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Examining sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in southern Africa: a case study of Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI)

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1. CHAPTER ONE: STATE OF RESEARCH ON SUSTAINABILITY OF DRAMA & THEATRE INITIATIVES

1.1 Background of Study

Most drama and theatre initiatives like many development projects in Africa tend to collapse with 'almost the same astonishing regularity' (Ferguson 1990: 9). This is how Ferguson describes the fashion with which 'rural development' interventions 'fail' in Lesotho. A range of arguments have been put forward in search for explanations as to why donor supported drama and theatre initiatives in particular and donor supported development projects in general collapse in a similar fashion. Theories have been used as microscopic lenses to diagnose the problems which have became chronic and these theories range from political, historical, social, cultural and economic. Some of these theories are post-colonial, Marxist, developmental, dependency and globalization. The explanations range from local and micro to global and macro. Having sought for solutions at micro level without much progress, it has been the undertaking of this study to trace the challenges from local levels to global. It is my conviction that by so doing I have traced the problems back to the roots and therefore the 'prescriptions' that I have suggested will treat the root cause of the problems instead of their symptoms. There have been accusations and counter accusations between the funders of these drama and theatre initiatives from the North and the implementing organizations in the South. This study has taken a closer look at South Africa Theatre Initiatives (SATI)'s partnership and programming policies as it is supported by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This evaluative study attempted to present a balanced analysis as it cautiously distances itself from the accusatory tone that has been traded between the NGOs from the North and those from the South.

Southern African Theatre Initiative (SATI), an umbrella board for theatre initiatives in the Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC) region, failed to fulfil its regional mandate upon withdrawal of support from Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). The failure to continue with its mandate was marked by the legal dissolution of the board which was

subsequently followed by the reconstitution of the organisation which was spearheaded by the Executive Director. The study did not go into the mandate of the new SATI whose obscurity is a further testimony of the collapse of the original vision. Earlier attempts to form a similar regional network in the name Union of African Performing Artists (UAPA) after the Murewa Workshop, Zimbabwe in 1983 were riddled by 'personal vendettas, scandalous squabbles about financing, and regional rivalries' according to David Kerr (1993). Central to the collapse of Union of African Performing Artists (UAPA) was the politics of funding which this paper seeks to tackle.

Most of theatre initiatives affiliated to SATI have also struggled to survive without donor support. Lack of sustainability has been attributed to a plethora of complex interwoven factors to the extent that some practitioners and critiques have concluded that it is impossible to sustain these projects without donor funding. There is need for an appreciation of challenges around drama and theatre initiatives in SADC beyond the situation on the ground as the problems are bigger and deeper than their manifestation. This requires an understanding of history and power relations which affect the macro and micro politics of theatre for community development.

Evaluation reports of such initiatives have attributed the collapse to weak management structures, lack of accounting systems, poor internal monitoring and evaluation systems, lack of commitment from beneficiaries, weak support structures, weak or no capacity of the implementing teams, wrong timing of the programmes, weak baseline surveys, misappropriation of funds, and lack of political will from governments. However an analysis of SIDA evaluations reports in a document of May 2008 entitled; *Are SIDA Evaluations Good Enough?* by Forss et al (2008) has an established flawed process, which makes the validity of the reports questionable.

> With regard to their assessment of sustainability, 59% of the evaluations are rated as satisfactory. Few evaluations apply the sustainability criterion well, however, and the analysis is often too impressionistic. In many cases, broader and more systematic analysis covering different aspect of sustainability would have been useful. (Forss Kim et al 2008:9 http://www.sida.se/publications : accessed 13.09.08)

It is unfortunate that many critical decisions that affect 'partnerships' and programmes in Sub Saharan Africa have been based on such flawed evaluation reports. The same reports have recommended technical support to enhance capacities of such programmes but still there has been little or no enhancement of the capacities of these implementing organisations. In most cases 'experts' are seconded to fix problems but soon as they leave, 'the introduced systems' collapse in a shockingly similar and traceable fashion. Solutions to the challenges remain apparently elusive. This leaves a very big question: What is the key to sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives?

Discussions on sustainability of initiatives have been characterised by accusations and counter accusations where funding partners have found inadequacies in implementing partners while implementing partners accuse funding partners of imposing pre-packaged programmes which are not compatible with situations in the SADC Region. So, what is the root- cause of the failure of these drama and theatre initiatives?

1.2 Terms Defined and Contextualised

Some of the words, terms, ideas, concepts and theories have been deployed with due caution as some of them have attracted a lot of debate and discussion about their meaning. The controversy in the definition of drama, theatre, development, sustainability and a lot of other terms that are used in this study broadly emanate from the colonial discourse which discusses the different perceptions of the world by both the north and the south. I found it necessary therefore to acknowledge the possible challenges by defining and contextualising some of the terms that will constantly feature in this study.

Aristotle defined drama as "a criticism of life, on a stage, with action, characters and dialogue."(http://www.123helpme.com:accessed12.12.08). After Aristotle, many philosophers and practitioners have defined it differently but the essence and meaning of drama remain the same. This study understands drama as a process of creating ritualised behaviour to criticise life, make meaning of life and taking appropriate action for positive transformation of individuals and the

society. 'Theatre is a major form of human expression, taking place in the present, but connecting us to other times and places.....a shared experience between audience and performers' (http://theatre.osu.edu/1_academics : accessed 12.12.08). The study adopted a broad definition of drama and theatre to include all forms of theatre from the conventional and aesthetic theatre work for the stage to applied forms of theatre which deal with social development, transformation, education, activism and therapy.

The key distinction between drama and theatre is that the latter emphasises the difference between the performers and the audience whilst the former does not distinguish between performers and audiences. The study acknowledges that in African theatre there is a very thin line between the performer and the audience. It is also important to note that the theatre initiatives referred to are mostly community drama and theatre initiatives which are mostly developmental in nature.

In the context of this study, development is used to refer to long term improved quality of social, economic, political and cultural livelihood of the people through their active participation in the transformation of their lives. This study acknowledges and adopts the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)'s definition of development which is a response to the narrow western perspective of development. NEPAD has been seen by many as 'a blueprint for Africa's development; others call it a framework, a process, or an initiative.' (http://www.foundation-development-africa.org: accessed 14.12.08). Developmental drama and theatre initiatives are understood and discussed in the context of transformation of lives and poverty eradication in Africa by Africa.

Sustainability according to this study refers to long term social, organisational and financial hold of a development initiative in the target communities. Southern Africa is endowed with rich applied theatre techniques and strategies which are well documented but the theatre industry remains unsustainable. It has been noted that sustainable development of these initiatives is largely influenced by partnership and programming policies, philosophies and principles. Development

in Africa has been championed by 'partnerships' between the countries of the north and south for decades, through bilateral and multilateral governments to government partnerships but the quality of life in Africa is deteriorating.

Partnership in this study is defined as a strategic and mutual relationship between two parties with a common goal, in this context the relationship between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs for the development of drama and theatre as transformation tools. 'Successful partnerships are often based on trust, equality, and mutual understanding and obligations' (http://www.seasite.niu.edu:accessed 14.12.08). Adopting this simple and clear definition of partnership the study was able to examine the partnership between the north and the south. Northern NGOs are those NGOs whose origins are in the so called 'developed countries' whilst Southern NGOs are those organisations founded and based in the 'third world countries'.

Programming is the ongoing process of strategising, planning, implementing, evaluating activities towards a desired goal. The study was concerned about the policies that influenced the programming processes in SATI with the view of establishing explanations for its successes and flaws.

1.3 Aim of the Study

The study aimed at interrogating the existing donor-implementer relationships with the view of establishing the underlying philosophy, principles and policies that inform decision making processes influencing the sustainability or lack of it in drama and theatre initiatives with regards to HIV/ Aids in the SADC Region. The specific objectives of the research project were:

1 To examine partnership and programming philosophy, principles and policies of funding and implementing organisations in the context of post colonial, dependency, development and globalisation theories.
2 To establish why SATI failed to continue with its founding regional mandate upon the withdrawal of support from SIDA.
3 To recommend alternative partnership and programming models for sustainability of theatre initiatives in SADC.

The study examined the micro and macro politics of drama and theatre initiatives through a study of policies of SATI as a sample of regional implementing organisations on one hand and SIDA as a sample of international funding organisations A case study of SATI allowed me to have and share an overview of what obtained in the region as SATI's aspirations filters down to its affiliates.

1. Key research questions were: How do partnership and programming philosophies and policies of both funding and implementing organisations influence the sustainability of drama and theatre interventions in the SADC Region?
2. Why has SATI failed to fulfil its founding regional mandate?
3. What alternative programming policies and structures can be put in place to ensure sustainability and lasting impact of these initiatives?

This study was a continuation of an inquiry into the subject of sustainability of theatre initiatives and the way some restrictive ideas about sustainable development are constructed.

1.4 Why the Study.

The critical role of drama and theatre to influence social, economic and political development is widely acknowledged and ascertained. Boal in the foreword of his book *Theatre of the Oppressed* reminds us that theatre is a 'weapon':

> *A very efficient weapon*. For this reason one must fight for it.
> For this reason the ruling class strive to take permanent hold
> on theatre and utilise it as a tool for domination. In doing so
> they change the very concept of what theatre is
> (1985, Foreword. Emphasis mine).

Could Boal's comment be a contributing factor for the struggles for drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa?

Like many theatre practitioners, I have been frustrated by managing collapsing theatre organisations and projects characterised by rhythmic uncertainty of funding followed by retrenchment of employees and then sudden influx of

funding followed by re-engagement of employees and then back to uncertainty of funding. There is a vast scope for home grown solutions to challenges faced by the theatre sector which has been revealed by the discussion of core challenges of polarity, mutuality and ideological compatibility in the funding and implementing partners. A mutual and compatible relationship in the partnership is very important for nurturing of sustainable interventions and development of the sector into an established industry.

The sustainability of drama and theatre interventions have been discussed in the context of development interventions in the SADC and this has resulted in drama and theatre issues being mentioned in passing. Like agriculture, industry, trade and commerce, education and other sectors, drama and theatre initiatives deserve to be treated as autonomous sectors.

This study was intended to contribute towards the ongoing discussions on sustainability of theatre and drama initiatives. The drive was to re-define the funding / implementing organisations partnerships for enhancement of self determination among individual practitioners, institutions and organisations in the SADC region. It is hoped that the study will probe further investigation of issues surrounding sustainability of drama and theatre projects, and that the findings and recommendations in chapter five will be used for policy formulation.

1.5 . State of Research on Sustainability of drama and Theatre initiatives

A lot of work has been written on Theatre for Community Development in its various forms. Academics and practitioners who have extensively written on Theatre for Community Development include Ngugi wa Mirii (1986), Penina Mulama(1991), Ngugi wa Thiongo(1981,1993), Zakes Mda (1993), David Kerr (1991, 1993), Ross Kidd (1983), Robert Kavanagh Mshengu(1990), Byam Dale (1999), Chris Kamlongera (1986), Kimani Gecau (1983), Kennedy Chinyowa (2005), Gaurav Desai (1991), Stephen Chifunyise(1990), Michael Etherton (1982), Christopher Odhiambo Joseph (2004), Lenin Ogolla (1995), Tim Prentki (1998) and Marcia Pompei Nogueira (2000) amongst others.

Most of the works documented by theatre practitioners do not specifically address the issue of sustainability from the perspective of power dynamics between funding and funded organisations. The literature mostly focuses on the effectiveness of theatre and the success stories in Theatre for Development initiatives. One wonders whether this is a case of fear to 'throw stones from a glass house' or 'biting the hand that feeds'? Is it because the research and the publications are financed by the same organisations that fund Theatre for Community Development projects?

Tim Prentki (1998) is one of the few academics who directly question the issue of sustainability of theatre in community development projects and his questions and arguments are pertinent to this study. He specifically addresses the issue of programming policies and in the process touches on the issue of Northern NGOs and Southern NGOS partnerships. He questions that if the immense transformative power of theatre for development is acknowledged, 'so why is Theatre for Development –TFD- not located in the policies and practices of most development agencies?' (1998: 419). His question is followed by a description of how 'Development' Workers are oblivious of the policies that govern their work. A scrutiny of policies of both funding and implementing organisations is necessary to establish the degree to which the partnerships allow for mutual appreciation of each other's philosophies, policies and principles. Some of Prentki's questions and arguments are not fully answered and developed respectively. This study has tackled the same issues and more with reference to SATI's work in the SADC Region.

According to Prentki (1998), TFD is perceived to belong to the arts and most development agencies do not include it in their list of development priorities. This perception is linked to the western understanding of theatre where the place of theatre is in the 'theatres' (the buildings) and where there is a divide between the actors and the audience. The west sees theatre where the audience passively admire the aesthetics of the art –form, clap hands and go home. Penina Mlama (1991) whose arguments concur with Prentki (1998) is concerned that the western perspective restricts the essence of theatre to entertainment. Prentki (1998) further

argues that many southern NGOs have adjusted their policies, visions and mission statements, and organisational framework to align themselves with those of the funding Northern NGOs. It was important for this study to look at how policies that manifested themselves in the work of implementing organisations reinforced perceptions and influence that ultimately affected decisions at the level of support.

Prentki (1998) addresses the social and organisational hold and impact of Theatre for Development thus:

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

The question of timing in programming is linked to perception of theatre as an event and this could be the reason why the Northern NGOs do not see the need for long term projects. It was also critical for this study to assess the degree to which policies of implementing organisations subscribed to a people based approach and the extent to which policies of funding organisations complemented their programming policies if they did at all.

Prentki (1998) concurs with Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993), Mlama (1991) and many others on the effects of colonialism on the indigenous forms of theatre expressions and how it was replaced by a theatre that seeks to sustain a dominant ideology. I found his analysis more profound as he explains how scripted 'mainstream' theatre allows for censorship and establishment of 'timelessness and universality' (1998: 423) in theatre-concepts which are necessary to reinforce the perpetuation of dominancy of coloniser in this purported mutual North-South partnership.

When Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993), Ngugi wa Mirii (1981) and many others write about Kamiriithu Community Theatre project in Kenya, they illustrate the brutality of the colonial power in dealing with people-based initiatives. They also

look at power politics from the perspective of the phases in the development of post-colonial theatre and struggle of theatre toward the emancipation of the people. Emphasis is also put on the power of participatory theatre and how the people's perceptions were changed. This study was trying to understand why projects like Kamiriithu did not transcend the founders and co-ordinators if it was so people-driven.

Ngugi wa Mirii (1986) borrowed elements of the Kamiriithu Project and implemented a similar project in Zimbabwe through Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT). The political environment was tolerant and the project enjoyed the support of the Government of Zimbabwe, funding was available but ZACT collapsed. Byam (1999) rightly asked 'why was there no follow up?' Byam's (1999) work directly speaks to this study as she raises the question about the role of the government in funding drama and theatre projects. Funding problems for ZACT started when it was weaned from the government and became an independent association in 1986. Funding from donor agencies could not sustain the project which had spread to all provinces in Zimbabwe. This subject required further interrogation, and while part of it is done in this study, there is still need for further interrogation.

In his introductory section of the article *Participatory Popular theatre: The Highest stage of Cultural Under-Development?* Kerr (1991) argues that:

> The question mark in my title is meant to raise doubts in the minds of those who, like myself, have been enthusiastic practitioners of participatory popular theatre-doubts about whether such drama forms might not sometimes be abetting the same process of dependency noted by Nkrumah, rather than helping de-link African societies from Northern dominance. (1991: 55)

It was the intention of this study to extend further the questions and debate ignited by Kerr but in a more elaborate manner drawing examples from Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI). A discussion of SATI's programmes in chapter 2 deals with this issue, confirming Kerr's doubts and doing justice to the issue by taking it further.

In his article, David Kerr (1991) traces the various development models up to the point when TFD came to be. In addition he also touched on the subject of north-south dichotomy. He however does not pursue the discussion on the north -south discourse in terms of partnership relations, but uses it to set the stage for his discussion of the participatory models of theatre and how the dominant ideology influences the form and content of theatre for development. Gaurav Desai (1991) also problematises the influence of dominant ideology in his article "Theatre for Development" and he argues that such ideologies play significant role in misunderstanding what TFD should be. I took a step further and interrogated the sustainability in terms of using local resources and how that could be used to strike common perception of development.

In *Culture and Development- Popular Theatre Approaches in Africa,* Penina Mlama (1991) discusses a very pertinent issue of how African Governments have resisted the introduction and use of theatre in schools (1991). She points out that young people 'introduce' themselves to theatre as a response to unemployment. Their foundation of theatre is weak and with this background one wonders whether theatre initiatives can be sustainable. If the west acknowledges and uses theatre in their education systems, why are they not promoting it in Africa through their 'development' projects? Is it 'a deliberate and convenient move to suppress the potential of theatre as a tool for raising consciousness of the people' (Ibid: 28)? The study took a closer scrutiny of this issue and established that the lack of support is a question of discordant agendas where Northern NGOs pursue their own agendas at the expense of local agendas. Chapter three provides a deeper insight into this.

In his doctoral thesis, Odhiambo Joseph (2004) tests the 'procedures and methodology' of Theatre for Development in Kenya against the Freirian and Boalian framework. An inspiration to this study is how he acknowledges 'the imminent failure of the imported development philosophies and ideologies' and how it 'prompted the need to generate alternative ways of transferring development to its recipients' (2004: 11). He undoubtedly articulates association of the TFD with development strategies, how TFD challenged the "top-down"

approach to development and how it was replaced by a more participatory "bottom-up" approach'(Ibid: 12). The question that this study endeavored to establish was the extent to which control has been given to the beneficiaries of development and why initiatives have remained unsustainable? Initiatives are still grasping for sustainability despite the application of "appropriate technologies" and "appropriates methodologies" (Ibid: 12).

Odhiambo Joseph (2004) raises the concern of how professional ethics and philosophy impacts on effectiveness and efficiency of TFD. It would be interesting to examine how this affects the sustainability of these initiatives. The 'quick buck' syndrome has created a crop of affluent theatre practitioners who enrich themselves in the name of development and at the expense of the poor disempowered artistes. This could be one of the factors that contribute to the collapse of drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa.

1.6 . Theoretical Framework of The Study

The sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in the SADC Region was examined in the context of macro and micro politics of Theatre for Community Development. This is informed by global perspectives of political, economic, social and cultural history of the colonised or the oppressed as articulated mainly by Fanon (1967) in his powerful collection of essays *The Wretched of the Earth.* The same issues and more are also articulated by Freire (1996) in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and Ngugi wa Thiongo (1986) in *Decolonising the Mind* and (1993) in *Moving the Centre.* Post-colonial theories describe and partly explain the traumatic, emotional and psychological processes of imperialism, the damage it had on the oppressed and their struggle to articulate their identity and reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness. Rodney (1973) in his book *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* foregrounds the post-colonial situation when he described colonialism among other processes as a system for underdevelopment. Achebe (1984) in his work *The trouble with Nigeria* is among the first writers to look beyond 'dependency' to search for explanations for the plight that Africa faces. The North-South economic and political power dynamics as demonstrated by these theorists manifest themselves analogically, so to speak, in the relationship between funding agencies from the North and

implementing agencies from the South. Development, globalisation and dependency theories will also aid in the appreciation of the current tides that are carrying and moving the drama and theatre initiatives in the Africa, particularly in the SADC Region.

Fanon laid a foundation on which Freire (1996), Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) and many other post colonial theorists built to describe and explain the struggles that Africa, South America, Asia and the Caribbean countries go through in the post colonial era. In the third Chapter of his book, Fanon (1967) gives a prophetic outline of the 'Pitfalls of National Consciousness' through which 'independent nations' in the 'under-developed' countries go (1967: 119-165). His theory touches on all sectors of a nation as they are influenced mainly by the political dynamics, steered by the contradictions of 'national middle class' and 'bourgeois caste which 'draws its strength after independence chiefly from agreements with former colonial power'. His theory might put in context the partnership between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs, a partnership that is characterised by heavy dependency by the South of the North.

According to Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) imperialism mortgaged African countries to the West through the International Monitory Fund which Julius Nyerere cynically refers to as 'the new International Ministry of Finance" (1993: 2) The mortgaging of African countries had 'economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the peoples of the world today' (1993: 2). His theory is premised on how culture was used in the subjugation of the colonised and the consequences this had on their perception of the world. He described culture as the 'biggest weapon wielded and actually daily unleashed by imperialism' (1993: 3)

> The effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief In their names, in their language, in their environment, in their heritage, of struggle in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as a wasteland of non-achievement and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them identify with that which is decadent and reactionary, all those forces which would stop their own springs of life.It even plants serious doubts about the morals rightness of struggle. Possibilities of triumph or victory are

> seen as remote, ridiculous dreams. The intended results are despair, despondency and a collective death-wish. Amidst this wasteland which it has created, imperialism presents itself as the cure and demands that the dependant sing hymns of praise with the constant refrain: 'Theft is Holy' (1993: 3)

Does this sum up the struggle that the development initiatives in Africa are facing? Does this mirror the struggle for self reliance, sustainability and total independency by drama and theatre initiatives?

Suggestions have been made that the under-privileged masses should go back to basics in search of solutions to prevailing challenges, but how can the oppressed go back to the 'wasteland' for solutions? Does this explain the continued dependency on western sciences and technology which Freire (1996) said is one of the tools used by the North to sustain their domination of the South? The findings of this study in chapter two (2) confirm Freire and Ngugi wa Mirii's predictions.

Through out Africa, the post colonial era is characterised by political independence which only saw the removal of racial barriers but maintained economic and to a great extent socio-cultural dominance. This has only seen the movement of a few Africans up the ladder of the social, political and economic structures but there has not been a downward movement of the former colonial master on the socio-economic ladder. This means power and control have remained in the hands of former colonial masters. Ngugi wa Thiongo (1986) says this slight shift in power structure has left the dissatisfied majority in the base (1993: 90). One wonders whether 'the political alienation of the majority at the base' Fanon (1967) does not thoroughly explain the resistance faced by donor projects driven by African governments. The power and control of the former colonies by the former colonial masters is also manifesting itself through the Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs partnerships which Prentki (1998) says is characterised by tension.

Oppressor-oppressed discourse as outlined by Freire (1996) points to the 'duality of the oppressed' (1996: 30) which is manifested in the contradictions of the

oppressed. One might ask how the oppressed can empower or liberate their fellow oppressed in community development projects when they have assumed the role of the oppressor. The lack of assertiveness and confidence may be understood from Freire's other concept of 'fear of freedom' (1996: 28) which is basically a fear of 'autonomy and responsibility' (1996: 29). The dominance of the north on the south and dependency of the south on north may be viewed as being reinforced by what Freire (Ibid) described as 'self-depreciation' (1996: 45) which is caused by perpetual domination, continuous and consistent disparaging of the oppressed by the oppressor and also a foreign criteria of knowledge that is imposed on them by the oppressor.

Freire also notes that; "The generosity of the oppressors is nourished by an unjust order, which must be maintained in order to justify that generosity" (1996: 42). Many theatre institutions have for a long time survived on the 'benevolence' and 'generosity' of funding agencies and many have cried foul about lack of commitment of the Northern Funding organisations. Is it the non-committal stance due to inadequate resources or is it deliberate as Freire (1996) puts it?

Fanon (1967), Freire (1996) and Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) do not only unpack the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser but they propose a remedy. Fanon (1967) sees the remedy in political education of the masses for them to realise that 'everything depends on them' (1961: 159). For Ngugi wa Thiongo (1986 and 1993), it is *Decolonising the Mind* and *Moving the Centre* and for Freire (1996) it is *Pedagogy of the oppressed* which is incomplete without the 'liberation' of the oppressor. The thinking of these post colonial theorists could be very critical for programming sustainable drama and theatre initiatives. Decolonising the mind involves the restoration of cultural heritage and all its elements. Language is the key element of cultural expressions. Of what value is an English play amongst the rural populace? The restoration of the people's culture could be the beginning of the process of decolonising the mind which results in 'self-conception as people' (Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1993: 7).

In *Moving the Centre* Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) proposes movement of the centre 'from its narrow base in Europe to a multiplicity of centres where the world can

be viewed from different centres' (1993: 7). This might be very useful in redressing the imbalanced North – South Partnership towards a mutual relationship. From the cultural perspective Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) also acknowledges 'multiplicity' of cultures as he argues that societies with cultures that stay in total isolation from the rest of other cultures of the world s6hrivel and eventually wither away. At the same time those cultures that are dominated or get an overdose of others also get deformed and die. Alternative theatre initiatives models recommended in chapter four are made in the context of 'multiplicity' and diversity of cultures and world views.

Freire's (199) remedy to the oppressed –oppressor dichotomy lies in the total liberations of both the oppressor and the oppressed through a two way process as opposed to the 'banking concept of education' (1986: 53). The place of the liberation through pedagogy could be applicable at both levels of programming and practice. In the programming of drama and theatre initiatives Freirean approach may help both the funding organisations and the funded organisations that there is no single reality and that the solutions to challenges lie in dialogue.

This study acknowledges the shortcomings and pitfalls of the post-colonial theories which may be detrimental to a balanced and objective analysis of contemporary socio-economic and political issues. Loomba in William and Chrisman (1993: 306) – describes these theories as either 'regressive', 'nativist' or 'westernised' and that they 'either erase the voice of the native or limit native resistance to the devices circumventing and interrogating colonial authority' (1993: 307). Some scholars have criticised post-colonial theories as 'incoherent and theoretically insignificant at best, and politically harmful at worst' and others 'as an uncritical condemnation of Western nations, values and culture (http://www.earlham.edu/~guvenfe;Accessed: 07.08.08). The study cautiously deploys inflections of this theoretical construct taking cognisance of the critiques and while transcending beyond its generalisations and biases.

Globalisation has become a major feature of commentaries on contemporary socio-economic and political developments. Globalization means, "the inter-connectedness of capital, production, ideas and cultures at an increasing pace."

(Paul Kennedy quoted by Denis Altman 1999:561). He further expounds the characteristics of globalization as 'homogenization of cultures' internationalization of 'certain styles and consumer fashions', strengthening of 'class divides across national boundaries' (1999: 561). Christopher Lasch as cited by Altman (1999) sees globalization 'as the loss of national cohesion and the development of international elites without any sense of patriotism' (1999: 561). Globalisation is argued by some scholars to be a term for the new stage of capitalism whose aim is the incorporation of the larger parts of the world than ever before through 'neo liberalism' of international institutions like World Bank and World Trade Organisation. Ferguson (1990: 11) questions how capitalist – run interventions can be instruments of real development. The picture presented by globalisation seems to pose new challenges for theatre for development practitioners as they develop intervention models particularly to deal with HIV/Aids.

'Development' is widely criticised for its western perspective as demonstrated by two development theories namely, 'modernisation' and 'capitalism'. Modernisation theory which is based on evolutionary theory of human history sees the western societies as more evolved and developed than 'third world' societies. The problems of the 'third world' countries are therefore seen as a result of the ideals and values of the traditional society and that solution of these counties lie in modernisation where capitalism should transcend over the traditional economy. In as much as 'modernization' and 'capitalist structuralism' theories have been widely criticized, most of the 'development' programmes which are financed by the Northern NGOs have been largely influenced by the two theories and more western oriented theories. These theories may explain the attitudes of the Northern Funding NGOs towards their Southern Implementing NGOs.

Andre Gunder Frank et al (1969) postulated the 'dependency theory' to describe and explain the world economy as capitalism expanded. All exchange is controlled by the centre for its benefit.

Dependency was a theory of underdevelopment: Poor countries

> exiled to the periphery of the world economy could not develop as long as they remained enslaved by the rich nations of the center. Andres Velasco (2002: 44).

The dependency theory has also been criticised for its rigidity and insensitivity to variations in the 'third world' countries and their contribution to the world economy. It however remains a critical tool in understanding the broad and macro politics of theatre for development in that it explains the nature of the perpetual dependency.

There is a high temptation to read and understand this study as an affirmation of the post-colonial theories and a negation of 'development', and globalisation theories. Ideas generated by these theories may be true or false but the main thrust of the study is to show the effects of such ideas on various stakeholders and how their varied interests impact on sustainability of theatre initiatives in Southern Africa.

1.7 Research Methodologies and Methods Deployed

The examination of the sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa was based on the events that have already taken place and hence a historical approach and its principles were followed.

> Historical method furnishes an important interpretive research approach that, unlike other approaches, aims specifically at investigating the causal motors that drive change through time. Although conventional wisdom and popular mythology hold that all historians merely seek to reconstruct the past "as it really was," professional historical analysis very often moves far be- yond just describing what happened and seeks to untangle the complexity of causes that move human events. (Smith and Lux 1993:595)

The main sources of data were the evaluation reports, annual reports, financial reports, institutional documents like constitutions and policy documents as well as newspaper articles. Interviews with the Executive Director of SATI and the former Head of Culture and Media were used as main primary data sources as well as to get deeper insights in the events of the past. This report acknowledges that both primary and secondary data sources came with biases some of which were discussed in the second chapter of this research report.

This was a predominantly qualitative research which focused on a phenomenon what cannot be scientifically proven. The collapse of drama and theatre initiation can be explained by complex human factors, such as historical, cultural, sociological and psychological ones which can not be quantified. Quantitative data in the form of the amounts of money which was invested in SATI was scarcely used more to explain and cement arguments rather than to build arguments.

The study focused on Senior Management personnel who were directly linked to partnership and programming policies in the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI). Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the selected informants. The semi structured interviews guides allowed free flow and natural conversations that generated passion charged responses particularly from the SATI Executive Director and some practitioners from the SADC Region. Interviews with former Head of Culture and Media were in the form of a series of interview questions were emailed her as she is now based in Sweden.

Interviews helped to give a human dimension to my study as it informed the study about how the informants felt about the issues. Interviews helped to establish passion or remorse for the informants about their philosophy, policies and funding criteria. The feelings helped me in giving weight to my arguments as I analysed the data and compiled this report. Interviews allowed me to seek clarity immediately when answers given were not that clear and this gave me a deep understanding of issues, this was particularly true with the SATI informants. Unstructured interviews allowed richness and depth of data Mabena (2008). I did all the interviews with out the help of Research Assistants which helped me to follow through issues that arose from the previous informants.

The research also followed a phenomenological approach which is an anti-positivist paradigm where total recusal from the case study was virtually impossible, hence so biases in the work are apparent.

> According to the phenomenologists, what the researcher observes is not the reality as such but an interpreted reality (Welman and

Kruger 2001:181)

Ethnographic reflection and retrospection based on my encounters with SATI during my work experience with other related initiatives also informed this study in a very profound way. A year of rigorous engagement with drama and theatre practitioners from the region in the form of fellow Drama for life Scholars helped me to validate some of the data from both documents used and my informants. Conscientious effort was made to sift possible biases related with closeness to the case study through a systematic interpretation of the data.

Information collated from various literary, web and oral documentations of the case study such as evaluation reports, policy documents and interviews were subjected to what Welman and Kruger (2001) describes as 'stringent criticism'. Stringent criticism deals with the authenticity, accuracy and credibility of the content of sources, which were all ascertained. A critical analysis was done using the lenses established in the theoretical framework.

Collected information was used to examine the assumptions that form the basis of this research project. It was also linked to the theories that informed this study and previous research in the area as articulated in the literature review and theoretical frame-work. Findings from the SATI case study were interpreted, evaluated, qualified and finally conclusions were made about the state of drama and theatre initiatives in the region as both internal organisational conditions and external political and economic conditions affecting SATI are similar to the conditions affecting most of the initiatives in the region.

The collected information was then classified in terms of vision, mission, aims, and activities. It was then analysed and interpreted against the research questions raised in this project. Facts were also drawn from published and unpublished articles and reports from the selected organisations.

Collected information was categorized into themes that built a logical and coherent report, for example issue of partnership and programming as determined by SATI were put in the second chapter of the study whilst those determined by SIDA were presented and analysed in the third chapter. Recommendations for all stakeholders were presented in the fourth chapter in the form of proposed models.

It was anticipated that informants would make recommendations for sustainable initiatives, which they did and this was analysed and built into the findings and conclusions of this study.

1.7.1 Limitations of the methodology

The informants for this study were usually busy people who did not have time to sit for a long time to explain issues. Interview questions were emailed to them in advance to allow them to prepare and respond. In the case of SIDA, follow up emails were then sent as the former Head of Culture and Media who was directly involved with the SATI project is now back in Stockholm in Sweden. Responses to emails were not prompt resulting in delays that had an overall impact on the study. This study required long descriptions and explanations which are laborious to put down on paper and for this reason an audio recorder could have been used during interviews for accurate recording of information but informant from SIDA was not accessible for that. Recorded interviews could have been done with the SATI respondent but that was not done owing to limited time. Interviews were then used to augment the data collected from literature on the two organisations.

It was hoped that more information would be collected through observation of SATI organised activities but unfortunately the scheduled consultative workshops about the situation of dance and theatre in South Africa did not take place owing to lack of funding. It was anticipated that SATI Board members would come together to strategise on a way forward after SIDA funding and that further information would be collected but by the time data collection was completed the meeting had not taken place. Rigorous discourse analysis was very critical in this study considering the limitations of the other methods deployed.

Validation of data which was collected from SATI generated reports and the interviews with the SATI Executive Director needed an independent and impartial sources but unfortunately the time within which the report was to be completed would not allow that. Most of the validation was done with practitioners from the SADC Region, most of who were unhappy with SATI as regional representative organisation.

2. CHAPTER TWO: THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL THEATRE NETWORK: A QUEST FOR PROFESSIONALISM AND SUSTAINABILITY.

2.1. Introduction

A journey of Southern African Theatre Initiative - SATI from its inception with the dissolution of the governing board and efforts to reconstitute the organisation will give a clear perspective of the various factors which are at play in the troubled lives of many drama and theatre initiatives. The journey is marked by institutional and programme landmarks which are documented in project, annual and evaluation reports. A critical analysis of these landmarks shades some light into some of the issues underpinning the systematic demise of drama and theatre initiatives most of which are donor supported.

The establishment of Southern Africa Theatre Initiatives –SATI, brought together like minded drama and theatre practitioners from the region and as such the thinking and the philosophy behind the formation of this regional networking organisation is a mirror of what happens in the region. The persons behind leading and fairly sustainable theatre projects in various SADC countries are the very same ones steering SATI. These include; Mpho Molepo then of Market Theatre in Johannesburg, Daves Guzha of Rooftop Promotions in Zimbabwe, Fredrick Philander of Committed Artists of Namibia, Mavhungu Lerule of Akanani in South Africa, Maswati Dludlu of Association of Community Theatre Groups of Swaziland and Ackson Tembo of Zambia just to mention a few. The philosophies and principles of these individuals and their organisations permeate through to the management of SATI. SATI therefore provides a backdrop for the study of sustainability of theatre initiatives, groups, associations, organisations and companies in Southern Africa. It is my conviction that an appreciation of the philosophy and principles behind the establishment of SATI with the support from SIDA, to a large extent provides a basis for generalised deductions about the nature of partnerships and programmes of theatre initiatives that determine the sustainability of such initiatives or lack of it.

2.2. The Inception and Status of SATI

SATI is a regional theatre networking organisation that was set up by theatre practitioners in Southern Africa Development Committee – SADC to foster the development of theatre in Southern Africa. The organisation was formed in 1998 at a regional theatre conference in Johannesburg and officially launched in 1999. SATI is a Section 21 Company that is set up to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. The ethos of SATI is therefore very communal and afro-centric, whose growth and development has been stifled by the capitalist principles that have taken over the world in the name of development, globalisation and other related forces. It is run by a Director under the custodianship of a non salaried Board. From inception SATI articulated its concerns about African forms of theatre, so it set out to document and track the various manifestations of African forms of theatre within the range of economies and societies in the region. The vision of the organisation shifted and became unclear when SATI deviated from its founding objectives, which were improvements of the status of drama and theatre in the region through training, networking activities and festival organisation, promotion of theatre activities, research, documentation and lobbying with all stakeholders including governments in the region. The shifting of SATI's identity is an indicator of the forces that have caused dilemma throughout the existence of the organisation.

SATI was born out of a co-operation between The Market Theatre Laboratory of Johannesburg in South Africa and Stockholm Stadsteater, a Swedish Theatre Organisation. It was conceived out of a Market Theatre Laboratory Regional Festival, where the SADC Co-ordinator went around SADC countries vetting plays for the festivals. It was out of these visits that the Market Theatre Laboratory SADC Co-ordinator saw the need for a better understanding of the work by practitioners in the region and hence the setting up of a regional network which coincidentally became an answer to some of the challenges that faced drama and theatre practitioners in the region. The founding of SATI was therefore driven from the top and directly not by a call from the practitioners, which later became a matter of concern for many practitioners in the region. Some of the challenges that the organisation faced are rooted on this foundation, which is

considered problematic by many. Top down approach to development work is based on the assumption of the diffusion of a wealth of knowledge from somewhere in the 'centre' to the 'periphery'. It is important to note that the thinking was not deliberate and malicious but rather inherent in the education and socialisation system prevalent amongst drama and theatre academics and practitioners in the region.

Market Theatre Laboratory also took heed to the Africa Renaissance call from the SADC region in the post independence era particularly from the post apartheid South Africa. In one of its brochures SATI has it that;

> Until the colonisation process started in the 19th century Africa was not marked by definite boundaries between kingdoms and tribes but was more of one large country. Historian and anthropologist have demonstrated the unique closely knit cultural and historical background of Africa
> (Unpublished SATI Brochure, 2004).

The culture and history of the people of Southern Africa was central to the identity of SATI which sought to 'reconstruct' the pre-colonial Africa, through the arts. The link with a Scandinavian country is not a coincidence but it is based on the history of the liberation struggle in the region where Scandinavian countries supported the liberation movement in Southern Africa. This historical background to a certain extent defined the ethos of partnership that existed between SATI and its founding partner - SIDA. Emergent domestic NGDOs in developing countries frequently mirrored the form and practices of the international NGDOs that were now establishing themselves in the South where partnership was informed by an ideology of international solidarity and 'partnership' in a common struggle (Fowler (2000:4).

In 2000 SATI received support from SIDA under the Sweden- South Africa bilateral cooperation. In 2001 SATI became an independent non-profit making organisation registered as a Section 21 under South African Company Law. The influence of Sweden on SATI was apparent from its inception in 1998 until the final three year support which was received in July 2004 for the period overlapping into 2007. From its inception until mid 2007, SATI was largely able

to fulfil part of its founding objectives where it registered a lot of achievements. Its survival challenges began to be felt immediately after the expiry of the final contract when SIDA changed its bilateral cooperation strategy for Africa. The impact of the change by SIDA was also felt by SATI's affiliates which were directly being supported by SIDA and these are organisations like CHIPAWO and Rooftop Promotions in Zimbabwe and the TUSEME Project in Tanzania. This raised a lot of questions about sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa without donor support. This chapter opens the interrogation of the partnership and programming philosophies and principles that influenced the organisational and economic sustainability of SATI.

2.3. SATI and its unsustainable impact

Sustainability of SATI and related drama and theatre initiatives in the region is discussed in the context of 'Beyond Aid Scenarios (BAS)' in terms of the survival of the organisation, the longevity of the social impact of the initiatives and the financial benefits from the initiatives. 'Beyond Aid Scenarios (BAS)' refers to a speculative period when Non Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) particularly those in the south will sustain themselves without international concessional aid. The term was coined at the 'NGOS in a Global Future' Conference which was held in Birmingham, UK in 1999. Fowler (2000:2).

There is substantial evidence that SATI completed its mandate within the timeframe that was set at its inception. The Director of SATI believes that without SATI, the network of practitioners within the region would not be there and practitioners also acknowledge and appreciate the impact of SATI. However SATI did not attain the desired levels of sustainability and hence discontinuation of its programmes and subsequent de-registration immediately after the withdrawal of SIDA support. Cannon (1999) as quoted in the Cultural Radius Evaluation Report says, 'Social sustainability "includes ownership to institutions, processes and ideas, development of local content, language and cultural relevance" du Plessis (2006:25). Development of local content, language and cultural relevance was achieved through regional workshops and festivals.

Ownership of processes and ideas was also achieved by some practitioners who were genuinely committed to training workshops, seminars, compilation of database and festivals. It is unfortunate that national chapters were not resourced which made it difficult for them to sustain their co-ordination roles. Ownership of institutions – the Regional Office and national chapters was not embraced by many practitioners and organisations in the region as they felt that SATI was for the privileged few who continued to benefit from it at the expense of the majority.

Organisational and economic sustainability remained an illusion for SATI. SATI was formally registered as section 21 company hence the constitution was in place but 'adequate legislation and policies' were yet to be developed by the time it stopped its operations. SATI's programming and partnership policy existed in principle but was not documented into a policy document. Appropriate and democratic management structure was constituted and the Director of SATI, then the Executive Secretary was happy with the existing organisational structure; however the structure did not produce the desired results.

> The management structure did work; it was more effective and easy for the committee to meet and also to visit project sites during implementation. The advantages of having the structure is that you still adhered to regional composition and they were giving support directly to the executive secretary. (Interview with the SATI Executive Secretary, 2008)

Financial sustainability was SATI's worst challenge as it did not put in place mechanisms for self sufficiency and financial independence. This challenge was felt across the region. Cost cutting measures were identified and implemented but SATI continued to depend on SIDA, NORAD, Africalia and the South African Government. Attempts were made to set up an internet cafe and to hire out lighting equipment as income generating projects but none of these two projects came to fruition. It was the aim of this research to find out why SATI and other initiatives in the region struggle for survival after withdrawal of aid by partners.

2.4. Understanding the drive behind the founding of SATI.

State of drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa with regards to sustainability of partnerships and programming in the region has had so many loopholes. This led to the intervention of Market Theatre Lab and the consequent

establishment of SATI. The Johannesburg regional conference felt the need to form an entity to deal with unfinished business of Southern Africa Theatre Performing Arts Network. The reconstitution of Southern Africa Theatre Performing Arts Network was also necessitated by new possibilities that were ushered by new cultural policies in the region. The initiative was also a response to the new requirements from the governments in the region regarding funding, tax and other benefits. The reconstitution of a regional theatre network was also driven by a number of new challenges that emerged during the conference perceived as affecting practitioners in the region. These were 'isolation' of practitioners, the need to make a "living out of their craft' and raising the 'status of their work so that it should not be seen as an easy option for unemployed people requiring little or no skill" (du Plessis, 2006:7). The motivation was by and large an economic one rather than social development.

Terms like 'reconstitution' and 'new cultural policies' imply an undesirable situation in this post colonial era and the undesirable contradictions of 'national middle class' and 'bourgeoisie caste' which "draws its strength after independence chiefly from agreements with former colonial power" (Fanon,1967:121). Most post independence cultural policies were blue prints of colonial policies because the 'national middle class' accepted to become agencies of the bourgeoisie. The policies have seen the perpetuation of the dominance of the so called 'mainstream theatre companies' at the expense of indigenous theatre initiatives. One wonders how indigenous theatre initiatives can be sustainable with such policies. Practitioners found it necessary to form a front from which to lobby for improved policies which would create conducive environment for sustainable production, dissemination and sharing of information and works of art. In the summary of the Finding Feet Conference of 2003 theatre practitioners reiterated the need to lobby and work with policy makers 'rather than sit back and wait for the policy to emerge from government, to present a regional front-forming draft bills and pushing them forward.' Zeeman (2004: 64). A survey that was done by the Market Theatre Lab -SADC Co-ordinator identified gaps in directing, producing, administration, management and co-ordination amongst

drama and theatre practitioners in the region (Unpublished SATI Review Strategic Document 2004).

The idea of having directors' workshops came after the Market Theatre Laboratory-SADC Co-ordinator watched 'a play written, directed and acted by blacks' during one of his visits to the region to search for qualifying plays for the SADC festivals which was held annually in South Africa. Market Theatre Laboratory was a white theatre initiative where most plays were written and directed by whites hence the emphasis on 'a play written, directed and acted by blacks'. Characters in the play portrayed were analysed as foreign, embodying imported values from another culture and this prompted a discussion on cultural background, heritage and legacy of colonialism by Market Theatre Laboratory in South Africa in 1998. At a local and micro level, the thinking was a response to the content of the production and the quality of directing, but the bigger picture presents an issue of imbalances resulting from the colonial structures and processes. SATI's targets in the region were the disadvantaged community based initiatives which were struggling for economic survival. These communities were disadvantaged by both the colonial and post colonial governance systems. The focus of SATI was in line with SIDA's mandate in the developing countries, that is, poverty reduction and empowerment; an issue which will be further discussed in the third chapter of this study.

The producers' workshops were similarly a response to the legacy of colonialism which saw the confinement of local and community based initiatives to local communities in specific countries. The idea of a producers' workshop was envisaged after a concern that was raised on the lack of theatre productions that are taken from one country to another. It was also acknowledged by Market Theatre Laboratory and all theatre practitioners who participated in the regional festivals in South Africa that in pre-colonial times there were no borders that divided people of Southern Africa particularly and Africa as a whole. One of the concerns that emerged from several conferences, seminars and workshops organised in the region and particularly the Johannesburg Theatre Conference of 1998 and The Finding Feet Conference which was held in Namibia in 2003 was

the low value that practitioners, in this instance Producers, thought of themselves and which reminds us of what Paulo Freire (1996:45) described as 'self-depreciation'. 'Self-depreciation is one of the many characteristics of the oppressed which stifle full realisation of their potential in dealing with challenges in the post colonial period. Post independence governance systems in the region for instance supported the so called 'mainstream theatre' and it is against this theatre that the disadvantaged practitioners modelled themselves. .

Governments in the region have the mandate to support regional theatre initiatives and hence, agreements like SADC's protocol on cultural development. Governments have established support structures through National Arts Councils to coordinate national arts activities. However, in most countries government support to community theatre initiatives has been hampered by bureaucracy, red-tape and bottle- necks in the system, a situation that has frustrated many practitioners. These were symptoms of what Fanon (1967:119) described as 'The Pitfalls of National Consciousness' which often has resulted in support of 'mainstream theatre' only and with the rest of the funding being returned to treasury at the end of the fiscal year. This constituted one of the reasons for the establishment of SATI.

Networks and coordination structures have been put in places in many countries but these too have also depended on donor funding and as such have also become redundant, falling by the way-side for one reason or another. In Zimbabwe the institutional support structures have totally collapsed leaving groups operating in isolation, un-coordinated and scrambling for dwindling donor support. Zimbabwe Association of Community Theatre (ZACT) and Zimbabwe Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ZATCYP) which were vibrant in the early 90s are now defunct, Lesotho Association of the Arts is on the verge of collapse, NACTED in South Africa is also dying, ASSOCIO TEATRO MOZAMBIQUE (ATEMO) in Mozambique is collapsing while in Malawi, the National Theatre Organisation died with the death of the Chairperson. Tanzania Theatre Centre (TzTC) an umbrella theatre institution is constantly ridden by leadership wrangles and this is obviously affecting the coordination of theatre

activities. Nevertheless, Zambia has an exceptional scenario where Zambia Popular Theatre Alliance has managed to hold the fort together and continued to serve its membership. Findings of the research on the situation in the region established the dire need for regional interventions to bring practitioners together. These assertions are based on my work experience in Malawi and that of my fellow Drama for Life Scholars from the SADC Region.

Fragmentation in the theatre sector in the region manifested itself at different levels. Practitioners and academics in the region are concerned about how the Performing Arts Sector is fragmented at both national and regional level and (they) argue that this is one of the reasons why the sector is failing to establish and sustain itself as an industry like other sectors (Zeeman 2004). Part of *Finding Feet Conference*'s mandate was to forge for cooperation between academics and practitioners.

Drama for Life Scholars (2008) in their submission in 'My work, My Country' reports also highlighted the issues of theatre as a fragmented industry. Academics and affluent practitioners stand on one end and grassroots theatre artists on the other. According to the centre-periphery dichotomy academics and affluent practitioners are at the 'centre' in the development of theatre whilst grassroots theatre artists remain in the 'periphery'. According to Verhelst (1990) the 'centre-periphery' dichotomy which is explained by Andre Frank Gunder's theory of dependency, demonstrates how countries in the North –'centre' exploit the countries in the South – 'periphery'. "Upholders of this theory also claim that the centre-periphery schema is reproduced inside each of the countries in question" (Verhelst, 1990: 13), where grassroots artists are therefore "doubly exploited on international level and in their country" (Verhelst, 1990: 13). The double exploitation of grassroots artists demonstrates the permeation of the dependence from the macro level to the grass-root level.

The status of practitioners in the region is appalling owing to volunteerism which is another major factor that has tremendously contributed to the failure and collapse of drama and theatre initiative in the region. The implementation of projects especially community based- interventions is left in the hands of

volunteers who have little technical-know how of managing a project. Again, these people are expected to do extremely demanding work for no or meagre tokens. Consequently, there is no serious commitment to the job and the people are not motivated or obliged to continue with the work. Most of them end up abandoning the work whenever they feel like. Ironically, donors pay exorbitant amounts of money to trainers and consultants to train volunteers. These assertions are based more on my work as Programmes Manager with CHIPAWO in Zimbabwe and also as Project Development Officer with Nanzikambe Arts in Malawi than the situation that obtained at SATI. The budget allocation for training consultancy for most Nanzikambe Arts projects was much more than the budget allocation for annual allowances for artists. The same situation is partially evident in the 2002 budget where SATI paid sixty thousand rands, (R60 000) to the Corporate Governance Consultant for a single workshop whilst each actor was paid ten thousand rands (R10 000) for rehearsing and touring with a play over two months (Unpublished Budget for 2002/3).

In terms of those theatre organisations that try to sustain themselves and their projects through donor funding, the situation is that they are met with restrictive policies which offer no growth to the practitioner and the organisation. For instance, from all the funding that any development initiative gets from SIDA, only 8% is allowed to cushion administrative costs and organisational support.

> the costs of managerial and economic functions and certain other personnel, rent of premises, inventory and the annual audit etc. For such administrative costs, Sida approves a grant amounting to a flat-rate of 8% of the total Sida grant to the organisation. (www.sida.se/publications: accessed, 13.09.08)

Such policies clearly manifest the deeply entrenched assumptions about the culture of organisations where partnering NGOs in the south are expected to finance the rest of the administrative cost. The situation of most NGOs involved in theatre activities is that they are not able to attract financial support from the communities that they serve hence the need for a front to lobby with both the funding institutions like SIDA and communities that they serve.

The vision, mission and objectives of SATI were set to deal with this superfluity of challenges in a bid to improve the quality of life of drama and theatre

practitioners in the regions. The formalised mission and vision statement was then structured to embrace the aspirations of other stakeholders who included funding partners and the government.

2.5. Vision, Mission, Aims and Objectives of SATI

According to an unpublished SATI Review Strategic document, SATI's vision was 'to make theatre an industry in the 21st century by combining the resources and expertise practitioners from all SADC countries." (2004:1). SATI's vision evolved over years since its inception in response to the growth and development of the organisation and the demand for focus from the practitioners and other stakeholders.

Three years later the aim of SATI as articulated in its reviewed vision was;

> to play a major role in the cultural industry as a central coordinating body for the advancement and development of arts practitioners in the 21st Century. (Unpublished Organisational Profile (2008: 4)

The evolution of the vision as the Director of SATI puts it was a response to the recommendations made by a consultant firm which was hired by SIDA as part of its capacity building efforts. The reviewed vision of SATI aiming to play a 'major role in the cultural industry' according to its 2008 Profile is too broad, ambitious and unrealistic to be achieved especially considering that it had failed to make the intended impact in the 'theatre industry' in the first five years of operation. The recommendation by the consultant casts some doubts not only on the capacity of the 'hired expert' but on the whole notion of an outside-in approach to 'development'. The paradox is that practitioners themselves are experts in defining their vision and yet external 'experts' are invited to define a vision for a community. This, to a certain extent marked the beginning of SATI's inconsistency which it is accused of by an external evaluator. SATI might have made a very significant impact in the region but if its work is measured against its vision then its impact remains limited.

The ‘road map’ toward the vision SATI as defined in its 2004 mission statement was through networking, training, research, advocacy and partnership.

> SATI aims to strengthen theatre for social, political and economic development in the region. (Unpublished SATI Review Strategic Document 2004:1)

The 2004 ‘road map’ was more direct, short and specific than the 2008 ‘road map’ which in my opinion is too long and winding. The mission reads;

> The mission of SATI is to be a voice of the diverse community of arts and provide a high level of artistic and administrative excellence developed according to the needs of our constituency and where possible with key stakeholders, including other external consultants. (Unpublished Organisational Profile 2008:4)

In my opinion the mission was later reviewed to include the role of stakeholders as a way of legitimising the function of external consultants in the operations and evaluation of SATI’s work.

The objectives of SATI just like the vision and mission also evolved and shifted over time, but unlike the vision and the mission, SATI’s objectives remained more consistent. The reviewed objectives of 2004 which were later ‘fine tuned’ in 2008 were as follows:

- improve, develop and raise the status of theatre in the region facilitate the exchange and sharing of ideas, experiences and resources in the region
- strengthen and highlight consciousness of theatre in the region
- facilitate promotion of the arts in the region for the purpose of fostering peace, harmony and unity
- facilitate regional programmes relating to development and capacity building of the arts.
- lobby for the recognition of the arts and culture in development and education
- encourage governments in the region to promote, amongst others, the rights and welfare of artists and the preservation of cultural heritage
- do research
- support festivals. Unpublished SATI Review Strategic Document (2004:1)

The objectives of SATI are very critical for this study not only as they point to the direction and motivation of the organisation but as they also provide the basis of

evaluating its success and failures and hence the sustainability of the organisation. Badly formulated objectives steer the organisation in the wrong direction which might lead to the collapse of the organisation. It is important to note that the SATI Evaluation Report of 2001 to 2005 was based on these objectives as well as the vision of SIDA in giving support to the culture and media sector in South Africa. The vision of SIDA will be discussed in the third chapter of this research report. In this (chapter) I focus on how SATI's objectives impacted on the nature of partnerships and programming as it moved to achieve its vision.

It is important for an organisation to have diverse objectives which take into account many issues such as the aspiration, purpose and vision of all stakeholders involved in the organisation, time frame for programming, magnitude of the work and whether targets are achievable. Specialists in organisational and programme management put all these issues into the SMART objectives scheme (SMART is an acronym which stands for 'Specific', 'Measurable', 'Achievable', 'Realistic' and 'Time based'). A closer scrutiny of SATI's objectives shows that in as much as they are beneficiary specific and clearly capture the aspirations of practitioners they are not specific in terms of the aspirations of all stakeholders. The objectives of SATI clearly captures 'what' the organisation sets to achieve but does not even allude to 'how', 'when', 'who' is going to do what, using 'what' resources and where it is going to take place . I do concur with the 2001-2005 evaluation which says that:

> The range of intentions expressed through these aims and objectives is noble, but hugely ambitious. The objectives are rather generalised which is not helpful when they have to be efficiently translated directly into practical actions contributing towards achieving the vision, with demonstrable outcomes. (du Plessis2006:2)

The objectives were so general and open-ended that any theatre activity could fit within the framework but this was not a healthy situation as SATI's activities then became undefined. The evaluation recommended that SATI should re-visit its original objectives to ensure they aligned with its activities. Part of the failures registered may be attributed to general objectives and undefined nature of activities.

Key stakeholders in SATI's work are the practitioners, the funders, and the community which benefit from the theatre initiatives. Governments and other related organs provide the much needed support structure through SADC. The vision, mission and objectives clearly articulate the aspirations of the practitioners and partly the community which defines SATI's programming, but does not at all take into account the aspirations of the donors and government and hence the partnership is left undefined. A clear understanding of the nature of partnership between stakeholders is not only critical for guiding the symbiotic relationship but is ultimately central to the sustainability of programmes undertaken.

SATI's regional mandate was endorsed by the governments in Southern Africa through Andre Strauss the Deputy Director of Culture in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture of Namibia who gave a key note address at the opening of Finding Feet Conference.

2.6. SATI's Programmes and Programming Ethos

The first two years from the formal launch of SATI – (2000-2002) were devoted to setting up the secretariat, the framework of operation and planning programmes. The programme of action which was mainly capacity building entailed: 'Theatre Administrators Workshop-Zambia: June 2002', 'The writing of a regional play - Zimbabwe: Sept- Oct 02', 'Finding Feet Project hosted by Namibia Feb/Mar 2003 ', 'Women in theatre Research-Mozambique' and the 'Theatre Lighting Project' : 03.10.08 (http://www.sati.org.za/index2.html: accessed 03.10.08).

The Theatre Administrators Workshop was designed to identify and empower artists who would constitute a human resource for theatre development within the SADC region. The action plan did not outline how the trained administrators were going to have a multiplier effect in the region, leaving the impact and sustainability questionable. The Malawi Playwrights Workshop was also designed to choose five writers to write a play on Human Rights and Democracy with focus on Zimbabwe. As such the team was expected to spend sometime in Zimbabwe as part of the writers' research. It would have been cost effective for the workshop to be held in Zimbabwe to cut on travelling expenses. One wonders

why it was necessary to bring 5 writers from the SADC region to write one play specifically on human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe. The capacity building drive and sustainability mechanism was stifled by the need to fulfil SIDA's agenda in Southern Africa.

The Finding Feet Project aimed at creating harmonised formal training facilities for practitioners in the region. The project was designed to bring together fourteen University Drama Schools, ten schools of Arts and fourteen prominent theatre practitioners from the SADC region to deliberate and come up with a plan towards a standard theatre curriculum for the region. This was a very noble and potentially sustainable plan as it was tapping into existing institutions. The Finding Feet Project was also an innovative attempt to create a new definition of what African theatre is through the engagement of academia in the region. Another objective was to break the barrier between grassroots artists, prominent practitioners and academics in the region with the aim of fostering collaboration amongst all practitioners in the region. The Finding Feet project also aimed at polishing the skills demonstrated by the Community Theatre Practitioners in festivals.

The research on women in theatre was planned to select representatives of prominent women in theatre who would research on the role played by women in pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial eras in their respective countries. The women would then come together at a meeting where they would present and share their findings. The research findings were going to be compiled into a discussion document which was going to be presented at a symposium in December 2003. The planned research was in partial fulfilment of one of SATI's objectives of doing research. It can also not be denied that the research was tailor made to fit within the SIDA agenda on gender.

Theatre lighting Project was part of SATI's action plan where lighting equipment was going to be acquired for the region and selected lighting technicians were going to be trained by a Swedish based company. By the time the planning was done, issues like, the number of participants, the duration of the training and the

dates of the training were yet to be decided. The idea of a regional Theatre lighting project came from a similar project that was tried in South Africa and Swaziland where results were impressive. The immediate questions that strike my mind are 'Who dictated the agenda in the SIDA /SATI partnership?', 'Whose interests or needs was the project serving in this partnership?', and 'how sustainable was this lighting project?' An attempt to answer these questions show that SIDA was dictating the agenda in this partnership as it decided the suppliers of project requirements. SIDA stood to benefit more from the lighting project as it did not only create a market for companies in Sweden but also 'created employment for Swedish citizens who were coming to train the technicians. The theatre lighting project was not sustainable in that on expiry of the support from SIDA, back up support was going to be provided at a fee that most theatre companies in the region could not afford. Another donation would be required to source the services of the lighting company thereby creating a cycle of dependency on SIDA. This can be interpreted as a calculated move by the north to expand its capitalistic base in the South (Ferguson 1990). The theatre lighting project alerts us to the question of the legitimacy and genuineness of development agencies in Africa. Ferguson (1990, 11) questions how capitalist –run interventions can be instruments of real development. According to Freire (1996: 42)

> More and more the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and repression. The oppressed as objects as 'things' have no purposes except those their oppressors prescribe for them.

I do concur with both Ferguson and Freire whose visionary analyses of the situation in Africa are being confirmed in the SIDA / SATI Partnership.

This project could be seen as partial fulfilment of two of SATI's generalised objectives, firstly to 'improve, develop and raise the status of theatre in the region' and secondly to 'facilitate regional programmes relating to development and capacity building of the arts'. SATI's generalised objectives posed a sustainability challenge in that anything could fit within its scheme resulting in some projects which were not a priority to the region. The theatre lighting project

was not a priority to majority of theatre groups and companies in the region as most of them were community based projects which have no access to theatre houses and in some cases any access to electricity at all.

Most of the projects that SATI planned to implement almost reduced the organisation to a training institution as they sidelined some of the key projects that really defined what SATI is, which are networking and advocacy function. According to the Evaluation Report for the period 2001 – 2005 the identity, purpose and function of the organisation was not clear.

> The question must be asked, however, if SATI is absolutely clear (and united) about what its organisational identity is –currently? Do the current expressions of intention (through the objective and other statements) succinctly and realistically describe achievable aims of the organisation? Is the organisation still a network as originally conceived or a regional training body or a hybrid of these two? (du Plessis, 2006:14)

Lack of clear objectives and hence clear programming strategy is one of the major reasons why SATI could not sustain its work during and after the expiry of its agreement with SIDA.

SATI's core business as a network organisation was to create a data base, produce and disseminate a newsletter, develop and constantly maintain a website, develop a festival directory as well as establish and nurture links to other networks. The core business was unfortunately implemented as complementary projects to supposedly secondary projects. The external evaluator rightly pointed out that the SATI's core business could have been sustained with minimal resources. Another concern to me and to constituencies in respective countries was the appropriateness of the electronic data base which was available on the SATI website, because majority of the organisations do not have access to internet. This is a clear demonstration that SATI was not built on firm baseline survey, the needs of the practitioners was not adequately established. The top down programming paradigm of most funding organisations from the North assumed by SATI is quite evident and this resulted in target beneficiaries becoming doubly disadvantaged.

2.7. SATI's Achievements, Challenges and Pitfalls

The workshops and projects which SATI implemented had a very impressive impact on those who participated. The action plan outlined was largely accomplished in terms of the fulfilment of the scheduled workshops and projects but the follow up of all the projects leaves a lot to be desired. The following is a list of projects carried out by SATI prior to and after the formal constitution of the organisation.

1. Kitwe Little Theatre in Zambia - 1998
2. National Theatre Workshop in Lesotho - 1998
3. National Theatre workshop - Lusaka Playhouse in
4. Zambia - October 1998
5. National Theatre and physical workshop - Namibia. Regional Supported Producers' workshop organised by Rooftop Promotions of Zimbabwe: Harare, JAN/FEB' 2000
6. Regional Directors' Workshop, Maseru, Lesotho. 18 - 24th June 2000 Regional Supported Producer's Workshop – Supported by Rooftop Promotions of Zimbabwe: Harare January / February 2000.
7. Regional playwrights' Workshop in Malawi for 14
8. days - 2001.
9. Theatre Administrators' Workshop in Zambia for 8 days 2002. Producers programme -: 2002 (http://www.sati.org.za/index2.html -03.10.08)

This list of projects is under the sub title 'Achieved Projects' on the SATI website.

The following is a list of more projects implemented within the financial year ending March 2004.

1. National Theatre Administrators Training Workshop – South Africa and Zimbabwe
2. Finding Feet Conference
3. Journalists in Theatre Criticism Workshop
4. Women in Theatre. (Unpublished, SATI Annual Report March 2003 to March 2004, (2004:6)

A review of the projects implemented highlighted expected outcomes, practical outcomes, challenges and risks. Whilst most objectives were realised a number of challenges were faced by SATI in fulfilling its regional mandate and these challenges included non- consolidated national chapters, unclear support mechanism for practitioners by SATI, unclear guidelines defining roles of country

representative organisation. These challenges resulted in poor information dissemination and unfair representation of practitioners at country level where certain individuals and organisations benefitted from SATI projects and activities. SATI's objective of establishing network was not SMART compliant and hence not clear. The Cultural Radius evaluation revealed that SATI was "attempting to be a network of networks rather than a membership based structure" (du Plessis, 2006:17)

An overview of projects which were implemented in 2004/2005 show that the following projects were successfully implemented;

1. Theatre Administrator's Workshop – Swaziland, Lesotho, Malawi
2. Women in Theatre – Tanzania
3. Theatre for Development Seminar – Botswana
4. Theatre Lighting Workshop – South Africa
5. Networking – Establishment of Chapters – Zambia, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi
6. Board Meeting – South Africa (Unpublished SATI Narrative Report 2004/2005: 2005)

The 2004/2005 projects were a continuation and consolidation of the work that SATI had started the previous year. Of concern in this period was that national chapters had not yet been formed in a number of countries by 2005; the long awaited memorandum of understanding between SATI and SADC was yet to be signed. National Chapters and the SADC Memorandum of Understanding remained an illusion to date. SIDA was pushing for the signing of the MOU with SADC with the hope that SADC would then set up a fund to takeover the responsibility of financing the organisation.

According to the SATI Report 2005/2006 this period marked the celebration of established networks in Southern Africa. Since most of the effort was focussed on consolidating established projects, the list of new projects was shorter. It included the following;

- Theatre Administrators Workshop – Mauritius & Zambia
- Women in Theatre Directors Workshop – South Africa
- National Community Theatre Conference and Festival South Africa (Unpublished Southern Africa Theatre Initiative Narrative Report 2005/2006)

A point to note is that the National Community Theatre Conference and Festival loosely fitted into SATI's main mandate according to is objectives. The objectives were not clear enough to keep the organisation focused. This divergence of focus to a certain extent explains why SATI failed to fulfil it regional mandate.

The Chairman's Report in the SATI Annual Report March 2003 to March 2004 congratulated the Secretary General, SATI staff, Board members, Funding Partners for successfully organising 'meetings, workshops, symposiums, newsletter publishing etc'. In the introduction of the narrative report it was noted that, "The workshops conducted have added value and SATI is making practical interventions as per the identified needs within the region". In the same report the Secretary General said that SATI made 'notable impression' as it implemented more projects than in the previous years. In addition he also admitted that there have been "big deviations", late completion of some work and even omission. In terms of networking and connection of stakeholders and practitioners, "The region has certainly become a lot smaller through the efforts of SATI" (SATI Annual Report March 2003- March 2004 2004: 3).

The general feel of internal reports namely *SATI Annual Report March 2003 to March 2004*, *SATI Narrative Report 2004/2005* and *Southern Africa Theatre Initiative Narrative Report 2005/2006* is that of success where "theatre community in the region has been unified", 'More practitioners have access to information and activities', 'rounded theatre practitioners are produced' and 'practitioners are exposed to other cultures'. The external evaluation report for 2001 to 2005 confirmed positive experiences that the workshops and seminars achieved. These are internal reports which largely give the perspective of SATI as an organisation. The reports are not without blemishes as they noted the challenges of fair representation of practitioners at country level as well as the challenges of lobbying for governments support.

According to the *SATI Annual Report March 2003 to March 2004*, the Chairperson – Henri Favory -- having congratulated SATI acknowledged that some parts of the planned activities were not achieved.

> A close scrutiny of human endeavours undoubtedly divulges Failure as success. Mine is therefore not meant as blame to anybody, if not myself, but as a plea for the fact that if the production of original plays is to be the most important task SATI could set itself, both to crown it numerous workshops and to fulfil its own "voice and soul" motto then I honestly wish that SATI will convince it members, funders and all well-wishers that both a *Women in Theatre play* and *Crooked Minds*, should be urgently produced and toured and that a play should be similarly produced and toured say, every three years. (Unpublished SATI Annual Report March 2003 to March 2004)

The plea by Henri Favory has not been realized to date and this is one of SATI's failures. My general observation is that SATI was happy and excited about initiating new projects but very little or nothing was done to follow up on these projects.

Finding Feet Conference of 2003 made very clear recommendations but not only did SATI follow up to implement some of the recommendations but most of the participants did not get the report on the conference. This cast doubts on whether the region really needed the conference or not. A participant at the just ended Africa Research Conference in Applied Theatre 7th -9th November 2008 hosted by Drama For Life at the University of the Witwatersrand made an observation that 'initiatives come from funders and hence they do not hold, if initiatives came from the ground then they would survive' The participant was commenting on why most theatre networks that are set up in the region collapse in an amazingly similar fashion.

According to the Cultural Radius Report the SATI's programming was not clear at all. Many people who were interviewed indicated that they were not sure what SATI was trying to do. People were confused about the ideology of SATI, was it 'industrialisation' hence capitalist and commercial or developmental and 'not for profit' making directed.

> Frequently people said of SATI that it had deviated too

> far from its original motive as a co-ordinating body and that it was failing to be consistently disseminate information throughout the region in reliable and effective ways. Most people said they only heard about SATI in connection with the occasional workshop or seminar but not otherwise. It was also often commented that SATI information and subsequent benefits were restricted to a few select people. (du Plessis (2006:14)

SATI's brilliant workshops were one-off experiences where participants never heard anything afterwards. The failure is a symptom of external interference and most probably from the subtle requirements from SIDA. SIDA did not openly dictate the conditions but rather created situations that ensured total dependency. For instance projects were not funded to their conclusion as there were no funding allocated for follow up on initiated projects like Finding Feet Conference. SIDA's funding policy and conditions were specific as demonstrated in the next chapter.

SIDA flagged new opportunities and possibility which in my opinion lured SATI and distracted it from its founding objective; whether this was deliberate or not remains a question to be answered. The Director of SATI did not see anything wrong with that, if anything, he was happy to seize every opportunity to access whatever SIDA funds that were made available. What emerged from the interview with the Director SATI was that, either SATI was oblivious of the macro politics that shaped their operations or they deliberately decided to 'ignore' the implications of SIDA's policies on their operations. This resulted in an unfocused programme which deviated from the core business; hence the failure to set up a sustainable network. This situation was true of SIDA's partnership with other initiatives in the region and this partly explains why most of these initiatives struggled to 'stand on their own feet' after the radical shift in SIDA's funding strategy in 2005\2006.

Volunteerism at all levels was one of the major challenges to the sustainability of SATI's organisational structure and its programming. Heads of the four departments namely, Practical Projects, Advocacy and Lobbying, Funding and Documents and Research, volunteered their service to SATI as they had their own organisations. They also 'doubled up' as Board members, a situation which created conflict of interest as a second challenge in this situation. The secretariat

was encouraged to partly volunteer their services as remuneration was low. The National Chapters were expected to provide networking and information dissemination service on voluntary basis. Volunteerism is one of the core ethos of 'non- profit making' organisations, but the question is how drama and theatre practitioners were expected to survive in a consumerist economy without wages. The dilemma of cross sectoral coordination left a question as to whether running parallel economies was possible in (the) developing countries. SATI's team of fulltime paid employees was conveniently kept small to fit with SIDA's requirement of keeping all administrative cost at 10% of the total annual budget. Motivation of both the Board members and secretariat remained a big challenge for SATI and its affiliate organisation.

'Trebling up' of roles and responsibilities by Board members cum Heads of Departments who also headed their own organisations created a serious challenge of a corporate governance nature – conflict of interest. This resulted in unfair representation of organisations in respective SADC countries as the 'voluntary Board Members' made sure that they indirectly benefited from SATI as much as they could. The 10% administrative cost threshold left many organisations with limited choices to motivate their employees; this resulted in two situations: firstly huge staff turnover and secondly a situation where management became 'creative' with their budgets to motivate their staff. It was not easy to stick to the 10% administrative threshold. The small secretariat was too small to satisfy the demands of an ambitious regional initiative.

Most of the challenges that SATI encountered may have been avoided if the programme had put in place a systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Annual reports were a reflection of monitoring and evaluation but the collection of data was ad-hoc, so was the analysis. According to the Culture Radius Evaluation report there was no record of the *Journalist in Theatre Criticism* workshop in the annual reports or on the SATI website. One wonders what information SATI was sharing and disseminating considering the gap in their records. I do concur with (du Plessis (2006:21) when she observed that 'this was a lost opportunity for an organisation which is attempting to capture data on current

country circumstances'. Funds budgeted for research and documentation could have been effectively used to collect, analyse and document data there by achieving two tasks at the same time.

SATI's programming philosophy has not been constituency driven resulting into a 'top down' or 'outside-in' type of development approach. Practitioners who were interviewed during evaluation said they only heard about SATI in connection with training. The Executive Secretary of SATI also confirmed this during the same evaluation when he said that 'most of these activities are generated by the Regional Office' (du Plessis, 2006:21). The website for instance was a good project as one of the primary public faces of the organisation especially for the purposes of advocacy and lobbying with prospective funding institutions. It had very limited direct impact on the target constituency, yet the cost of hosting was so huge that the SATI website had not been updated since 2002. SATI's links with other regional theatre organisations remained weak because of limited access to internet facilities; whilst its links with international organisations outside Africa became stronger nevertheless such links were a bit removed from the practitioners in Southern Africa. This is typical of what Ngugi wa Thiongo described as effects of the cultural bomb, which alludes to the elusive possibility of solutions to be found in Africa, the 'wasteland'. Whilst websites are useful networking tools and although international theatre organisations provided possible good governance and programming practices, they did not provide practical solutions to challenges faced by SATI and other organisations in Southern Africa.

2.8. SATI; A global and regional agenda

SIDA as the donor agency had an upper hand in this 'partnership' where the evaluator even recommended for SATI and other 'players in the cultural media sector to review their cultural projects to ascertain that they are relevant to the SIDA's goal of poverty alleviation and human rights based approach.

National Governments in the region are concerned about their partnership with the North as they question role of the North particularly in culture.

> we increasingly favour and consume the toys of the West,

> Japan, Hong Kong AND Malaysia – but the KEY QUESTION
> must remain: WHO DICTATES THE AGENDA? (Zeeman, 2005: 2)

The tone gesturing to the influence of the North is carried forward when Andre Strauss commented about the ineffectiveness of SADC that 'despite vigorous efforts to move culture up the agenda as one of the most important priorities of our people, we still fail' (Zeeman, 2005: 2). His argument in regard to the failure of SADC is that the region does not have control in its natural resources and that the region still allows 'funny people' to run its economy. Andre Strauss's comments are loaded with suspicion and resentment about the influence of the West on Africa. Unlike most of the governments in the region, the Zimbabwean Government took a public stance about its resentment of the West and this to a large extent resulted in the prevailing political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean situation confirms the region's resentment.

In my opinion SATI failed to transcend the agenda of the funders but instead succumbed to the pressure not only by abandoning its mission but by shifting from a social responsibility position to a consumerist stance. Since 2007 to date, SATI has been reduced to South African network organisation as it now focuses on national programmes like the Provincial Indabas. The national programme is supported by National Arts Council of South Africa and the National Lottery. The question 'Where is SATI now?' was raised at the Dramatic Learning Spaces Conference of 21st to 24th September 2008 and the response from the Director of SATI was that the organisation was undergoing a mutation where the board was considering reconstituting the organisation on an entrepreneurial level to ensure sustainability of the initiative. The same question was raised by a working group on 'Africa Representation and Networks' during the initial Africa Research Conference in Applied Drama and Theatre which was hosted by the Division of Dramatic Art in collaboration with Drama for Life in the Wits School of the Arts - University of the Witwatersrand on the 7th – 9th November 2008. In response to the same question the Director of SATI who was part of the working group suggested the setting up of new network. This is a clear indication that SATI was at the moment dysfunctional. In the discussion, the Director of SATI insinuated that the collapse of SATI was a direct result of poor national networks.

The situation of drama and theatre initiatives is a reflection of the global political economy where most of the interventions have had short lived positive impact but reveal a deterioration of quality of life in the long run.

> Everyone knows, none of the major objectives of the last two 'Development Decades' declared by the United Nations have been attained. Today poverty and malnutrition is more prevalent than they were twenty five years ago. The greater party of humanity is experiencing deterioration in the quality of life on the social and political as much as economic level. (Verhelst, 1990:11)

It has been the object of all institutions funding drama and theatre initiatives to ensure that practitioners have adequate resources not only to make the world a better place to live in but also for them to have sustainable quality of life. Lighting equipment has been imported from Sweden, experts have been brought in from Sweden to train technicians in South Africa, websites developed and workshops organized but still the quality of life of drama and theatre practitioners has not improved. This is clear demonstration that poverty in Southern Africa is not a function of backwardness but 'rather of systematic retardation and destructuralisation' (Verhelst1990:14) to ensure continued exploitation of the south by the north.

2.9. SATI; New vision new strategy

SATI recently de-registered as Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) to be reconstituted as Non profit making organisation which can be driven by as few as three individuals with a common vision. According to the Director of SATI, as NGO, the organisation needed to be driven by national networks for legitimacy and this was not workable as the national networks were and are still fragmented. SATI has always operated as Non Profit making organisation, so the reconstitution is a question of formalising the operations. This change is necessary to prepare the organisation for the new entrepreneurial thrust that it is set to undertake. The new SATI which might be renamed will continue with networking, training workshops, lobbying and advocacy, hosting conferences, seminars and festivals but at a fee and now these programmes or rather services

will be run on commercial basis. In addition to these services, the new SATI will offer cultural tourism and other consultancy services like monitoring and evaluation and project development.

The nature of partnership envisaged for the new SATI will be purely a business partnership of client and supplier, where the NGOs which are funding practitioners and drama and theatre initiative will be clients. The envisioned constitution as a Non profit making organisation and the commercial drive are in total contradiction leaving one wondering whether the new SATI is not heading for a another false start.

The proposed 'entrepreneurial' approach which SATI is now advocating for is an indication of a realisation of the challenges of sustaining a 'not for profit', 'socialist' and nationalist initiative in a 'capitalist', 'consumerist' 'commercial' and 'industrial' economy. The destruction of the communal base in the South by the North has left many initiatives and projects with limited options for survival without adapting to the 'capitalist world order'. International funding institutions from the North like SIDA are part of the scheme to expand and maintain the dominance of the North over the South. The failure to sustain a regional network is therefore a function of both SATI's non compliant corporate governance requirements at implementation and local level, and SIDA's overall agenda which it pushed through the media and cultural policy in the region. SIDA's 'upper hand' in the partnership to a larger extent influenced SATI's programmes. That is the concern of the next chapter.

The impact of SATI as a network and capacity building organisation cannot be underestimated, its influence will continue to be felt by many who were in contact with the organisation. It is a pity that organisation could not continue with its regional mandate in accordance with the founding objectives. Using postcolonial, globalisation, development, and dependency theories, it became apparent that what we see on the surface in terms of the challenges faced by drama and theatre initiatives are symptoms of deep seated and macro challenges.

CHAPTER THREE: SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY (SIDA)'S DEVELOPMENT AND UNDER DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency –SIDA's operations in South Africa during its partnership with SATI was broadly guided by the bilateral agreements between the Swedish and South African Governments. General institutional policy documents governing various sectors and programmes such as *SIDA at Work; A Guide to Principles, Procedures and Working methods*, *SIDA Procurement Guide Lines* and others also affected the partnership between SATI and SIDA. The implementation of the SIDA support to SATI was directly guided by the terms and conditions outlined in contracts which were signed at the beginning of each project or funding period. A critical analysis of these documents gave a deeper insight into some challenges which SATI and other drama and theatre initiatives grappled with.

3.1. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency –SIDA

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency –SIDA is an international Non Governmental Development Organisation which was instituted by the Swedish government to enhance its effective participation in international development cooperation. Through the Sector Wide Approach of 2000, SIDA was able to effectively and efficiently pool resources together and reach out to all development sectors which included the Democracy and Social Development Sector under which the division of Culture and Media is established. SIDA's involvement in cultural development of the so called 3rd World countries is guided by the "Policy for Sida's international development cooperation in the area of culture" of 2000 which was later developed to 'Sida's Policy for Culture and Media' in 2006.

> Sida's work with culture and media is ultimately founded on the rights of individuals, the right to freedom of expression, the right to exercise cultural and creative activities, the right to access information, the right to knowledge, the right to transform knowledge into action and the right to free themselves from poverty. (www.sida.se/publications: accessed 02.09.08)

SIDA's empowerment and poverty reduction goal in the 3rd World countries was made possible through Swedish government's bilateral and multilateral cooperation with governments in the south. SIDA's cooperation with Southern African countries dates back to the liberation struggle when Scandinavian countries supported the liberation movement. At independence SIDA and other Scandinavian organisations like Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation-NORAD and Danish International Development Agency -DANIDA changed their focus from liberation to democracy, good governance and development. A number of cultural organisations including SATI, benefited from the cooperation of Scandinavian countries and SADC Countries.

Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)'s eight year support to Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI) was very significant but limited in its impact and was barely sustainable as SATI's practical projects did not go beyond March 2007. A total of six million, three hundred and seventy thousand Swedish kroners (6 370 000 SEK) or Seven million six hundred and forty four thousand rand (R7 644 000) was injected into a project that was expected to have taken root as a regional theatre network. The situation of drama and theatre initiatives by poor practitioners did not improve much as initiatives are still struggling for survival. Fragmentations of practitioners remains a challenge and resolutions taken during many conferences, workshops, seminars, meetings and symposiums have not yet been implemented if at all they are going to be implemented. One wonders whether the support by SIDA like many 'development' projects was a case of 'island of success in an all too hostile ocean' (Edwards and Hulme 1994:14). Did SIDA achieve its mission at the expense of poor practitioners? SIDA has not been an exception in the accusations against the Northern NGOs by Southern NGOs and critiques of development work in the South. It is inconceivable that SIDA could achieve its objectives in isolation from the national and regional political processes hence the need for this study to look at the relationship between SIDA and the governments in the region. This chapter takes a closer look at SIDA's partnership and programming policies in respect to its support for the South Africa Theatre Initiatives (SATI)'s regional theatre initiative. The study strives to present a balanced analysis as it cautiously distance

itself from the accusatory and polemical tone that has been adopted by some critiques.

3.2. SIDA & SATI: Common Vision /Discordant Priorities

The partnership and programming philosophies and policies of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) that guide its relationship with SATI and other drama and theatre initiatives is articulated under *SIDA's Policy for Culture and Media*. SIDA does not have a policy that specifically deal with drama and theatre and hence an analysis of the policy for Culture and Media. The study will also do a critical analysis of other instruments that are used to guide SIDA's work with NGOs in the South like the *SIDA at Work: A Guide to Principles, Procedures and Working Methods, SIDA's criteria for selection of Frame Organisations and SIDA's Procurement Guidelines.* SIDA's work in drama and theatre with SATI and other theatre institutions in the region is first of all generally guided by 'Global Development Agenda' and then specifically by its *Policy for Culture and Media*. The 'global development agenda' is one towards poverty reduction and global development in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which have been developed to address the social and geographical disparities globally. Poverty is central to one of the world's major challenges namely political conflict; hence poverty reduction is a means towards peace and political stability.

'Globalisation' and 'development' have been widely criticised for their limited view of the world which tends to perpetuate the 'centre'- 'periphery dichotomy with the North as the 'centre' of the world, 'knowledge' and development and the South as the 'periphery'. This presents the first challenge in the development of sustainable drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa considering how drama and theatre as cultural expressions is people specific. The Millennium Development Goals are complemented by a series of international declarations of harmonisation of development. Globalisation acknowledges cultural diversity in principle but the implementation of the principles contradicts with a number of guidelines in an attempt to standardise development. An attempt to globalise culture is an illusion.

The relationships between SIDA and SATI to a certain extent fits in with what is

described and explained by Andre Gunder Frank and others in the 'dependency theory' summarised as follows;

> There is a "chain of dependency" running down from the highly advanced centres of the world, a hierarchy of metropolises" with their subordinate "satellites" through which the economic surplus is passed upwards within a nation and then internationally…. While countries of the advanced centre can develop through self-growth, others since they are dependent can only possibly expand if the dominant metropolises expand. But such an expansion is always under the control of the metropolis since any expanded surplus will be automatically passed upwards out of the satellite…the only way of stopping this exploitation of this surplus is by breaking the chain of dependency by which it is transferred. (Webster1990: 82)

The description and explanation of the 'dependency theory' leaves a question whose answer might explain why 'development' projects in Africa fail to produce desirable results. The question is 'does the SIDA policy promote development or underdevelopment in Africa?' This study partially answers this question in the later sections of this chapter.

SIDA's work in culture was 'to contribute to an environment supportive of poor people's own efforts to improve their quality of life'. (www.sida.se/publications accessed 17.11.08). SIDA's support for drama and theatre initiatives in Africa was a means to an end and this broadly matched with the work of drama and theatre practitioners in Africa whose work is usually a 'tool' and 'forerunner' to development work in health, agriculture, environment, human rights, democracy and good governance. The two institutions agreed on the 'means' (drama and theatre) but differed on the 'end'. The focus on poverty reduction is also in tandem with SATI's goal to improve theatre and status of practitioners in the region but the only discordant factor is that whilst SATI's priority is drama and theatre industry, SIDA's priority is human rights and democracy. This is confirmed by a comment which was made by the former Head of the Division of Culture and Media when she said 'Culture is very seldom prioritised by the national governments, insufficient funds available in the countries. Very few donors support culture.' (Helen Nordenson, 2008: interview).

The Deputy Director of Culture in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and

Culture in Namibia - Andre Strauss also confirmed the lack of support for culture by government in his keynote address during the opening of *Finding Feet Conference* in Namibia in 2003.

> Despite the fact that we did our damnest to move up culture
> as one of the most crucial priorities for our people, we still fail.
> I want to briefly jump into the analytical thing and give
> five major reasons for this under-prioritisation (Zeeman, 2005: 88).

His analysis and explanation is that Africa does not control its own resources and hence does not have the money to control its priorities. He also says that the economy in Southern Africa is run by 'funny people' –foreigners and that Africans allow self hate through 'black racists'. His analysis points to dependency on foreign aid which always comes with 'strings and conditions' attached. Under-prioritisation of culture is also caused by the problem of bureaucrats in the governments who are slow and conservative. Andre Strauss's analysis confirms what I would like to call Fanon's (1965) prophecy when he wrote about *The Pitfalls of National Consciousness.* Fanon reminds us that most of the challenges that we face today are the mishaps of the post-independence era where the unpreparedness of the educated elite to run the newly found nations resulted in regurgitation of policies of the former colonial masters. Most of these old policies do not genuinely support indigenous African culture.

Under-prioritisation of culture is not evident in SIDA's definition and understanding of culture which is an all encompassing definition. SIDA uses UNESCO's Universal declaration on Cultural diversity's definition of culture which states that;

> Culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual
> and emotional features of society or a social group,
> encompassing in addition to art and literature
> ("cultural expression"), lifestyles, value systems, traditions
> and beliefs. (www.sida.se/publications accessed 16.11.08)

This putative definition explains culture as a way of life influential to how individuals and communities recognize, appreciate and value, own identity, past, present and future and how people organize their experiences and live together as human beings. It also acknowledges the multiplicity of identities that individuals and societies can construct as well as how culture is fluid as it mutates and

overlies other cultures, beyond artificial national boundaries. SIDA's understanding of culture does not reflect in its programming because it uses culture in a very specific way and does not deploy it in its entirety. It uses the rights based approach which perceives culture as central to empowerment of people and the civil society in communities where people are living in poverty. The narrow, human rights based approach influences the content of the programmes that SIDA supports. It explains why SATI's Writers Workshop which was held in Malawi in 2001 focused on the development of a single script about human rights and democracy in Zimbabwe, when it could have been open to allow writers to explore issues of their choices particularly those driven by their communities. In a way SIDA's policy confined practitioners to specific issues already determined for them.

The following is a list of five goal areas for culture and media which are outlined in the SIDA 2006 policy document;

- Cultural freedom and cultural diversity
- Freedom of expression and access to means of expression
- Access to information and ideas
- Conflict prevention and increased tolerance
- Local production, economic growth and
- employment (www.sida.se/publications accessed 17.11.08)

The five areas broadly defined SIDA's funding priorities in the culture sector where each goal was broken down into objectives and further into a wide range of activities that SIDA supported. SATI's regional network was funded in the context of these five goal areas and all its programmes fed into SIDA objectives in one way or the other. The objectives of the policy were also very wide and inclusive but the choice of projects was limited to specific priority activities during specifics programming periods. During the period of study SIDA took an affirmative position on gender, human rights and democracy and hence SATI's specific workshops on Women in Theatre, like the research and the women directors workshops. This is an aspect which was not explicitly stated in SATI's vision, mission, aims and objectives. In my opinion SIDA influenced SATI's programming in a silent but strong way. The fact that there was no follow up to these projects may be an indication of the challenges of a top down approach of

Northern NGOs who based their intervention on assumptions. Taking a speculative opinion, SATI might not have embarked on this project if it was given an open choice.

The broadness of SIDA's goals and focus on specific activities partly explains why SATI, national governments and other initiatives in the cultural sector constantly shifted their focus in pursuit of the financial support. Subtly the South has been dancing to the tune of North.

> Given their dependent origins it is no surprise that the majority of these Southern organisations have been 'domesticated' to the goals and agendas of Northern organisations and agencies and more broadly to the dominant neoliberal vision of the world. Here the market is pre-eminent and the way to achieve 'development' is to integrate (or subdue) the poor and the marginal more securely into market relations and the monetary economy.
> (Mawdsley et al 2002: 5)

The constant shift and inconsistence of SATI's projects may be attributed to the dependency syndrome which saw them unconsciously 'domesticating' their projects. Pre-eminence of market posited by Mawdsley et al (2002) explains the proposed radical shift in SATI's theoretical and ideological framework in search of 'sustainable development'. Consultancies awarded by SIDA to individuals and private companies to run drama and theatre training workshops for producers, directors, lighting and technicians and also in monitoring and evaluation attracted SATI to envisage shifting from community development oriented work to an entrepreneurial and commercial work.

3.3. SIDA's focus Group and Priority Issues

According to the SIDA policy document on Culture and Media, the focus group of SIDA's Global Development goal were the poor where the poverty was defined as

> ".. a human condition characterized by the sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights." (http://www.unhchr.ch/development/poverty; accessed 18.11.08)

Its priority issues were human rights, gender and democracy and the policy focuses on 'freedom of expression, cultural rights, the right to information and the right to participation' (www.sida.se/publicattions accessed 16.11.08). This is a commendable development goal which was appreciated more by 'real poor' people of Southern Africa and who could have made the best out of the SIDA support than the 'well to do practitioners'. It is unfortunate that Southern Africa Theatre Initiative was driven by the affluent drama and theatre practitioners in the region. Daves Guzha of Rooftop Promotions in Zimbabwe, Fredrick Philander of Committed Artists of Namibia, Mavhungu Lerule of Akanani in South Africa, Maswati Dludlu of Association of Community Theatre Groups of Swaziland and Ackson Tembo of Zambia lead lifestyles which are far beyond that of ordinary citizens in region and let alone beyond average theatre practitioners who struggle to put food on the tables for their families. They own vehicles and houses affluent locations which are beyond the majority of the artists whom SATI claims to represent.

The 2006 Cultural Radius Evaluation Report established that SATI's practical projects excluded majority of the practitioners in the region as it only benefited a few practitioners who were already running fairly successful initiatives in their respective countries. The aspirations of the 'affluent' drama and theatre practitioners were higher than what the resources could support. Again, taking a speculative analysis, if the support was directed at the poor and marginalised drama and theatre practitioners, they could have made the best out of it and the initiative would have been sustainable. SATI may have focused on the wrong target group for the wrong motives of enriching the 'drivers' of the initiative. The theatre lighting project for theatre practitioners, majority of whom had no access to electricity is one example of inappropriate priority which was targeted to benefit theatre companies which were being run by the 'affluent' practitioners.

The bulk of the support from SIDA was spent on travel, hotel accommodation, food and allowances for a few participants during training workshops, meetings, seminars and symposium at the expense of the poor majority theatre artists. The practical projects were not cost effective and sustainable. Based on the budgets

and reports that were presented to SIDA, the former Head of Division of Culture and Media said, “In my opinion SIDA support was not enough to build a sustainable network. Regional programmes cost a lot” (Helen Nordenson, 2008: Interview.) The Women in Theatre Research and Symposium of 2003 used up R500 000.00 in transport, accommodation and food, R470 580.00 in administration costs and R13 000.00 in advocacy, lobbying, research and documentation. SATI, being a network organization, one would expect a higher expenditure on advocacy, lobbying, research and documentation. The high propensity to luxurious and ‘unnecessary’ expenditure can be explained in terms of Freire (1996)’s concept of the duality of the oppressed where the leadership of SATI further sank fellow practitioners in abject poverty by spending money on a few individuals instead of using it to uplift the standards of the majority. The leadership have internalized the image of the oppressor and hence the duality which was a hindrance to sustainable development of a regional network.

3.4. SIDA’s Policy on Entrepreneurship and Economic Sustainability

One of the five goal areas which could have been instrumental in the development of sustainability mechanism for SATI and other initiatives in the region, was goal number five on ‘Local production, economic growth and employment’ (www.sida.se/publicattions accessed 16.11.08) The objective for this goal was to contribute to setting of a supportive kitty of strengthening artists’ financial resources. Under this goal SIDA supported development of local cultural production like scripts and plays for sale, ‘promotion of creativity and entrepreneurship’, encouragement of conditions for the development of theatre companies and also business management skills. SIDA also supported protection of intellectual property rights to ensure that theatre practitioners and players in the cultural sector enjoy financial benefits from their creativity. This goal however contradicted SATI’s constitutional status under section 21 which stipulates that it is a non profit making and sharing status, which in a way presented a disincentive to the ‘entrepreneurship’ possibility provided by the SIDA policy.

SATI was a member driven public company which could only engage in business activities as provided by clauses 27.11 to 27.13 which allowed SATI to;

Take part in the management, supervision and control of the

> business or operations of any other similar company which is registered in terms of the Fund-raising Act, 1978 and to enter into partnerships. (Republic of South Africa Companies Act 1973)

The limitations of Fundraising Act, 1978 is that SATI would only raise money for social development work and not for commercial purposes. It still confined the organization to the non-profit making and non-profit sharing realm which also presented a disincentive to the 'entrepreneurship' drive.

Other business opportunities were presented by Article 27, clauses 27.4 which allowed the directors to borrow money and 27.7 which allowed the directors to invest 'funds available for investment' with registered financial institutions. This provision made it possible to generate income which could be used to sustain the organization after the expiry of its agreement with SIDA. The first obstacle to the investment option was that SIDA never received excess money which could be put aside for investment. All the money was supposed to be 'used for activities specified in the application' of which deviation from the main programme objectives would result in SIDA withholding the disbursement wholly or in part. The second hindrance was the contractual requirement on interests accrued from investments; SATI was supposed to refund it to SIDA with all other unutilised money. Special request needed to be made for SATI to use the interest and money that was not used during the programming period.

The conditions of the contract did not leave any opportunity for setting up of a sustainability fund which could be used for sustenance of the organization at the expiry of the agreement. This study asked a question on how SIDA expected SATI to survive in the post 2007 period. The former and last Head of Division for Culture & Media's response was that 'we had hoped that SADC would set up a regional fund where regional organizations could apply' and also that 'more than one donor could support such an arrangement.' (Helen Nordenson, 2008: Interview). SIDA never envisioned sustenance of SATI on its own but still never put in place mechanisms to ensure that other donors or stakeholders could intervene to keep the regional network going. The search for sustainability from project funds could be an illusion in the context where Mawdsley at al (2002)

perceived Southern NGOs as services providers or 'suppliers' contracted by Northern NGO s to provide services to national and local governments. What would be realistic is for the Southern NGOs to continuously look for business like private companies instead of expecting once off 'contracts' to sustain them.

3.5. SIDA and political economy of Africa

SIDA's other interest in supporting cultural initiatives such as the Southern Africa Theatre Initiative (SATI) is that of; 'conflict prevention and increased tolerance'. (www.sida.se/publicattions accessed 16.11.08) The objective of this goal is to contribute to an environment where people live in peace and security. The activities which SIDA supported under this goal are; improvement and propagation of correct and appropriate humanitarian information and use of cultural language in the discussion between conflicting parties to uphold peace. It also encourages active participation of both men and women in public discourse before, during and after conflicts**.** The argument from SIDA is that;

> if culture and media support is provided, based on human rights, cultural liberty, cultural diversity and media pluralism, and focuses on strengthening resources that can empower people and communities as regards power, influence and opportunities, then societal changes may take place that lead to poverty reduction. (www.sida.se/publications accessed 18.11.08)

Whilst SIDA places emphasis on 'poverty reduction' in its argument I do concur with another school of thought about the agendas of Northern NGOs, one of which is 'reforms' of Southern governments and bureaucracies, and changing the attitude of 'civil society', an agenda which many Northern development NGOs are also involved' in (Mawdsley at al, 2002:6) . The argument also places emphasis on 'power influence' which is articulated clearly throughout the 'human rights' based Culture and Media Policy.

SIDA's interest in the political stability in the region is seen through its support for a Regional Writers Workshop which focused on Zimbabwe's political situation. The massive support to Rooftop Promotions' political productions mainly on democracy also confirms its efforts towards regime change in Zimbabwe. The next question would be 'why regime change?' and 'could the

answer be neo-colonialism?' SIDA is perceived as a conspirator rather than a partner in development.

> Open trade and foreign direct investment are taking over as the preferred mode for allocating development capital and accelerating economic growth based on competition for individual gain. The negative impact of such a shift on equity, sustainability and justice are already to be seen. (Fowler 2000:6)

The evaluation reports of programmes and projects implemented in the south have also not openly discussed the possible hidden agendas of Northern NGOs which may have superseded development concerns and good practices. It feels like the mission has been that of spreading western culture to Africa through 'generous' cultural exchange programmes and attempts to standardize approaches to culture. Northern NGOs seem to have continued to 'colonise', 'develop' and bring 'civilization' in a friendly and subtle way and the response by people in the south has not been any different from the response to colonialism; - resistance, this time, has been passive. Driving this resistance has been the spirit of community which take precedence over individualism. SATI's noble communal initiative was retarded by individualism of some of the Board members whose motives were bent on personal gains rather than community. Countries in the north thrive on capitalism so are their programmes, consequently the projects in the south are a mirror of the situation in the north.

It is important to note that the resistance has not been absolute as evidenced by the ambivalence of people of the south which comes with contradictions. Most of the problems that drama and theatre practitioners face are a manifestation of such contradictions. Standardization of the world has resulted in the measure of 'development' relative to the north and the consequence is that there is perceived failures where there is no failure at all. Fowler is very positive that institutional reforms which are required to ensure quality 'aid' are attainable.

3.6 SIDA's partnership with the SA government and SATI

The relationship between international and national NGOs in Africa has traditionally been characterized by suspicion where NGOs perceive subtle to outright hostility on one hand whilst governments on the other hand perceive 'hidden agendas' in development co-operations. The suspicion comes from the

autocracy and democracy dichotomy where governments are often hierarchical, rigid and autocratic whilst NGOs are non-hierarchical, flexible and democratic. NGOs are accused of setting the citizens against their governments whilst the governments are accused of oppressing their citizens. The situation in Southern Africa is that governments remain the ultimate arbitrator of the political environment in the region so it is critical for NGO to nurture a positive relationship with the government for sustainable projects. In countries like Zimbabwe where the governments were open about their resentment to programmes which were funded by Northern NGOs, there was total collapse of the work in the cultural sector. Rooftop Promotions' productions were on several occasions disrupted by the arrest of either the producer or the actors: this coupled with other challenges led to the complete withdrawal of support by SIDA and other NGOs. In countries where government animosity was subtle, then the collapse of projects was gradual thereby demonstrating a correlation between the Government /Northern NGOs relationship and sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives. This is true in countries like South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Malawi.

Though NGOs are aware of the power wielded by governments, they still ignore governments to their own perils. According to Helen Nordenson (2008; interview) 'SATI was to us a regional programme and was not discussed with the South African Government.' The explanation for not engaging the South African government was that SIDA was hoping that SATI would sign a memorandum of understanding with SADC but this did not happen. A direct discussion with the South African government with regards to SATI's regional mandate might have expedited the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding. A cordial relationship between SIDA and the governments of Southern Africa through SADC would have ensured that governments adopt policies which were genuinely developmental and ultimately taken over the regional networking programme upon the inevitable expiry of the contracts signed. This would have ensured that the majority of drama and theatre practitioners benefited from this regional initiative.

3.7. SIDA Programming and Partnership

SIDA's work in general is guided by the framework of 'genuine ownership of development by cooperating partners and partnership which is 'distinguished by equality and mutual trust'. 'Genuine ownership by the cooperating partner(s) is recognized as one of the key conditions for sustainable development' (www.sida.se/publications accessed 17.11.08). The four key principles within this partnership framework are non discrimination, participation, transparency and accountability. A common understanding of poverty and its causes is very critical as a foundation for partnership where a divergence on definition and causes of poverty may result in discontinuation of the cooperation. SIDA follows United Nations' definition of poverty which largely attributes the causes of poverty to the poor themselves, a view which is contrary to the perspective of academics in the South. The diverging view on poverty is not often openly discussed as cooperating partners canvass for financial support. The diverging view normally surfaces during the implementation of the projects and this results in suspicion, tension and ultimately in the termination of co-operations. The SIDA/SATI partnership was not an exception to this scenario as some of the influential practitioners like the late Ngugi wa Mirii were very critical of the North and its policies in the South. One of the common criticisms levelled against donor agencies is how they come to Africa with pre-packaged projects which do not fit into the African context. Briggs & Sharp (2004:662) in their paper *Indigenous Knowledge and Development; A Postcolonial Caution* wrote;

> Faced with this failure of development, some development theorists and practitioners have criticised modernisation approaches for being based on the uncritical transfer of science and technology from the North to the South (Peet & Watts, 1993; Escobar, 1995).

Mutual trust between the South and North is difficult to achieve given the backdrop of colonialism and the subsequent struggle for liberation by Africa. Reconciliation, transformation and co-existence have been widely encouraged in the post-colonial era but it has remained a fantasy as the rift between black and white has remained a disturbing reality in Southern Africa. This can not be ignored as contributing factor to the challenges of sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in the region.

The influence of 'race' on sustainability of theatre initiatives is partially confirmed by the success of organisations which are run by white liberals who are working with indigenous practitioners in the region. These organisations have the same corporate governance structure to those run by black practitioners but they have continued to enjoy the support of Northern NGOs and even private companies. Nanzikambe Arts in Malawi and CHIPAWO in Zimbabwe are typical examples of fairly successful organisations, whose success may not be separated from the figures heads, whose allegiance require further research. This leaves critics wondering whether it is an issue of good corporate governance or it is just a question of race and the believed weak capacity of the African which is drawn from the evolution based 'development theory' which sees superiority in the white race. If SATI was spearheaded by a white liberal was it going to collapse? A speculative answer would be, maybe not. The issue of race overlaps into the question of 'ownership' and 'equality and mutual trust'. The survival of DramAidE and Market Theatre Laboratory in South Africa may also be attributed to 'trust' put in the white management.

Discrepancies between theoretical framework and practice affected the relationship between SIDA and SATI. The SIDA framework of 'genuine ownership' and 'equality and mutual trust' was not seen from the same perspective. The four principles were monitored through annual reports which were submitted by SATI to SIDA. These reports were The Cultural Radius Evaluation of 2006 which was not well received by SATI as it was perceived as a fault finding evaluation aimed at blocking further funding (for SATI). External evaluations are very essential for objective and bias free assessment especially if they are done in the spirit of building a partnership. If they are not constructive then they destroy the equality and mutual trust. The keynote address on 'Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy' for applied presented at Africa Research Conference in Applied Drama and Theatre at the University of the Witwatersrand, Division of Dramatic Arts, 7 – 9 November, 2008 pointed to the need for collaborative monitoring and evaluation strategy (Chinyowa, 2008). Collaborative Monitoring and Evaluation involves active participation of representative of

organizations which are under evaluation and guarantees cordial relationship between the cooperating partner and funding partner.

SIDA instruments provided for a favourable environment for the development of a professional theatre industry but the interpretation and use of the instruments was sometimes misappropriated resulting in tense relationships. Amakhosi Theatre in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe is one such institution which was supported by SIDA to build a Community Theatre Centre but ended up contravening public funds principles when the founding Director claimed private ownership of the centre. In other cases the frameworks like 'ownership' of projects were more ideal than real, especially in the situation that SATI found itself in where it contributed nothing to the resources required in a year. One hundred US dollars (US$100) per year was proposed as subscription fee for each network but very few networks honoured and paid this. Grants and donations eroded the spirit of ownership as well as the power of SATI as a cooperating partners and this resulted in a skewed power relationship, where SIDA retained more power to the detriment of 'genuine ownership' and 'equality and mutual trust' which were seen as central to a sustainable development of a regional network.

3.8 Implications of SIDA's Procurement Policy on Programmes & Partnership

SIDA has a range of procurement policies, guidelines, rules and procedures which direct the engagement of its cooperation partners' suppliers, service providers and consultancies. Procurement according to definition in the policy document means: buying, hiring, renting, or leasing of goods or services. The key principles for procurement are accountability and transparency in so far as the use of the finances for the project is concerned. The purpose of stringent procurement policies and procedures to curb corruption, fraudulent activities and promote cost effectiveness, efficiency and high quality of services and products. SIDA's procurement policies and procedures are applicable across all sectors. This study however specifically analyzes those policies and procedures that were directly applicable to SATI and the implications that the policies had on organization and the rest of the sector, specifically on the programmes and the partnership with SIDA.

Some of the policies, procedures and guidelines are: the requirement by the cooperating partners to engage qualified auditors who shall carry out the audit according to 'international standards issued by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC)' (Unpublished SIDA/SATI Agreement (2001:6). According to the same contract the selected auditor was supposed to be approved by SIDA; the other requirement was that 'Procurement of goods, works and services shall be carried out in accordance with internationally accepted principles and good procurement practices.' (Unpublished SIDA/SATI Agreement (2004: 3). The tender procedures involved publication of tender in the press and submission of tender documents to SIDA. In some instances like in the case of the Theatre Lighting project, SIDA 'advised' SATI to procure lighting equipment from a Swedish Company which was then going to be contracted to train Lighting Technicians for the region. The policies and procedures were all set with 'the good intentions' but they ended up having implications which negatively impacted on the sustainability of SATI and other drama and theatre initiatives in the region directly supported by SIDA.

SATI was faced by a number of challenges, but the ultimate one was that SATI failed the compliance test and this finally affected not only the partnership between SATI and SIDA but also with other donor agencies from the North. Compatibility of corporate governance systems in the private sector, government department and International NGOs and those systems in the theatre sector in Southern Africa became a big challenge where SIDA expected SATI to comply with international corporate governance standards when it was networking poor and largely informal drama and theatre initiatives. The cultural sector in the region is largely informal such that application of formal procedures, let alone international standards was, and is still far removed from their organisational and business culture. It was in the interest of setting up a formal sector that SATI rolled out SIDA's good governance policies to the network through its training programme. Unfortunately these policies retarded development and sustainability of SATI as they further alienated the poor for whom the programme was intended.

SATI was not well endowed in financial resources such that the implementation of some of the policies, guidelines and procedures was virtually impossible. The paradox was that SIDA like many Northern NGOs was not prepared to fund staff salaries and SATI's total administration cost was not supposed to exceed 40%. Some funding NGOs even set as low as 10% threshold for the total administration costs. The 2004 -2007 SIDA/SATI agreement clearly stated that; 'No more than 40% of the Swedish contribution may be used for expenses categorized as administration in the approved budget' (Unpublished SIDA/SATI Agreement (2004:6). SATI could not therefore attract competitive personnel as it could not give competitive incentives. This and the issue of volunteerism of board members discussed in chapter 2 were sure recipes for failure.

Adherence to stringent good governance procedures was not only costly in regard to labour but also time consuming such that in one way or the other some processes suffered. Adherence to good practices was not sustainable and non adherence led to non sustainability of initiatives as the practical work suffered. With limited human resources as was reported in all SATI annual reports, total compliance to corporate governance requirements would have meant limited work in the region. Drama and Theatre practitioners had their own culture of working which could be improved on by coming up with standards for small to medium scale organisations, and not totally discarding them and replacing them with sophisticated systems. According to the International Federation of Institutes for Advanced Study (IFDA) it has been established that:

> All over the planet, the cultural integrity and vitality of the different human groups find themselves threatened by development strategies which stress economic growth and institutional efficiency at all cost...Too often the values of the Third World are irredeemably damaged by models of social change based on consumption, competition, acquisition and on the manipulation of human aspirations. (Verhelst 1990:19)

The policies, guidelines, and procedures of SIDA were too radical and stringent for smooth adaptation of a semi formal sector into a formal and professional organisation. SIDA's expectations from SATI were too high a sentiment shared by other organisations which were directly funded by SIDA like CHIPAWO

Trust, Rooftop Promotions and Amakhosi in Zimbabwe. This assertion is based on my experience at CHIPAWO Trust as a Programme Manager for a SIDA supported *'Bringing CHIPAWO to More Children'* programme where KPMG, the auditors applied international audit standards on the semi-formal CHIPAWO Trust. The outcome of the audit was what we expected as Management, CHIPAWO Trust did not 'pass the test'.

Stringent contractual requirements created mixed feelings on the partnership between SIDA and SATI. Suspicion, animosity, tension and hopelessness wore out the initially mutual partnership. The procurement of lighting equipment from a Swedish Company when there are many companies in the region raises questions about 'development' motives of SIDA. Who benefited more from this partnership, SATI or the Swedish company? The procurement of lighting projects confirmed and affirmed the notion of the 'centre' and the 'periphery' where everything good came from the centre and nothing good was found in the periphery. Following Freire's (1996:42) thinking one could argue that;

> More and more, the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and repression. The oppressed as objects as "things" have no purposes except their oppressors prescribe for them.

It is however important to note that situations such as that of the theatre lighting equipment were not common in the partnership between SIDA and SATI. Elsewhere in the region, similar questionable procedures have been witnessed where programmes for an event taking place in Africa was sent to Europe for printing. These kinds of situations raise a lot of questions about the competencies of the African region as well as the 'development agenda' of Northern NGOs. Acknowledgement of capacities of the Southern NGOs by Northern seems to remain a principle than a genuine acknowledgement.

After nearly a decade of SIDA's commitment to the 'development' of theatre in the region through SATI, the status of the theatre remains deplorable. The former Head of Division of Culture and Media attributed the failure of SATI's continuation with its regional mandate to a weakness within the organisation

when she said; 'The organisations are not that good in fundraising, their skills are in the artistic field' (Helen Nordenson, 2008: interview). SATI as a representative of drama and theatre practitioners blamed both the practitioners and SIDA for a number of inadequacies. This study acclaims both SIDA and SATI for their good developmental intentions but critiques both of them for deliberate and sometimes unintentional contradictions which ended up overriding the positives. Institutional decay, fragmentation of theatre organisation, lack of formal operational structures, lack of political will, hidden agendas and many others challenges cited as causes of collapse of drama and theatre institutions are manifestations and symptoms of contradictions of ideologies, philosophies, policies and principles of the Northern and Southern NGO as they interplay at macro levels.

In concluding this chapter it is important to note that partnership between SIDA and SATI was skewed in favour of SIDA where SATI as a receiver of financial support echoed it voice from a weak position. The policies, procedures and working guidelines imposed conditions which stifled the potential for the sustainability of SATI as network organisation. Whether these conditions set by SIDA were deliberate to maintain the dependency of the hegemony of the north or not remains debatable. Further research in this area can be used to further unpack the north-south discourse and its impact on drama and theatre.

CHAPTER FOUR: DRAMA & THEATRE -'LIFE BEYOND AID': MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA THEATRE INITIATIVE

4.1. Introduction

Five decades of intervention by the Northern NGOs in the south have yielded short lived positive impact in the cultural sector and performing arts sector. Fowler (2000) has it that poverty oriented approach by Northern NGOs is sustainable in about 15% of the cases. Chapters two and three have given explanations which point to and blame different stakeholders namely, drama and theatre practitioners' lack of coordination, SATI's obscure focus, SIDA's stringent partnership and programming conditions, National Governments' lack of political will, SADC's lack of interest in culture and the global political-economic forces. Explanations that have been given to the challenges affecting the sustainability of SATI and theatre practitioners in the region either deliberately or unconsciously skirted around the core factors, which are the culture and the history of the people of Southern Africa. This is understandable but not justifiable because the lead evaluator of SATI's programme – du Plessis does not have a full appreciation of the value and impact of culture in development work and any work for that matter. Could it be that the evaluator deliberately avoided bringing in the cultural and historical dimension for fear of opening 'wounds' from the painful colonial history? The current struggles for survival by theatre initiatives is also a natural response to the prevailing global forces which are steering the work towards what Flower (2000:8) called a 'single global economic model of free trade-based, market capitalism'.

4.2. Search for solutions in the post colonial era

Solutions are elusive and will continue to be illusive until culture and history are given the prominence they deserve in understanding any human phenomenon. Ironically it is from the same stakeholders that the possible solutions to the challenges facing drama and theatre initiatives should be sought. Recommendations by Cultural Radius as an external evaluator of SATI's programme provide some critical and good practices which need to be considered in search of solutions to the challenges of sustainability. Those valuable

recommendations might not help to resuscitate SATI until the same recommendations begin to acknowledge the foundations of the people for which SATI has been constituted.

The route to possible solutions to the sustainability of SATI and similar organisations is (therefore) not a straight and easy one, as it is still marked with the contradictions of the North-South relationships as well as the local disparities in visions and aspirations of stakeholders. A more realistic approach to the challenges facing SATI and the rest of drama and theatre practitioners' fraternity in Southern Africa should be informed by the spirit of compromise, tolerance, and acknowledgement of socio-economic and cultural diversities of the world today. The compromise should begin with acknowledgement of one another, particularly the acknowledgement of the South by the North, what Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) has appropriately referred to as 'moving the centre', within the framework of 'centre- periphery' dichotomy. He proposes the movement of the centre 'from its narrow base in Europe to a multiplicity of centres' (1993:7) where the other views of the world will count. The proposed 'moving of the centre' will also work with a reciprocal response from the support structures from the north through Northern NGOs like SIDA. It is in this regard, that rethinking and revision of solutions suggested decades ago by theorists, academics and practitioners some of which have been considered as romantic becomes necessary.

The solutions for sustainability of SATI and other drama and theatre initiatives can nestle in the development, cultural, commercial and public sectors, depending on prevailing conditions and the rejuvenation drive. A lot of ideas, principles, philosophies, values and good practices are derived from various sectors in this search for sustainable models. The acknowledgement of the culture and history of the people provide a good foundation on which the proposed ideas, good practices and corporate governance instruments will work as solutions for sustainability of drama and theatre. This study of sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives is in itself not a path breaking enterprise but rather an exercise that collates existing knowledge to describe, explain and make recommendations towards the formulation of models for sustainable drama and theatre initiatives. Fanon (1952,

1961 & 1967), Freire (1996) and Ngugi wa Thiongo (1983, 1986) all seems to provide us with some kind of framework towards finding solutions to Africa's myriad problems.

A number of drama and theatre practitioners and academics have given insights into some of the appropriate solutions to the application of drama and theatre processes but not many have engaged with the question of the sustainability of theatre initiatives. Prentki (1998) as intimated previously is one of the few academics who directly questions the issue of sustainability of theatre interventions in community development projects. His questions and arguments are therefore very pertinent to this study. He specifically addresses the issue of programming policies and in the process touches on the issue of Northern NGOs and Southern NGOS partnerships. If the immense transformative power of theatre for development is acknowledged, Prentki (1998) asks;

> So why is TFD not located in the policies and practices of most development agencies? Most people working in the field with TFD are drawn from different branches of formal theatre or from the arts faculties of universities. Either way, they are not usually familiar with either the philosophies or the methodologies of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tend to operate on a project by project basis on the margins of the consciousness of those who take policy decisions within the NGOs. (1998, 419)

A scrutiny of policies of both funding organisations and implementing organisations is necessary to establish the degree to which the partnership allows for mutual appreciation of each other's philosophies, policies, and principles. Some of Prentki's questions and arguments are not fully answered and developed respectively, a further analysis of the best practices in partnerships and programming will probably answer many questions asked by academics and practitioners.

4.3. Best and sustainable programming practices

Sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives has been defined in the second chapter as survival of the organisation, the longevity of the social impact of the initiatives and the financial or economic benefits from such initiatives. Sustainability has been broadly understood in the social, organisational and economic terms. The intention of this section of the study is to further breakdown

the broad definition into elements of sustainability. These attributes of a sustainable organisation or project are based on the western framework, but they constitute universal characteristics which are applicable in the local context. This study acknowledges and appreciates fundamental ideas, concepts, principles, philosophies, procedures and guidelines propounded in the north, but is very critical of the 'one size fit all' approach to the application of such 'good instruments'. The study is also critical about good practices which do not acknowledge and underline cultural values of the people. Culture is very pertinent when discussing drama and theatre which constitute key forms of expression of a people's cultural values. This section outlines some of the best and sustainable practices which range from organisational identity to relevance of organisations to the communities that they serve.

Organisational identity is the key characteristic of an organisation which all stakeholders are able to describe in terms of it vision, mission, goals, objectives, activities, outputs and outcomes. The identity of an organisation should have a mark of its original vision. A mismatch of the activities and the vision is a sign of an unstable and therefore unsustainable organisation. The Cultural Radius Evaluation report highlighted unclear identity as one of the challenges that SATI faced. What is inadequate about Cultural Radius's definition of identity is that it does not specifically talk about the history and ideology of SATI as pivotal in ensuring a focused purpose of the organisation. Though the vision was there, the standardised framework prescribed by SIDA and the foreign language used to articulate the vision obscured the SATI's vision and hence it's shifting search for the best vocabulary to articulate it. The director of SATI said that the shift of the vision was more apparent than real as it was just a matter of semantics. The actual vision of the organisation never shifted (Interview, 2008).

'Management ability' is another attribute which guarantees the sustainability of any organisation or project' (Aldaba et al 2000). Management ability is the existence of systems of strategic planning, monitoring evaluation and control. SATI held numerous management workshops to ensure that these systems were mainstreamed in the management of theatre initiatives and project in the region.

The only weakness about the definition, training and application of management systems is that there was no link with indigenous and local knowledge systems. It seems to have ignored the fact that Africans are also capable of planning, monitoring, evaluating and controlling their work as management systems are inherent in all human beings. The fact that African management systems are different from the western should not make them any less superior to the western ones.

Good governance practices refer to the acknowledgement and respect of power structures within an organisation which should be horizontal and democratic to allow for transparency and accountability. This however comes with defined boundaries and these boundaries vary from society to society and so is the definition of democracy which also differs from society to society. However, the differences should not make one system inferior or superior to the other. Good governance practices are those which accept diversity and divergent views especially where two systems come in contact with each other. If the director of SATI took some decision without consulting the board of directors, that should not be seen as violation of good governance practices because in the African culture there are some powers vested in the leadership which give them the power to take autonomous and unquestionable decisions as the assumption is that, decisions are taken in the best interest of the community. Abuse of power may not be ruled out as contact between the western and African cultures have brought contradictions which have been mentioned in chapters two and three.

The other attribute required for sustainability of organisations and projects, is strategic thinking which is the ability to engage in continuous analysis of the environment, the ability to have the knowledge of practical and strategic necessities, the ability to select strategies and priorities and the ability to do self – evaluation (Aldaba et al 2000). Strategic thinking should be exercised with full consciousness of the dynamics of the community in which the work is being implemented. This capacity of the leadership of southern NGOs like SATI is often hampered by what Freire (1996) called ‘self depreciation’ which is defined and explained as follows;

> Self-depreciation is a characteristic of the oppressed which derives from their internalisation of the opinion that the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything- that they are sick, lazy and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. (1996:45)

Strategic thinking is also hindered by structured knowledge system guided by the narrow and single 'centred' and 'singular' knowledge system inculcated by the colonial system. Ngugi wa Thiongo (1996) proposed 'multiplicity of centres' which allows different perspectives and hence strategic thinking which transcends beyond the confines of some structures, policies, procedures and guidelines. Strategic thinking allows for constant review of policies, procedures and guidelines.

Ability to renovate is another quality which implies the ability to continuously adapt to new developments in the industry to avoid stagnation and inertia. This is another organisational attribute which is necessary to ensure sustainable growth of an organisation. It entails needs analysis in consultation with constituencies taking cognisant of culturally appropriate approaches. Re-envisioning process is also another attribute which is directly linked to the ability to renovate and it entails fostering culture of change and the use of appropriate technology (Aldaba et al 2000). Ability to relate to the environment and drawing from local expertise for solutions is also related to the ability to renovate. The Cultural Radius evaluation report made this recommendation to SATI with regards to its training programmes.

Resourcefulness is a critical variable that is necessary for organisation to achieve integral sustainability. Resourcefulness indicates the knowledge and application of the laws of the market, in this case the cultural and development sector markets. This knowledge is then followed by innovation, creativity and assumption of risk in the case of both philanthropic and commercial organisations. Understanding of the history, culture and trends in the market, in this case cultural and social development market is a pre–requisite to the knowledge of the market. If the leaders of an organisation like SATI do not have an insight in these two markets then, no matter how much funding the

organisation might get, it will remain unsustainable. It is unfortunate that the Board of Directors of SATI worked as part-time volunteers who came together for strategic planning only. This left gaps in the management of SATI.

Integration of advocacy, lobbying, monitoring and evaluation in all project activities is another positive sign of a sustainable organisation. For an organisation to attain legitimacy it must be able to articulate its purpose and for it to retain its relevance it must constantly feed back to the constituencies that it serves. This also comes with the acknowledgement that the community served is the key stakeholder in the whole project. Links with similar organisations in the region is also one for 'best' practices that SATI could have implemented for sustainability.

Impact of an organisation and its programmes is often used to claim legitimacy of organisations and as a result evidence for impact is regularly collected. Impact is the value generated by an organisation and the social base created there of, fulfilment of the vision according to the principles set and the ability to make its work apparent. During the eight years of operation, SATI had partial impact on its constituency as is evident in the evaluation report where most people interviewed said SATI's workshops were very exciting although they did not hear about SATI outside these workshops. The lack of impact resulted in the wearing out of legitimacy and which eventually resulted in the collapse of the organisation. There is a direct correlation between impact and sustainability.

All these good practices often recommended by external evaluators and management 'experts' remain colourful displays in policy and procedure documents, training manuals and annual reports if they are not made relevant to the values of the people who are supposed to implement them. SATI evaluation report of 2006 which was done by Cultural Radius recommended that SATI should implement the 'recommendations', particularly those made by external auditors. This was after an observation made during the evaluation that SATI was not implementing some of these recommendations. My point is that, good practices are easy to implement if they are contextually appropriate and relevant

and also depending on the availability of resources. The attainment of the discussed variables is dependent on a chain of factors and therefore not easy to achieve. Central to the attainment of the variables is the consciousness of the leadership of the organisation about the historical and cultural background of the community that it is serving. It is important to note that since culture is society specific, then the discussed variables are not universally applicable, otherwise the proposed solutions will fall in the trap of the pre-packaged solutions by the northern NGOs.

4.4. 'Life Beyond Aid': Search for new Non Governmental Development Organisations-NGDOs Paradigm in the cultural sector

Prophets of doom have said that drama and theatre will not survive without government subsidies or donor support, one claim is that the notion of NGOs self-financing their way to sustainable development is a myth. The Cultural Radius Report of 2006 has it that;

> SATI is unlikely to be able to sustain its projects without constant substantial donor funding from outside the region. The cultural funding for most Southern African countries will never be high on the national agenda of priorities, if on the agenda at all. Not all have ministries of culture or cultural policies, or resourced infrastructure du Plessis (2006:26)

The picture painted is so bleak that 'life beyond aid' was unimaginable. Gauteng Theatre and Dance Indaba of 7th -8th June 2008 hosted by SATI discussed the sustainability of theatre initiatives in South Africa in terms of ability to continually attract donor funding and government subsidies. Is this an acceptance and confirmation that sustainable development without donor support is not attainable? If NGDOs have over the period reformed in response to the world political and economic force, why then is the philanthropic model of development indispensable? Fowler (2000) sees *'NGDOs as a moment in history',* and SATI is confident of a new life after grants and aid from SIDA, where the new model retains SIDA as an 'investor' and 'client' in the new partnership.

NGDOs have over the two centuries evolved, transformed and reformed from 'traditional charities and welfare societies' to the present developmental agencies (Fowler, 2000). The latest transition in this century was from "liberation

organisation" to developmental agencies' (Smith, 2001:12). In this dynamic society the role of institutions is constantly shifting in search for legitimacy and relevance. The limited impact of Non Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs) in Southern Africa and Africa could be a sign that there is need for new strategies either by the same institutions or completely new institutions. NGDOs may have had their time and its now time for more innovative approach to the same challenges. It might be necessary to go back to the initial moral, religious and culturally conditioned compassion paradigm of the 20th century.

> NGDOs are the product of an era that is rapidly passing. Yet the common goals they strive towards remain relevant and are far from being realised. Poverty, inequity, insecurity and injustice were stubborn features of the old world order and are abiding features of the new. A brief history of NGDOS and of the radical shifts in the context where international development takes place shows that the goals NGDOS typically aspire to cannot be reached by simply relying on the framework employed by the official aid system. One important reason is that a growing reliance on tax-based funding is shifting NGDO morality, legitimacy and function from the civic to the public domain. Consequently, a new paradigm is required not just for NGDO development practice, but for the very nature of NGDOS themselves. (Fowler 2000:637)

This long quotation serves not only to demonstrate that there are constant shifts in the role of NGDOs but also that the collapse of initiatives like SATI is not only a result of shortcomings of implementing organisations as purported by evaluations of projects in the south. Often these reports do not acknowledge firstly the lack of autonomy, the shifts from moral and political solidarity and challenges faced by Northern NGOs like SIDA. According to these evaluation reports Northern NGOs are blameless. Fowler (2000) says that there are many opportunities for local NGDOs to invigorate and renew themselves towards sustainable development.

4.5. Suggested alternative models for sustainable drama and theatre initiatives

This section of the study constitutes suggested alternative models for the reconstitution of a sustainable SATI and other theatre initiatives that have found themselves either as illegitimate, redundant, irrelevant and or collapsed in the wake of the either change in the funding strategies of Northern NGOs or withdrawal of support for one reason or the other. The alternative models are an

attempt to reverse and overcome challenges that have been identified in 'partnership' between SIDA and SATI. SATI was so dependent on SIDA that it became complacent and was caught unaware that it immediately collapsed when SIDA decided not to renew its contract.

The other challenges that stifled SATI's sustainability are stringent programming and partnership policies and procedures, an asymmetrical power relationship, discordant visions, intermittent funding, hidden agenda, and lack of trust. The suggestions made for alternative strategies, take into consideration the key forces that are shaping the global economy namely globalization and capitalism and recognize the positive strides and gains made during this era of dependency on the north by the south. This study provides some conceptual frameworks of the proposed sustainable theatre model instead of fully structured models and it should be noted that this study is making suggestions for further development. Whereas some components of the model have been tried elsewhere, this study is not claiming to have found appropriate models. The range of models suggested, takes into account that despite having a common history, the socio-economic terrain in Southern Africa is not homogeneous. Some models might work better in one country than in another depending on the political-economic terrain and nature of bilateral and multilateral relations between the countries and Northern NGOs.

The initiative to suggest alternative models for drama and theatre is driven by the realization that the recommendations made by external evaluators and auditor are not rooted in the values held by Africans, as they are based on capitalistic values. Their recommendations by external evaluators are not sustainable as they have yielded limited or no results. There is a conspiracy theory which has it that, it is not in the interest of Northern NGOs to develop and support sustainable initiatives. Freire (1996) has it that:

> The oppressor who oppress, exploit, rape by virtue of their power
> cannot find in this power the strength to liberate either themselves.
> Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed
> will be sufficiently strong to free both. (1996: 26)

Some critiques would say that Frere's ideas are romantic, but I do concur with him, in the sense that self motivated initiatives are driven by passion, commitment and dedication where as externally motivated initiative is driven by duty and obligation and is often characterized by a lot of questions marks. When a community encounters a challenge in a self motivated initiative they look inwardly for solutions and they take the responsibility to become creative and innovative. The ownership is total and such initiatives are guarded jealously. This largely explains why founding members of organizations such as, Nanzikambe Arts in Malawi, CHIPAWO in Zimbabwe, Amakhosi in Zimbabwe, and Sibikwa in South Africa, find it difficult to let go the running of these organizations. The reason why these supposed community organizations are not well sustained despite having their founding history rooted in communities is that they degenerated from being community driven to individual driven.

4.5.1. 'Civic Innovation': Local Partnership for development of sustainable theatre in South Africa

Discussions and debates on the role of NGOs in the 21st century seem to have been so exhaustive and conclusive. Continued and deeper association with aid organisations from the north has been seen to result in compromised motivation, impaired vision, stifled ability to think, suppressed alternative ideas and ultimately unsustainable development. The following are some of the conclusions and way forward made about development in Africa;

> In reality instead of progress in Africa, there often seems to have been deterioration, regression with regard to the imported economic mode and, notably a return to an economy of self-subsistence. (Verhelst 1992: 25)

In the journal article *NGOs Strategies Beyond Aid; Perspectives from South and Central America and the Philippines*, Aldaba etal (2000) strongly concur with Verhelst, particularly on the way forward when they say that;

> Emerging evidence suggests that NGDOs are more likely to sustain themselves if they (a) look beyond finance to adopt an integrated, capacity-based approach to sustain- ability and internal organisational reform and (b) put effort into making good their 'relational deficit' with a wider array of domestic constituencies (Aldaba et al, 2000:1)

Although Verhelst, Aldaba and others' analyses on the place of NGDOs in the third world may be true, the question is to what extent can Africa return to 'self-subsistence' in a world that is almost all consumed by capitalism? Broad suggestions on the way forward have been made for Southern NGOs working in social development, what is now needed are concrete strategies for different organisations in this case, strategies for theatre organisations, companies and individual practitioners in the region. There is a common saying that 'experience is the best teacher' and I would like to believe that with the experiences that drama and theatre practitioners have had at the hand of Northern NGOs, the drive and energy should be there for creative and innovative options.

The theatre industry in the region can borrow a framework for a sustainable model from what Fowler (2000) called 'Civic Innovation', a recommendation that he made for southern NGOs in response to the apparent dwindling of aid to the third world countries.

> Civic innovation is the creation of new or modification of existing conventions, structures, relations, institutions, organisations and practices for civic benefit demonstrated by ongoing, self-willed citizen engagement and support. (Fowler 2000:649).

The beauty about Fowler's suggestion is that he is not advocating for the total breakaway and estrangement from the existing models. The emphasis is on 'self' rather than the dependency on others. Modification of relations and practices requires negotiation with the 'traditional partners' –northern NGOs and their 'buying in'.

Civic innovation is a citizen response to their needs which is built on the ideals and principles of co-operation, association, mutual assistance and the 'traditions' that already exist in society. This is unlike the currently collapsing local NGOs which were motivated by the call either by the government or the Northern NGOs to form associations in order for them to be able to access funding. The calls came with prescribed structures of the organizations which were built on assumptions not only about processes of development but about cultures of the people. Civic innovation places a lot of respect in the 'traditions' that already exist in the society. Verhelst (1992) made a very interesting observation and

explanation on the power of 'traditions' and why treasurers, leaders of community initiatives and employees of NGOs misappropriate funds entrusted to them by the community for the projects. He argues that misappropriation is;

> a question of obligation of social solidarity deeply rooted in the tradition. Loyalty to the clan is seen as more important than loyalty to the employers, whether it be the state, the capitalist boss, or a development project (Verhelst, 1992:28).

There could be other factors to explain the behaviour of Africans, but I found his ideas profound, for instance he says that the Africans resist any phenomenon that threatens the moral fibre of a community. The sense of morality and community takes precedence over materialism, and individualism. Application of the civic innovation model calls for an appreciation of the African traditions which are inherent in the African communities.

The emphasis on culture and the 'traditions' of the people makes the civic innovations applicable more at a local scale hence it is the best approach for community theatre groups and local theatre companies. One may argue that application at a regional level may begin to bring about contradictions associated with heterogeneity of the region. It is however possible to form a network of locally based organisation in Southern Africa as their cultural foundation is the same. Initiatives driven by a need in the community do not require external funding; a good example is the Kamiriithu experience in Kenya where the villagers approached Ngugi waThiongo and other theatre practitioners for assistance in the setting up of the Kamiriithu Community Centre. The civic innovation model is built on ethics and values of voluntary collectivism, in this case financial gains are not an issue as what matters is the social impact on the community. The question which lingers is how those who work on the programme survive in the capitalistic, consumerist and material world. Fowler answers that question when he says that the model can form synergies with 'social entrepreneurship' ventures which fall under another non –profit making model. This shows that civic innovators are also concerned by the economic viability of the project, they are only different from charitable non-profit making organisations in the sense that they mobilise resources from the citizens. Legitimacy and validation of relevance is therefore acquired through local

support. The constitutional status remains non–profit making but the difference from the model that SATI for instance used is that resources are mobilised from within the community by the community and not from the donors.

There are challenges that are associated with civic innovation model particularly at a point when it interfaces with the capitalist economy. The opportunity for SATI if it were to take this route would be through collaboration with New Partnership for Africa's Development- NEPAD whose principles are pretty much the same as the civic innovation. Drawing recourses from member states NEPAD can fund SATI which will then network grassroots drama and theatre initiatives, which will in turn draw their energies from their respective communities. SATIs role would then be to inculcate the spirit of self –reliance among its affiliate organisations and theatre groups. The programming will remain the same but this time emphasis will be placed on projects which respect the 'traditional' and cultural practices.

SATI's hope for sustainability as a regional network lay in the signing of a memorandum of understanding with SADC, which would then provide the legitimacy, infrastructure as well as providing financial resourses for the coordination of theatre in the region. The signing did not happen for one reason or the other. The possibility is there for SATI to collaborate with NEPAD as it seeks 'new partnership'. New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a vision and strategic framework for Africa which was established in 2001 under the auspices of African Union (AU), then the Organisation of African Union. The modification of 'relations' advocated by the civic innovation model agrees with the of the goal of NEPAD;

> The *New Partnership for Africa's Development* is about consolidating and accelerating these gains. It is a call for a new relationship of partnership between Africa and the international community, especially the highly industrialized countries, to overcome the development chasm that has widened over centuries of unequal relations (http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/inbrief ; Accessed: 27.11.08)

Under the suggested civic innovation model and the suggested collaboration with NEPAD the regional legitimacy and support that SATI was looking for with SADC might be attained.

Drama and theatre in Africa as cultural expressions have roots in the communalism where most rights are communally owned and artists have no monopoly over them and as such drama and theatre practitioners may not sell 'commodities' that belong to them . Sustainability through commercialisation of drama and theatre for subsistence, particularly in semi urban and rural communities will not work hence the proposed 'civic innovation model for sustainability.

4.5.2. 'Social Entrepreneurship': re-orientation of drama and theatre initiatives for sustainability

Diversification, reformation, re-orientation, modifications and adaptation are some of the processes associated with the response of Southern NGOs to the decline in the philanthropic paradigm in the Northern NGOs. SATI's response to change in SIDA's funding strategy can take a combination or any of the processes stated above. The transformation of SATI may take different forms which range from subtle to radical evolution. The second model that Fowler (2000) suggested is 'social entrepreneurship' which is the model where non-profit institutions commercially create their own earnings for social benefit. He defines it as follows;

> Social entrepreneurship is the creation of viable (socio-) economic structures, relations, institutions, organisations and practices that yield and sustain social benefits. Fowler 2000:649)

Social entrepreneurship is re-orientation of a charitable organisation by creating entrepreneurial entities without changing the 'non-profit making' status. The model is a response to the 'privatisation' call from the north which is associated with reduced expectations of tax-based funding. Instead of depending on external funding the organization will generate its own 'surplus' or 'profit' which will then be used to subsidize the social and non profit making entities of the same organization. The model is neither new in the NGO sectors nor to SATI. The theatre lighting and the internet café' projects were an attempt by SATI to create

'surplus' making entities to subsidise the regional networking programme. It is unfortunate that the projects never took off the ground. In Zimbabwe CHIPAWO used a similar model in the late 90s when the NGO sector started giving indicators of scaling down. It established a musical instruments making project, a video and film making studio and an arts school to generate revenue to subsidise its school and community based arts education programme. The social entrepreneurial entities were only viable for a short while as there was competition between the business and the social obligations of CHIPAWO. The social side overpowered the commercial side in term of demand for attention.

The problems that SATI and CHAPAWO faced in trying to set up the social entrepreneurial entities are not peculiar to the two organisations. Fowler (2000) indicated that managing such a 'hybrid' organisation required special capacity and recommended that two entities should not be kept under one roof especially where the complementary social entrepreneurship model was followed. Complementary social entrepreneurship model is an alternative to social entrepreneurship where the commercial entities are not in any way related to the core social activity and do not generate social benefits, for example SATI as a theatre organisation running a funeral parlour. The ploughing back of surplus from such entities was referred to as 'cross-subsidy' by Fowler (2000). It is important to note that no matter how separate the commercial entities are from the 'mother' organisation, the surplus or profits will never be shared and the operations of the commercial entities will continue to be audited under the non profit making organisations. CHIPAWO in Zimbabwe called its social entrepreneurship entities 'companies of the trust' (www.**chipawo**.co.zw/strategydoc.htm: accessed28.11.08)

An organisation like SATI can re-orient its social responsibility of networking and training drama and theatre practitioners projects into social entrepreneurial entities where SIDA is converted from a funder to a 'client' or an 'investor'. When SIDA becomes a 'client' then SATI charges SIDA for the training services that it provides to drama and theatre practitioners in the region. SATI frees itself from the stringent 'partnership' contracts to purely business contracts where it

uses the surplus as it wishes but within the framework of its social responsibility. In other words SATI remains a non profit making organisation but this time a sustainable one. The regional mandate is perpetuated without donor funding. This model just like the civic innovation model seeks to reduce heavy dependency on external funding.

Driven by professional individuals with common aspirations, social entrepreneurship is characterised by reduction in expenditure and increase in surplus income. The target beneficiaries are also turned into 'clients' where they are assisted by SATI to develop business plans for a fee which is charged to the fund. One of the reasons why SATI shifted its key original goal of networking and coordinating theatre organisations and practitioners to focus on practical projects was a search for legitimacy and relevance to the funders in the north who preferred supporting humanitarian issues like poverty, HIV/Aids and environmental issues to cultural activities. This means that support for humanitarian issues will remain a priority and theatre organisations and practitioners will continue to benefit from communication components of these priority areas and the re-orientation of its identity and services to social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurs are motivated by creation of 'surplus' and not 'profit' according to Fowler (2000) but the integration of development agendas and market opportunities brings together two conflicting entities which are likely to drift in opposite directions if not properly managed. Awareness of opportunities, risk taking and the market forces might force the social entrepreneur to gradually drift away from business activities that generate social benefits or rather business activities that benefit the poor and the disadvantaged people to highly commercial enterprises. When that happens then social entrepreneurship ceases to exist presenting;

> the scenario before us is one where NGDOs' past complex motivations and legitimacy are coming to an end in favour of a market discourse and its values. It would appear that NGDOs are about to succumb to the homogenising forces of economic globalisation in favour of a market-inspired model of NGDO

identity and behaviour (Fowler, 2000:644).

Civic values and legitimacy are at the moment facing the risk of being abandoned. The search for independence and autonomy from the Northern NGOs seems to bring drama and theatre practitioners back to the bondage of the north and its pursuance of the 'single global economic model of free trade-based, market capitalism'. The hope for drama and theatre practitioners who take the route of social entrepreneurship is to avoid losing sight of the African culture and its 'traditions'. With some modification in line with the context that SATI finds itself in, there is scope for sustainability under social entrepreneurship.

4.5.3. Government Support and infrastructural Support for sustainable theatre initiatives

The involvement of the Government in support for the arts has been noted to be limited or insignificant and practitioners throughout the region have complained about limited government support and lack of political will. There has been notable decline in support from the government in the post-independence era; in South Africa for example the budget allocation for 1999/2000 financial year was 32.4% compared to 67.7% in1994 (Rocky 2000). The new political dispensation in the post independence era did not only see the decline in government subsidies in the arts but also the decline in support of donor agencies as Northern NGOs shifted their support from local NGOs to support new democratic government systems. One of the assumptions in the shift of Northern NGO support to Southern NGO was that the government would pass on part of the funds to local NGOs like SATI, but that never happened. Organizational capacity, bureaucracy and red tape in the funding system which was inherited from the colonial regimes partly explain why the governments have not been able to adequately support the arts. Paradoxically part of the funds allocated for the arts was and is still returned to treasury at the end of each fiscal year. The question is how then can the same governments that failed to sustain the arts for the past four (4) decades provide a workable model for sustainability of the Arts?

The challenges that hindered full support of the arts by governments in the Southern African region are known and the solution lies with the reversal of such

challenges which admittedly is a mammoth task in itself. Having acknowledged the centralization of power in the national governments compounded by the 'laziness' 'spiritual penury' and 'the profound cosmopolitan mould' of the national middles class (Fanon, 1967: 119). Northern NGOs driven capacity development programmes of the early post-independence years have failed to liberate the 'oppressed' middle class; if anything the programmes have been further bound them to the 'cosmopolitan mould' as it was driven by the 'oppressors' in the name of Northern NGOs. The proposed government model for sustainability should seek to reverse most of the challenges brought about by the centralised operation of the government.

The suggested option is through infrastructural support to networking and coordinating organisations like SATI where the administrative costs like rentals, furniture, telephone, internet, water and electricity are absorbed by the government. Often the government bureaucrats occupy spacious and luxurious offices and spend long hours on personal calls at the expense of practitioners who are doing the actual work on the ground. The same space can be shared with organisations such as SATI. The suggested model does not only reduce the expenditure burden from these organisations but it physically brings the 'watch dogs' closer to the government bureaucrats and help to improve efficiency in government services to the arts. If governments have hosted international Non Governmental Organisations, what stops them from hosting local Non Governmental Organisations?

In this model the coordinating organisation remains autonomous from the government. It will pursue the most effective way of generating its revenue for the projects. The networking, training, festivals and lobbying and advocacy remain the same where the government bureaucrats can also benefit from the projects and become more conscientious about the needs of the regional and national dynamics depending on the focus of the organisation. The model would allow for an easier link of regional theatre networks with regional governance networks such as SADC, NEPAD and African Union which can guarantee the sustenance of drama and theatre initiatives. It will also help to put drama and

theatre at national and regional agendas thereby formalising the currently largely informal sector.

4.5.4. Synergies for Capital Investment

Discussions and debates on economic sustainability of drama and theatre have concluded that these forms of art are not profitable as commercial commodities and hence the continued dependence on government grants and donor funding. This has locked drama and theatre in the informal sector whilst other related forms of art in the creative industries like filming, television, video, broadcasting and advertising have become highly formal and commercial. The irony of this situation is that drama and theatre provide the foundations of all the other mentioned forms of performing arts. This is a clear indication that the scope for formalisation and sustainability of theatre is infinite.

In the face of limited grants and subsidies from the governments, dwindling support from funding agencies and the need for sustenance of drama and theatre practitioners there is need for other forms of capital injection into the industry. The question is what are the capital investment opportunities in the environment where commercial banks and investment houses require collateral security which is out of reach for most drama and theatre organisation? Interest rates are prohibitive. The situation becomes worse for a regional organisation like SATI. The one option is for theatre organisations to apply for small to media scale loans from Northern NGOs like SIDA. SIDA has years of experience in administering small to medium scale business loans in both rural and urban communities under its microfinance programme. The challenge with this route is that the loans still come with conditions almost similar to the grants and that the loans are usually small. They may not guarantee sustainability.

The second option under capital investment is a model where drama and theatre create synergies with related creative industries which have made it into the formal commercial sector but still require the services of drama and theatre practitioners. These are industries like film, advertising, television and broadcasting. In South Africa, it has been observed that;

> The creative industries are differentiated, linked with close interlocking but flexible networks of production and service systems, allowing the sector flexibility in the face of economic recession.(http://www.srac.gpg.gov.za: accessed 28.11.08)

There is potential for theatre institutions to synergise with film or advertising company as these creative industries are always scouting for actors, actresses, models, voice over artists. The informal nature of drama and theatre allow practitioners to enter into contacts in the film, advertising and television industries and often they are short changed, a situation which creates relevance for organisations like SATI.

There is also scope outside creative industries where returns are guaranteed from strategic synergies with tourism and hospitality industries. One such example is the case of Teatro at Montecasino where Tsogo Sun invested in the construction of one of the largest theatres in the Africa.

> The investment of R100 million by Tsogo Sun into the Teatro at Montecasino has ensured a bright future for theatre in South Africa, with increased job opportunities for performers and technicians and the potential to expand our theatre going population through the strategic acquisition of varied and diverse productions that will appeal to many different markets of all ages and demographic groups (http://tsogosungaming.tsogosun.co.za/content/press_release;accessed 23.11.08)

Investments of this magnitude are attracted by the synergies which help to spread the risk.

The scope for synergies is even better for a networking organisation like SATI as it will have a pool of practitioners at its disposal. SATI can synergise with different creative industries on behalf of organisations and individual practitioners thereby also assuming the role of an agency. In chapter 2 we established that SATI could team up with fundraising organisations but this was for the purpose of soliciting for funding and donations. In this model the teaming up is for purely business transaction. A good illustration of this point is the synergy between The Market theatre in Johannesburg and the restaurants in the Market Theatre Complex in Newtown – Johannesburg. The two businesses compliment each other in attracting clients, some people come for good food and drinks and they

find good theatre, some come for good theatre and they start having good food and drinks as they wait for the show to begin. Others come for both. A friend of mine was hosting colleagues from America and inquired from me about a place where he could take them for dinner and then a show as they are theatre lovers and I told him – The Market Theatre. The value of the synergy can not be taken for granted.

It takes theatre organisations like SATI to market the ideas and negotiate deals on behalf of practitioners or other theatre companies. The work does not only ensure sustainability of individuals or companies but SATI itself can survive out of subscription and commissions. The legal status in this case can be a council of theatre practitioners whose work can even go beyond networking and negotiating synergies into quality control and assurance through organisation of refresher courses. If the council is run on professional basis then its relevance and legitimacy will see it survive for centuries.

Development of synergies can happen with other theatre companies which specialise in different but symbiotic areas for special projects. A good illustration was when Nanzikambe Arts of Malawi approached SATI for identification of a strong theatre group to collaborate with Tumbuka Dance Company in Zimbabwe and another theatre company in the United Kingdom, SATI recommended The Market Theatre Laboratory. In this collaboration Nanzikambe Arts needed to develop a piece with fusion of acting, physical theatre, dance and image theatre. The coordination that SATI did was informal and for free. According to the Director of SATI these enquiries from theatre organisations come quite often. SATI could go a step further and get a British Company to either sponsor or invest hence mutual returns for both the arts and commercial sector. If formalised and organised through regulatory instruments, a fee can be paid for this service and this could actually guarantee sustenance of SATI as the coordinating organisation.

SATI's Finding Feet Conference of 2003 which was held in Namibia had vast business potentials which could have been pursued through different models suggested in this chapter. A follow up with any of the following models was

possible; sponsorships, civic innovation, social entrepreneurship, government support or capital investment. There were huge prospects of setting up a fully fledged regional theatre school based on SATI's experience in training workshops in the region and the capacities of different institutions that participated in the conference. The current relationship between SATI, Drama for Life and Wits School of Art can also be explored and developed to the benefit of the three institutions as they bring together three (3) distinct but complementary energies. The synergy can be marketed either for capital investment or sponsorship or a government support through institutions like the National Research Foundation (NRF).

4.5.5. Partnership between business and the theatre through sponsorship.

Many theatre organizations and individual practitioners have at one point been involved in a partnership with private companies but often the relationship is one off or short. When SATI embarked on the theatre lighting project its idea was to use it as a sustainability project where it could hire out the lights to other companies with in and outside the theatre industry. Unfortunately the project never went beyond short and sporadic contracts. It is attainable to have long term if not permanent partnership between theatre arts and business as new products, new brands, new services emerge under different conditions like challenges, competition, economic depression and even economic boom.

Usually when practitioners think of partnership between business and theatre, they think theatre for entertainment and yet theatre for transformation, theatre for development, theatre as education, theatre as activism and theatre as therapy can also get sponsorship. The opportunities of sponsorship of applied drama and theatre are vast in this era when the corporate world is becoming more and more conscious about the welfare and wellness of their employees. In social and community development drama and theatre is commonly used to raise awareness on many issues which could be affecting the community, the same power of creating awareness can be used in the corporate set up to create 'name' awareness, 'brand' awareness and 'services' awareness. All forms of theatre can be marketed to the corporate world. One condition for any business partnership is

mutual benefit. *Arts and Business,* an arts consultancy company have described the relationship between arts and business as that of 'a chicken and egg' where the question of which one comes first is best answered by 'neither'. Underpinning mutual benefit is the quality of theatre, which is also achievable.

Partnership between business and theatre is through sponsorship which is defined by *Arts & Business* as

> the payment of money to an arts organization with the explicit objective of promoting the business' name, its products, services or image. Sponsorship is part of a business' general promotional spending and may encompass staff developments as well as sense of corporate or social responsibility(Tweedy, 2001: 3)

Private companies have harnessed and will continue to harness the power of theatre to add value to their business. Theatre practitioners in the region have passively waited to be hired by these companies and in the process exploited instead of being proactive in initiating such partnerships. Southern Africa has a wealth of talented artists and arts organizations with extensive experience that can contribute to companies' business performance, reputation and social impact. Arts Sponsorship is a long established part of many companies' image management and corporate hospitality programmes. Many companies have gone further than corporate image to meet business objectives in brand development, sales, and corporate communications and cause related marketing projects with arts organizations and in most cases individual practitioners.

'Dependency syndrome' and 'false generosity' of aid organizations has created a very narrow view of opportunities where most artists do not see options outside subsidies, grants, donations, and patronage. Prospects are infinity beyond aid as Rocky (2000:225) reminds us:

> There are abundant opportunities for corporate to align the arts and culture support with their business goals and particularly to build brand loyalty and grow relationships; support a synergy between the market and CSR initiatives.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is another avenue to forge sponsorship partnerships between companies and theatre arts. Performing Arts Managers and Marketers need to develop business language for marketing their products and

should have their selling points very clear and attractive. The following are some of the selling points for the arts: improvement of reputation, develop influence, raise profile, building brand and recognition, encourage loyalty, increase sales, and demonstrate the commitment to corporate social responsibility of a company.

The standing and power of a company can be enhanced through sponsorship of creative and innovative theatre projects connected with the value of certain brands or products for example a garment making company like David Whitehead sponsoring costuming and set designing for a festival. Festivals can engender eye catching stories for newspapers which provide 'free' advertising for the companies. Theatre, dance or music festivals can involve clients and decision makers through high quality entertainment which may involve celebrities:

> Popularity of festivals, ranging from small local occasions to huge, multi stage fiestas is attracting corporate grant makers, who view them as sponsorship opportunities which enhance the company's image whilst making an important contribution to specific communities (Rocky, 2000: 255).

Theatre can be used to build brand recognition or raise profile of old products through sponsorship with festivals featuring renowned artists. We tend to undervalue our work as theatre practitioners and often when we think of festivals we think urban communities. If theatre practitioners allow themselves to think outside the box then they will see opportunities where there are 'no opportunities'. If I take an example of a rural community in Malawi, where villagers are starved of entertainment because they have no access to television, a road show can attract huge numbers which can then provide companies with vast opportunities to encourage product or brand loyalty and even increase volumes of sales.

Corporate Social Investment or responsibility can enhance companies' ethical reputation which has an increasing influence on consumer behaviour. Strong public support for the arts as a valuable part of national life makes them an ideal partner in corporate social responsibility programmes. If SATI succeeds in reconstituting its self as a commercial board then it should also inculcate the

business ideas and ethics, and in the process help its affiliate organizations and theatre companies to take the business partnership route.

4.6. Conclusion

Commenting on the 'single global economic model of free trade-based, market capitalism' which has caused a lot of shift in the NGOs sector a domain that nestled drama and theatre initiatives Fowler (2000) said:

> Such a model gives highest merit to values of individualism, competition, extraction, accumulation, exploitation and rivalry as the normative mode for relations between people and between people and nature. The negative social effects are manifest and manifold: for example, destabilising social relations, eroding social capital and undermining virtuous values, such as trust, reciprocity, mutuality, co-operation and tolerance of difference. There are also unwelcome political effects in the accumulation of power within a few corporations whose practical accountability to and through shareholders to society at large is grossly overstated (Korten, 1995 in Fowler 2000:8)

The cultural sector particularly drama and theatre as 'sidelined' forms of art need to take a robust and aggressive approach to come up with innovative strategies for survival and sustenance. The options are infinite but they require professionals who can think outside the box and outside the conventional concepts, theories, procedures, principles, relations and structures which were established in Africa by colonial systems and are being recycled through globalisation and capitalism in the post colonial times.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: COMPROMISE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

5.1. Introduction

What has emerged from the previous chapters is that drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa are presently unsustainable broadly owing to the postcolonial historical background and the new shifts in the global political economy. It is also important to note that some of the challenges and problems that have been listed as affecting drama and theatre initiatives are more apparent than real. The causes of the present struggle for survival by drama and theatre practitioners has been explained by a myriad of factors but the underpinning factor is the historical background that has defined the relationship between the south and the north, between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs and specifically between SATI and SIDA. The potential for sustainability is great as the struggle for self-sufficiency is believed to be a phase in the post independence history in Southern African and it is anticipated that the phase will soon be gone. Fowler et al (2000) have projected what is understood as 'Beyond Aid Scenario' (BAS) where NGOs in the south will rely on local resources as opposed to aid from the north.

5.2. Summary of Findings

The study acknowledged the successes that SATI scored as a regional networking organisation. The existing collaborations amongst theatre organizations and practitioners within SADC countries and the region may not have reached the levels that they are at without SATI. Skills levels within the region can be attributed to many other initiatives but SATI's role still remains quite phenomenal. The achievements were realised under limiting conditions and with limited financial resources and one can only speculate what would have happened if conditions were more conducive. The study also has affirmed the link between collapse and failure of SATI to continue with its founding objective and the withdrawal of SIDA support. The regional relevance and legitimacy has been lost and SATI has now been reduced to a national outfit.

This study was very cautious about the use of terms, ideas, concepts and theories since some of them have attracted a lot of controversies. The term 'sustainability'

has been used to mean organizational and economic stamina more than social resilience. The reason being that the research was centred more on the relationship or 'partnership' between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs working in the cultural sector. Social sustainability of drama and theatre could require a detailed interrogation of the social partnership between SATI and its constituencies, which would constitute a whole different research. The term 'partnership' was used with reservation considering the concerns surrounding the 'mutual trust' between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs. In as much as SIDA referred to its cooperation with SATI as partnership, this study however established that mutual partnership never existed, as elements of mutual trust and cooperation were missing in the 'marriage' which seemed like a 'marriage of convenience'. Support to SATI was convenient to SIDA as it got an opportunity to push its agenda of democracy, good governance and human rights in Southern Africa. SATI was merely an implementer with a very small voice in the 'partnership'. This is true of many 'partnerships' between Northern NGOs working in culture, media and theatre and art organizations and individual practitioners in the region.

The problems faced by drama and theatre practitioners and organizations are signs and symptoms of deeper and bigger challenges that are affecting the sector. The failure to comply with good governance practices by SATI and its affiliate organizations is not a function of lack of capacity of the implementing teams but rather the inappropriateness and rigidity of the partnership and programming policies which are based on western oriented 'development' theories and models. Without necessarily ruling out poor capacity of running projects, the underlying cause of collapse has more to do with changing strategic patterns amongst Northern NGOs and the changes in political situations in different regions and the world. The political situation in Zimbabwe for instance has had a very adverse impact on donor relations. Other countries might enjoy political and economic stability but their relations with the international communities may determine the nature of 'partnerships' and programmes the country may get into with the Northern NGOs. In a nutshell the micro challenges are a manifestation of the macro problems which are far removed from drama and theatre practitioners who

have for a long time withstood the accusations about the situation in their industry.

According to the findings of this study the management operations of SATI were largely guided by the policies, principles, procedures and guidelines stated in the *Financial Management and Policies and Procedures* of 2002. The compilation of the document was financed by SIDA. This document provided administrative and financial guidelines developed in line with good corporate governance practices which were advocated for by SIDA. The partnership and programming policies were largely outlined in the agreements that were signed between the two parties. SATI did not have partnership and programming policies per se as the policies and guiding principles were scattered in various documents such as the strategic document and the organisational profile. The study established that the policies were stringent and rigid and SATI could only make adjustments of any procedure with approval from SIDA. An example of such polices was the one on excess funds which stated that; 'SATI shall not spend the funds until guidance is given by the donor on how to utilise the excess funds' (Unpublished Financial Management Policies and Procedures (2002:12). The policies, procedures, and guidelines stifled possibilities on investments and management innovations, which was a major contributory factor to the collapse of SATI. The policies affirmed the notion of 'development' which is based on evolutionary theory of human history which sees the western societies as more evolved and developed than 'third world societies. The north is perceived as the 'centre' of knowledge and the south as the 'periphery' or the 'wasteland' to use Ngugi wa Thiongo (1993) terms.

Programming which was another focus of this study referred to the envisioning, strategizing, planning and implementation of the drama and theatre projects. Programmes referred to broader framework of theatre activities while 'projects' was used to refer to specific drama and theatre activities. The envisioning and implementation of the regional theatre network followed a 'top down' approach at two levels, first at local level where the Market Theatre SADC Coordinator came up with an idea of establishing a network after encountering challenges in the

coordination of the SADC Festival. The second level of 'top down' programming approach was envisaged in the cooperation between SIDA and SATI where SIDA announced what funds were available, and for what purpose and then SATI would be required to develop proposals to fit into the funding framework. The implementation processes were guided by the terms which were steered by SIDA. SATI's hand and voice was very small.

The larger constituency of drama and theatre organisations and practitioners that benefited from SATI's network are applied theatre practitioners; most of whom are community based. Through out the discussion in the report there is a deliberate distinction between the terms drama and theatre as the two are understood to be different. Drama refers to process oriented creative work whilst theatre refers to theatre product oriented type of work. The study used both terms concurrently as the work sometime involves both of drama and theatre elements.

All stakeholders have had a hand in the collapse of drama and theatre initiatives in one way or the other and all stakeholders should therefore have a hand in the reconstruction process. Drama and theatre practitioners' lack of dedication to professionalism has kept the field stuck in the informal sector making it difficult for other stakeholders to confidently engage with them. The effort to professionalize theatre industry comes with the institution of instruments on professional ethics to guard and protect the industry from opportunists who take advantage of any loop hole to make quick money and go. Southern NGOs like SATI's limited analytical intuition has led them to accept 'raw deals' with Southern NGOs, a situation which has left them and the practitioners that they support stuck in a vicious cycle of dependency on the north. Northern NGOs singular truth approach to development work, hidden agendas and the stringent and rigid demands on the local NGOs have produced 'cosmopolitan moulds' which have stifled the potential of organic response to the needs of practitioners. National Governments' regurgitation of colonial policies on culture has thrown them in 'the pitfalls of national consciousness' which in turn produced a bureaucratic 'national middle class' responsible for sluggish implementation of innovative ideas from the practitioners. In some cases unstructured and skewed

allocation of resources has resulted in part of financial resources allocated for theatre being returned to government treasury at the end of fiscal year. Regional networks like SADC have not been any different from national governments as they have inherited poor or no policies from national governments leaving the survival of cultural initiatives in the region at the mercy of Northern NGOs.

External evaluators tend to downplay the successes and effectiveness of drama and theatre particularly in HIV/Aids intervention and they do accentuate the challenges. It is unfortunate that theatre practitioners themselves have joined in what has become 'self depreciation'. Some of the perceptions are skewed and they give a wrong picture about the great work that drama and theatre practitioners are doing. Problems are always attributed to the implementing agencies in the south whilst the funding agencies are allowed to appear as pure and free of blemishes. The irony in my analysis is that most of the problems are a result of the policies of funding organisations and their host governments. I would like to reiterate that the fact that implementing organisations are 'victims' of the policies of the north does not exonerate them from contributing to the challenges.

Solutions to these challenges do not solely lie with practitioners and theatre organizations but it requires other stakeholders to equally play their part. This however calls for aggressive and innovative lobbying and advocacy for other stakeholders, particularly funding partners to buy into the proposed solutions. The lobbying and advocacy can be best achieved through professionalism in creating good work and not by simply talking in seminars, meetings and symposiums. A number of strategies have been suggested for the re-envisioning, reorientation, reformation, restructuring, rethinking, diversification, adaptation and /or modifications of approaches to drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa. Ideas for the suggested models were borrowed from other fields and fused with those existing within the theatre fraternity. As a way forward the following models were proposed for sustainable development of drama and theatre initiatives; civic innovation, social entrepreneurship, sponsorship, capital investment and government infrastructural models. The study has established these propositions as concepts which are yet to be fully developed into applicable

models. The success of the proposed models would depend on knowledge, passion, dedication and a full appreciation of the cultural and traditional values of the project constituencies.

As search for explanations to challenges on the drama and theatre scene this study established that there is a paradigm shift amongst the Northern NGOs where the officially propagated and uniform philanthropic paradigm of development action is slowly disappearing to be replaced by the one that is driven by capitalist values which stress 'privatisation' of work and reduction of dependency on tax-driven aid. The transitional period has been associated with the apparent withdrawal of aid. Smith (2001) in his article "Questioning the crisis; International Donors and the reconfiguration of South African NGO sector" said that what appears to be withdrawal of aid is not withdrawal of aid but shift in priorities and expansion of funding areas and structural change.

5.3. SATI's current status and the new vision

The research established that SATI has discontinued its regional mandate and this was formalised through the dissolution and deregistration of the Board of members which was done in line with the constitution of SATI according to the director of SATI. The former Director of SATI is working towards creating a strictly commercial arts company entity which is building on the experiences and the gains of SATI. A draft business plan has been drawn for a company called 'The Arts Calabash' but the 'modus operandi' has not been drawn and there are still so many 'grey areas to be cleared with regards to the link between the envisioned company and SATI. The Director of SATI is still working on the new modalities of operation in the absence of board members.

> We will not dissolve the Brand and we also need to acknowledge that the democratic regional structures of SATI have to be reconstituted with new persons and also needs to create a better way on how to make sure that the National networks exist and the representation at regional level is legitimate. The Calabash is the entrepreneurial attitude of SATI and it is acknowledgement of the achievement of SATI as developmental and educational and it is its growth stage. SATI will exist and is continuing to exist.
> (SATI Director Interview 2008)

If the on going plans are implemented the Arts Calabash- will then be used to sustain SATI's original social commitments following the social entrepreneurial model. The other options suggested in chapter 4 remain as possible for the new SATI to adopt and implement.

5.4. Regional support structures for SATI

According to the Head for the Division of Culture and Media - Helen Nordenson (2008: Interview) SIDA support was not enough to build a sustainable network and the hope was that more stakeholders would come on board and work with SIDA to build a 'basket fund' that would then be used to sustain the operations of SATI. In the interview Helen continued to say:

> Regarding SATI for example we had hoped that SADC would set up a regional fund where regional organisations could apply. More than one donor could support such an arrangement. Unfortunately this hasn't happened. A feasibility study was carried out but then SADC moved to Gaborone, Botswana and it came to a standstill. (Helen Nordenson, 2008: Interview)

SATI can still attempt to go back to SADC with renewed energies, but there is the possibility of it tapping into NEPAD, whose ethos is in line with both the proposed social entrepreneurship, the civic innovation models and the government infrastructure support models. It is even possible for SATI to appeal to NEPAD for capital investment as one of NEPAD's principles is 'Anchoring the development of Africa on its resources and resourcefulness of its people' (http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/inbrief.php; accessed 01.12.08).

5.5. Response to global force

When change in the world political economy takes place it impacts more on the poor people than anyone else and drama and theatre practitioners are doubly affected as they are already sidelined by the mainstream economy. The situation is worse when the changes result in disagreements between the super-structures because it is the ordinary and the underprivileged people who suffer most. The prevailing change on the global scene seem to be going unopposed and in one direction that any new paradigms in the development sector would have to align themselves with the changes. Fowler (2000) says:

> open trade and foreign direct investment are taking over as the preferred mode for allocating development capital and

> accelerating economic growth based on competition for individual gain. The negative impact of such a shift on equity, sustainability and justice are already to be seen (2000:6)

He continues to conclude the discussion about the state of NGDOs by saying:

> It would appear that NGDOs are about to succumb to the homogenising forces of economic globalisation in favour of a market-inspired model of NGDO identity and behaviour (Fowler (2000: 6)

A standardized approach to African challenges could not work for SATI considering the diversity of the challenges and the cultural diversity of the constituencies being discussed by this research. Directors and programme managers should keep abreast with global dynamics in order for them to institute appropriate solutions to the problems as they arise.

5.6. Conclusion: Compromise for Sustainability

A movement towards possible solutions to challenges facing the drama and theatre industry implies reversal of the notion about the world, a reversal of some of the historical processes that left Africa stuck in a vicious cycle of dependency. This movement is what Ngugi wa Thiongo called *Decolonizing* and Moving *the Centre*. Freire' called for Pedagogy *of the Oppressed* which he said will be complete when both the oppressed and the oppressor are liberated. The route to solutions also implies selective and contextual application of current global processes that are shaping the world politics which is tantamount to resisting some of the ideas from the north. The labour pains of re-birth and acceptance of authentic indigenous theatre are long and agonising and require boldness, consistency, determination and compromise. Disagreements are part of the package so all parties involved in the dialogue must not lose sight of the diversity of the world and must be prepared to swallow their pride and compromise for sustainability. It is a fallacy to deny the pitfalls of decolonising the mind, 'multiplicity of centre' liberation of the oppressor and the oppressed and multiculturalism as a liberal concepts but the time is now when all stakeholder in the theatre industry should scrutinize the said processes steps towards sustainability of drama and theatre rather than brush it aside as idealistic.

It is very important to acknowledge that this study discussed possible explanations and solutions to the challenges faced in the management of drama and theatre initiatives. It does not in anyway claim to have established the root causes of the lack of sustainability in this area as the need for refinements of some of the arguments is infinity. The gravity and complexity of factors surrounding the sustainability of drama and theatre initiatives in Southern Africa clearly points to the need for further research in this area. The need is infinity as this is a grey area which the meeting point between the drama and theatre practitioners and development practitioners and economists. The area is often neglected. This study focused on the relationship between NGOs in the North and those in the South, the next level of research may perhaps focus on the bilateral and multilateral agreements between the Government in the north and those in the south. The place of the corporate world in this discourse is also critical as both a benefactor and a potential partner toward the sustainability of drama and theatre.

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