**, yesterday, when he was alive, which gave the community the opportunity to become emotionally in-

Two time frames

involved in the feelings and pressures of the actual moments of decision and/or change; and

End is beginning (b) by deliberately letting the community “in on” the secrets of the story from the beginning — i.e., the story starts with Tom’s funeral, making the end of the story its beginning and the beginning of the story its end. So in Tom’s story the community knows from the start which of the 22 characters have contracted the HIV virus — even though most of them do not know it themselves — by the dead Tom endowing them with a red ribbon (in the subsequent sections, which retrace the events that have led to the funeral scene, the characters are re-endowed with a red ribbon at the point in the action when they acquire, or have just acquired the virus).

This enables the community to critically appraise the attitudes and actions of each and every character.

Story board

- To use a **Storyboard** as the central educational, aesthetic, and visual stimulus for Tom’s story. The storyboard is neither a conventional theatre set nor a conventional teaching blackboard, but a three-dimensional resource that combines both. For “Red Ribbons For You?” the storyboard consisted of a 12’ x 8’ plywood board, painted with an overall design, onto which the central questions relating to each scene, nine in total (each 2’ x 2’), were hung separately using hooks. Its purpose was to invite informal interest, provide a focus, act as a physical totem, and hold the through line of that day’s participation.

Nine sections

- To break Tom’s story into nine separate free-standing sections, each of which would make sense in their own right, but when linked together would equally make sense as a whole. Each section of scripted theatre varies in length between 7 and 15 minutes. The duration of the participatory drama that follows each section is entirely in the hands of the community and facilitator. It usually lasts between 15 and 75 minutes. *NB There is no reason why the project has to be confined to a single day e.g., it could be phased over a week (two sections a day) or even over two months (one section a week) etc. This is especially so if you want to integrate the project as a specific educational resource within a broader pattern of activities.*

- Nine questions* • To carefully select and phrase a **Central Divergent Question** for each of the nine sections which would penetrate the heart of the specific strands of CRUSH's HIV/AIDS aims and objectives. The questions are designed to be provocative and alluring, thereby engendering informal discussion amongst the community and with us from the moment of our arrival to put up the storyboard. (See page 106 for the 9 questions).
- Choice of sequence* • To allow the community to **Choose** the sequence of the nine sections themselves, as a means of **Empowering** them. *NB We select the first and last section for structural clarity and they determine the seven sections between. They choose a section they want to watch by selecting a question they want to answer. When a question has been selected that particular question board is unhooked by the facilitator, to reveal a separate symbolic design, visually representing the essence of the question, and the actor/teachers begin the chosen section. This then becomes the first stage of their participation, through which the community express individually, and then collectively, their priorities both felt and thought. The reasons they give for their choice becomes the touchstone for their subsequent verbal and then physical participation.*
- Facilitator(s)* • To identify from the group a **Facilitator(s)** to act as a bridge between the actor/teachers, the drama, and the community. The facilitator's role is crucial in the steady development of the community's active involvement, from the establishment of informal personal contacts with members of the community as soon as the group arrive at the venue; through the balanced mirroring, guiding, and leading of the communities' essential contradictory interests arising out of the questions and problems we have deliberately built into each section of the project; to the active investigation and interrogation of the particular problem they have identified as most urgently needing their attention. The facilitator's style must genuinely indicate at all times an openness, a humour, an egalitarianism, and an un-selfconscious lack of authoritarian status, if he/she is to establish and then sustain a meaningful rapport with the community.
- Actors/Teachers* • To develop each of the main characters in the project to a point at which the **Actor/Teachers** could freely and truthfully improvise both **Questions in Role** and **Open-Ended Role-Play** with a member(s) of the community.

Questioning

- Questioning in role means that during participation the community, through the facilitator, may call on a character(s) in order to question them directly as to their motives and actions. Using their sense and knowledge of their character as well as the educational aims of the project, the actor/teacher can provide answers that are truthful to the character and, where possible, provocative in an educationally helpful way (e.g., the character may lie, as people often feel compelled to, when answering certain questions that the community ask and when a community sense that a character is lying they are provoked into questioning why the character is lying)

Open-ended role-play

- Open-ended role-play means a member of the community may **“Put Themselves Into The Shoes”** of one or more of the characters’ and improvise with the actor/teachers around the particular predicament in question in order, for example, to try to prevent them from contracting the HIV virus. The actor/teachers must also be able to interact with ANY NEW character the community deem as being necessary in their attempts to resolve the particular dilemma, e.g. a neighbour, relative, elder, chief, counsellor, doctor, medicine man, peer, etc. This allows the participant to view themselves from the safety of an “other”. So that instead of feeling exposed and vulnerable, as often is the case when we are being ourselves, under the guise and protection of a role (i.e. an “other”), we can express and explore our contradictory attitudes and emotions emanating from the given social problem without fear of being stared at or laughed at. The actor/teachers must also be open to actually being partially or wholly persuaded to change either their attitude and/or behaviour, but only when this has been believably worked for and achieved by the community in a real and not magical manner. When this happens it invariably results in a moment of spontaneous applause and celebration.

Symbol

- To select as our central **Symbol** the “Red Ribbon” to denote who are the positive people or not during the project. The importance of symbol and **Metaphor** (many different metaphors are used throughout the drama) is to communicate not only through words but also through **Image**. The significance of both symbol and metaphor in human communication is that it allows us to tap into our collective

unconscious, thereby opening up the sensuous world of the imagination, out of which springs our desire and willingness to play. The necessity for adults and adolescents to be given subtle permission to play again in safety lies at the heart of successful and meaningful participatory work.

Staging

- To make the performing area a three-sided thrust arena in order to allow the community (who stand) maximum proximity to the performers and maximum visibility of the storyboard (the performing area is demarcated by the use of simple short stands and ropes). The importance of appropriate staging and location — i.e. the spacial and physical relationship between human beings in any social gathering — should never be underestimated, especially when one of your main aims is wholehearted participation. People are finely tuned to reading physical signs, e.g. body language, in their assessment as to how genuinely open a situation is, as opposed to word forms that can sometimes simply mask a familiar one-way, authoritarian hierarchy. We call this non-verbal language “**Signing**”.

Culturally acceptable

- By its nature the content of the project is sensitive. As always, the artist/educator has to determine how far to push the **boundaries** of what is culturally acceptable in any given place at a given time, whilst not compromising the integrity, truth, and principles informing the creative piece. The received wisdom is that Luos do not talk openly about sex and sexuality, and yet here they are talking very freely about it in a community gathering of both sexes, all ages, and most classes. Our experience tells us therefore that when participatory methods and techniques are successfully applied, then the actual wisdom of the Luo community in reality and practise is a far cry from its appearance.

We didn't know whether this PET initiative was going to succeed or not. There were large elements of risk involved for us all, but in the event, it has proved highly successful, both with large community audiences (up to 400 people) as well as with similar numbers in secondary schools (see Responses). Our aim now is for PET projects, which are a specialist educational and cultural resource, to become more integrated into ongoing community activities. We have been invited to submit a long term (five years) project proposal, which we hope will have four major components viz in-schools; out-of-schools, influential adults; & NGOs

The Storyboard Questions

<p>THE FUNERAL</p> <p>Why is everyone fighting at Tom's Funeral?</p>	<p>CHILDHOOD GAMES</p> <p>Are children aware of sexuality when playing "Mothers and Fathers"?</p>	<p>TEENAGE ANXIETY</p> <p>How did Tom & his friends first learn about sex when they were young teenagers?</p>
<p>PEER PRESSURE</p> <p>What were the pressures on Tom to make love for the first time?</p>	<p>GREAT EXPECTATIONS</p> <p>What went wrong for Tom after he'd made love for the first time?</p>	<p>THE TRIANGLE</p> <p>What is Tom suffering from? Is it Demons? Is it AIDS? Is it Chiraa?*</p>
<p>THE MEDICINE MAN</p> <p>Can the Medicine Man, or Religion, cure Tom of AIDS?</p>	<p>REJECTION</p> <p>Why did Tom's younger brother, Mike, kick him in the teeth when he was down?</p>	<p>DELIRIUM</p> <p>Why did Tom attempt to commit suicide?</p>

** CHIRAA is a traditional Luo illness resulting from the breaking of a cultural taboo. If it is not dealt with in time by the performing of certain tribally prescribed rites, such as the drinking of a specially prepared herbal brew called Manyassi with other quite elaborate rituals, carried out by the local Medicine Man, then death will be the certain outcome. Naturally the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Western Kenya is much complicated by such customary beliefs, together with others such as wife inheritance by one brother on the death of another, and Ke, the obligatory performance of sexual intercourse by all immediate members of the family before dispersal following a funeral, etc*

A day in the village



A detailed anecdote arising out of a PET performance of the Apondo Youth Group's Project "Positive People" or "*Neno Joma Nigi Kute Ayaki*" by Lenin Ogolla

Twelve HIV-positive people are at an HIV/AIDS Counselling Centre. Members of the community are then put into roles as their counsellors. The project uses familiar, traditional storytelling techniques, with the people choosing whose story they want to hear first, whom they want to counsel first. It is a battle of sorts as the facilitator mediates between the different "factions" that want to hear different stories. The central questions on the storyboard that highlight each character's dilemma, already reflect the dilemmas of the particular people in the community who seek and insist on investigating those particular characters. They are beginning to lay on the table their own personal feelings, prejudices, fears, and hopes for investigation within the safety of their role-play as counsellors.

A sceptical old man who does not believe in the existence of AIDS, and who has not said a word throughout the project, suddenly clears his throat. He can neither read nor write, but is attracted to the story of the village carpenter, who on his elder brother's death is forced by the elders to inherit the widow. He has been attracted to this character by the symbolic graphic design theatre presents and illustrates the carpenter's dilemma.

A sudden hush falls on the 400 members of the community. Here is a village sage, whose word on custom and tradition is faultless, and is revered to the point of becoming law. He explains the philosophy behind wife inheritance slowly but firmly, citing from a wealth of ageless ancestral wisdom, that no man or woman present dare dispute. His peers nod knowingly, as the younger men in the audience look at him in awe and amazement. The women sit passively, no expression of any sort in their faces, as their "proper" place is defined by marriage in the society, which makes them communal property, to be passed over to the next man, together with cows, land, and houses. The old man sits down after 20 minutes and there is no doubt in the minds of the people that wife inheritance is blameless, as far as AIDS is concerned.

The carpenter begins to tell his story to a keen and curious community. There is nothing unusual in his life, his story is the community's story, until he narrates how he discovered that his elder brother, whose wife the elders forced him to inherit, actually committed suicide after he

was diagnosed to be positive with AIDS. Without pathos, he declared he has since tested positive, together with his first wife, their last born baby, and the second wife he inherited from his late brother

Nobody speaks for a long time, until a teenage schoolboy begins to point out the contradictions in wife inheritance as a practice. For the next half hour the ball is tossed between the youth and the elders. What was accepted before the drama as sagacity is slowly reconstructed in the light of HIV/AIDS. There seems to be an impasse until a woman coyly steps forward. The facilitator is quick to notice her, for rarely do women stand to give their opinions in such weighty matters in this village. She brings a different angle to the stand-off between youth and elders, challenging to the marrow the assumptions of tradition and custom about the place of a woman in a marriage, in society. AIDS is for a moment, but only for a moment, put on one side, as the spotlight is turned full glare onto the rights of women to inherit property, including land.

A fourth school of thought quickly established itself, presented by middle-age practising and retired professionals that include school teachers, a clinical officer, and an ex-captain in the air force. They attempt to reconcile the traditional with the harsh realities of existing with AIDS. People listen, people argue, people venture into the performing area to wear the caps of different characters as well as to wear the cap of the carpenter at the crossroads of his life. Attempts are made at changing the outcome of events.

There is a moment of instantaneous applause when the elder who first opened the door of this Pandora's box declares he is convinced by a doctor (another member of the community in role) that AIDS does exist.

The applause is like a signal from an invisible orchestral conductor. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, the young, the middle-aged, and the elderly call out to each other. An elder moves to a corner that is predominately occupied by middle-aged women. Three youths engage their school teacher in animated dialogue, challenging him, teasing him, saying to him things that would earn them immediate expulsion if they were said in a classroom. At the far end a red-eyed youth asks a bemused village chief to immediately arrest all wife-inheritors!

And in the far west the waters of Lake Victoria are reflected in a sapphire blue sky. The goddess of the Lake has come out to bask and the

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setting sun plays hide and seek with the splendid colours of her beauty. Soon, she'll return to her abode and the blanket of death will cover the village with her evil warmth. But as yet, no-one is in a hurry to go home

In six months no single performance has been like the other, the audience is always bringing into the dramatic situations new and exciting possibilities that give them a feeling of strength and success, where they previously felt powerless and confused

The programmes do not present a particular point of view and initially, some sections of the community, after many hours of reflection and practical action in the drama, would turn to the facilitator for his opinion, a legacy of traditional teaching systems and uninformed individualistic theatre. Only when the value of the doubt and confusion has been pointed out to them by their neighbours do they seek out their friends, neighbours, or family in the audience to slowly start their short journey home. Others stay to chat with the actor/teachers, helping to bring down the set and load it onto the waiting vehicle.

Responses



from staff and students of Buhumba Secondary School to "Red Ribbons for You?"

Report compiled by drama tutor, Charles Ochieng*, 24 March 1995

PET [is] a highly effective tool of educating people as it links the cognitive and the affective. Its main point being role-play, it gives the adult an acceptable but rare opportunity to learn through "playing" ... [these are] processes, that have been hitherto hidden to me (I believe still hidden to many people) C. O.

"It was the first time I saw issues related to HIV/AIDS being discussed and shown in an open forum by young girls and boys without any inhibition, fear or threat" Mrs Eunice Omondi, Commerce Teacher

"The students are talking about it everywhere They remember all the details But ask them about 'Archimedes Principle' that they learnt about yesterday and they will just scratch their heads!" Mr Ndenga Josiah, Chemistry Teacher

The students discussed the performance on their own for several days, in fact they still talk about it In their jokes, informal talks, and games, they have indicated a lot of borrowing from what they observed during the performance. In English lessons, some of them construct sentences using some words or statements picked from the drama To me this is enough proof that learning has taken place. Statements of the students such as the following are very common

"Beware of Red Ribbons!"

"The beautiful ones are no longer safe!"

"Red Ribbons - no scholarship!"

"Are you suffering from Demons, AIDS or Chiraa?"

"I have caught it It is a black cat!"

"Skin plus skin is equal to AIDS minus cure = death"

"Walking down Memory Lane?" C.O.

*"That boy [Tom] died of chiraa It came out very clearly You cannot share a pot with your father and escape "*Mzee Obuya, Groundsman (translated from Kiswahili)

"Even old men are not spared. This AIDS will finish us People should surely change " Mzee Opundo, Cook, (translated from Kiswahili)

We realize that the youth have a very irresponsible attitude towards

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sex. They take it as a game that can be played anywhere so long as there are no people watching. To a majority of them the AIDS menace, is an ongoing story that is not amidst them. Perhaps it is somewhere in the Far East. Yet experience has shown that formal, direct lectures by health workers or teachers on this subject are not quite acceptable to the student population. It is in the light of the above that, to us adults, teachers, your [Kama Kazi] performance provided a very unique opportunity together, not merely to listen and watch, but seriously engage in discovering the youth own misdeeds, problems, irresponsibility and dangers and, even more important, suggest solutions to them. Even more interesting is the fact that the whole performance was done by more or less age-mates, in a very informal, free atmosphere “without prefects or the master on duty’s supervision”, to quote one of them. C.O

“At first I had dismissed it just as another concert, but now I feel we should have more of that, not only in this school, but even in other schools in this District, so as to save this generation ” Headmaster, Bujumba Secondary School

* Teacher C Ochieng (C O) attended the February 1995 PET workshop held in Kisumu. Following the workshops Kama Kazi toured their project to various educational establishments in Western Kenya. They presented “Red Ribbons For You” at Bujumba Secondary School on 23 February 1995

12. Theatre Groups in Western Kenya



Amandla Theatre	Kisumu
Apondo Youth Group	Ahero
Balathago	Kisumu
Bungoma Arts Theatre	Bungoma
Fish Theatre	Kisumu
Floods	Ahero
Cross Roads	Asembo Bay
English Language Group	Kisumu
Homa Hills Arts	Kendu Bay
Kajulu Drama Group	Kisumu
Kama Kazi	Kisumu
Kisumu Professional Players	Kisumu
Lwak Theatre Group	Lwak
Misango Arts Ensemble	Kisumu
Nyawita Youth Group	Kisumu
Obunga Youth Theatre	Kisumu
PETAAK	Kisumu
Rech Ki Sane Guok Arts Group	Uyoma
Red Cross	Kisumu
Resurgence Theatre Players	Kakamega
Sega Community Arts Theatre	Sega
SESE Women's group	Seme
Siaya Cultural Foundation (SICUFO)	Siaya
Siaya Kisumu English Teachers Association	Siaya
Sony Theatre Players	Sare
STG—Sigoti Teachers Group	Sigoti
Sugarbelt Theatre	Mumias-Butere
Victoria Theatre	Nyahera
Wadada Theatre	Kisumu
YMCA	Chavakali

For the addresses of the groups and/or for an update of this list, please contact.

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13. About the authors

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Asenath Bole Odaga was born in Rareda Village, Nyabondo, Nyakach in Nyanza, Western Kenya. She studied History, Education and Literature at the University of Nairobi and holds B.A (Hons), Dip (Ed) and M A (Lit). Writing both in Luo and English, Bole has written many books, among which are *Shade Changes*, *Yesterday's Today* *The Study of Oral Literature*, *A Bridge in Time*, *Simbi Nyama - a play* etc. She has worked as a curriculum developer with church organization, and also as a Researcher Fellow with the Institute of Africa Studies, University of Nairobi. Bole is married to James C Odaga. The family lives in Kisumu. She is the Chairperson and one of the founding members of Gender and Development Centre — a national NGO based in Kisumu. Bole has travelled widely to attend seminars and workshops.

Ochieng Anyona

Ochieng Anyona is a full time a Lecturer at the Department of Literature, Egerton University, Njoro and a part-time lecturer at Marist International Teachers Training Seminary, Nairobi, Kenya. In addition to teaching, he is a performer and director with Egerton University Travelling Theatre and Theatre Workshop production. He has facilitated and devised in community theatre and schools in Kenya and in The Netherlands. Currently he is researching the concept of “Oral Literature (Verbal Arts) for Development (OLD)” an exploration of the educational and communication potential of OLD in communicating a multi-cultural society

Roger Chamberlain

Roger Chamberlain comes from Sheffield in Yorkshire, England. He studied drama at Manchester University and then trained as an actor at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. Since then he has worked extensively in educational theatre at home and overseas. His first visit to Kenya was in 1992.

Mindy Chillery

Mindy Chillery comes from Southampton in England. She studied to be a teacher before training and working as an actress in various community and fringe theatre companies in the U.K. Whilst in Kenya she has formed an unfunded drama group in Butula, Western Province, taking Theatre In Education programmes on *Romeo and Juliet* and *African shoot stones* to local secondary schools

Joyce Colijn **Joyce Colijn** spent an important part of her youth in Zambia. She is now a fourth-year student at the college for Drama Teachers in Kampen, The Netherlands. She is one of the initiators of the Sigoti Teachers Group and she worked with them during 1994 and 1995. Joyce intends to work with groups like the Sigoti Teachers Group using Theatre In Education to raise environmental awareness throughout Africa.

Loukie Levert **Loukie Levert** is a communications advisor from The Netherlands living in Kenya since 1992. Because of her background in communication and cultural studies, her main interest is translating cultural aspects into grassroots level communication and documentation of experiences. The last 12 years she facilitated preparation of communication strategies in development programmes in Africa (Kenya) and Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan). In Kenya she is mainly involved in research about participatory development methods — including research on the impact of Theatre For Development — and documenting it through TV, video productions, and written materials.

Opiyo Mumma **Dr. Opiyo Mumma** is a Drama/Theatre Educator at the University of Nairobi, Kenya. He is a playwright, director, facilitator of oral performances and a producer with the Free Travelling Theatre, a multi-disciplinary performance troupe that devises with rural and deprived communities locally and all over Kenya. Mumma has facilitated drama and theatre workshops locally and internationally and is the author of plays, research papers and articles for journals on popular education, participatory communication and culture. He obtained his PhD at the University of Manchester, U.K., his research, which focused majorly in Western Kenya, was on popular education and participatory methods through drama and theatre. Mumma's current research is on the use of drama/theatre as part of human progress; exploring the concepts of education, development growth, communication, society, and the arts.

Lenin Ogolla **Lenin Ogolla** comes from Siaya District in Nyanza Province, Kenya. He has been an active dramatist since his school days at Maseno and Alliance. He studied literature at Moi University, where he worked extensively with the travelling theatre. He later taught drama at Mbeji Academy.

Donald Okola **Donald Okola** is a qualified Teacher of English at Naki Secondary School in Nyakach, Western Kenya. He has been teaching for close to ten years and has a great love for drama. He is also the coordinator of the Sigoti Teachers Group.

Winnie Olilo-Ogunde

Winnie Olilo-Ogunde is a former communication officer of Kisumu Municipal Council. When she joined in 1983, the post was funded by UNICEF to provide communications input to a World Bank funded project intended to upgrade the slums in Kisumu. The council took over and established the post. Later, when UNICEF jointly with the Council embarked on Child Survival programme she remained the communications expert for the project until she joined SNV Netherlands Development in 1994. Her role is particularly community mobilization.

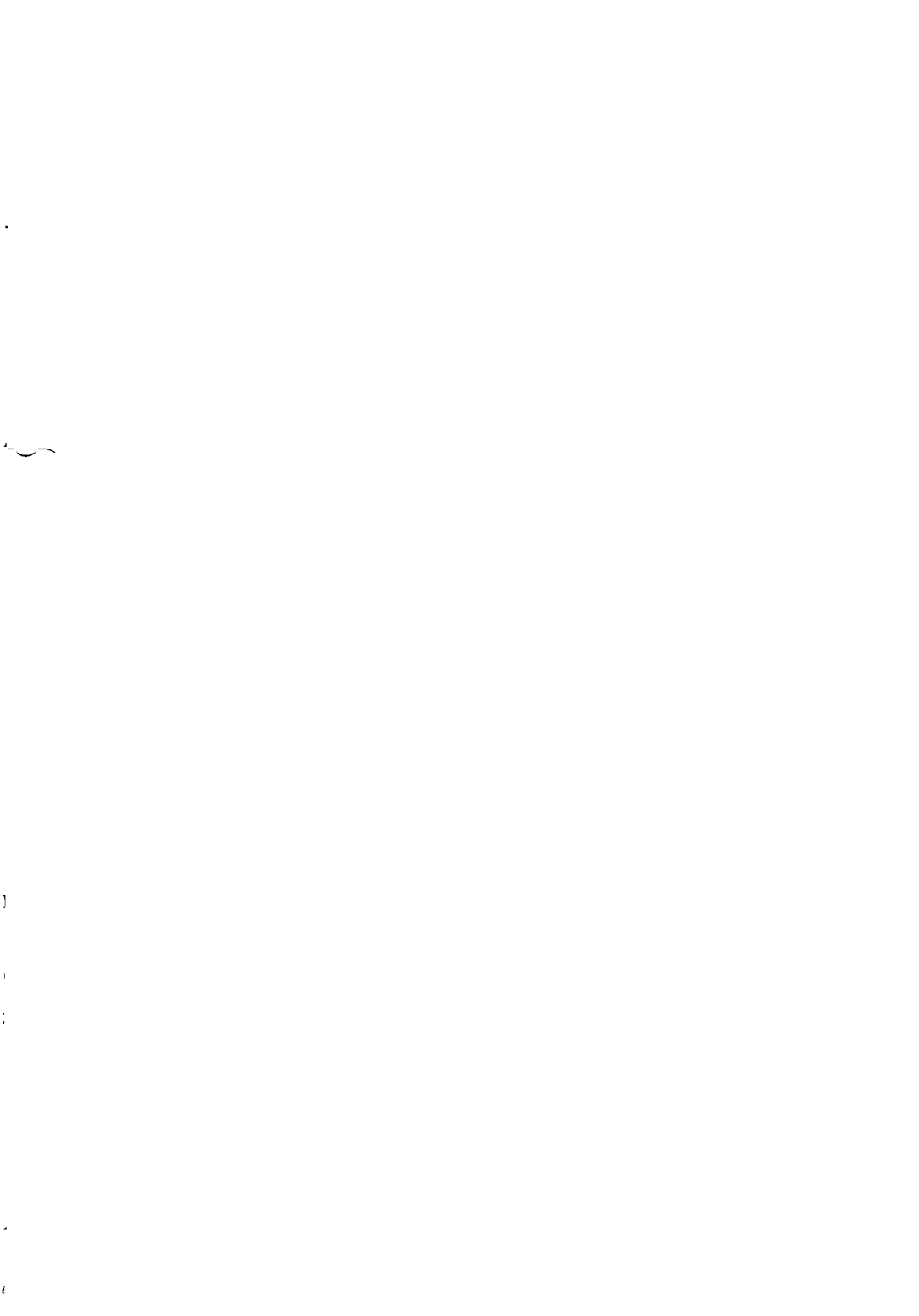
Ochieng Wandera

Ochieng Wandera comes from Kisumu district in Nyanza Province, Kenya. He has been an active free-lance actor and director since his school days at Kisumu Boys and Kakamega Boys. Since then he has worked with many local theatre companies in and around Kisumu, as well as with visiting international groups from Russia and the U.K.

14. Glossary



Abagusii	The Kisii people
Ayahs	Maids or helpers
Baraza	Open-air public/community meeting
Chiraa	Scourge
Dholuo	Language of the Luo people
Eskuti	A traditional Luhya dance/drum
Isizizi	Musical instrument
Jua Kali	Appropriate technology applied in the hot sun
Kapokii timogimoro	Before you take action
Luo	Ethnic group in Western Kenya
Kipkandit	Musical instrument/dance tradition
Mutatus	Mini-bus/public transport
Mandaazis	Doughnuts
Manyassi	Herbal medicine
Mzee	Old man — elder/wise man
Nyatiti	Luo eight-stringed musical instrument
Ndahika Ndedal	I will marry when I want
Yawa	An exclamation
Orutu	Horn (musical instrument)
Omuna	Tiny little fish
Shamba	Farm
Sim Sim	Small grain made into a cake
Tinda	End





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Kenya Drama/Theatre and Education Association

The Kenya Drama/Theatre and Education Association (KDEA) was established in 1992 with the core objective of raising national awareness of the positive role of drama/theatre and education as communication.

The KDEA facilitates exchange of practice in the fields of participatory communication using drama/theatre through workshops, performances, play writing, documentation, and research.

This booklet is the first in a future series in KDEA's quest to explore writings about theatre.