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The Role of Participation in Community Theatre for Development Interventions: A Case Study of the Wadzanayi Farm Project in Lalapanzi, Zimbabwe

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This research report has been submitted in the partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Art in Dramatic Arts

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the research report contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the report itself.

Signed……

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Many thanks go to my supervisor Dr Kennedy Chinyowa. Through your guidance I made it to this point. You challenged me, pushed me to the edge and you became my mentor, teacher and a loving father. I thank you a million times, be blessed

To Warren Nebe and the Drama for Life team, you made the journey easier and manageable. I would like to express my gratitude for this life changing experience. Keep on doing the great job.

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Dedication

This research is dedicated to my beautiful mother, Future Katsiru Yule for being my role model.

Abstract

Participation has now become an established orthodoxy in theatre and development thinking and practice. But what exactly is it and how best it should be pursued in community development remains the question. This study examined the role of participation in community theatre for development interventions in Zimbabwe drawing from the Wadzanayi community as a case study.

A number of paradigms of participation were explored in the search for a better and more effective model that prioritises the community. Among these paradigms, transformative participation proved to be more people centred as compared to other paradigms where participation was goal centred and donor driven. The study acknowledged that even though practitioners are striving to achieve transformative development they constantly fall in the trap of holding back power and control from the local people who are the primary stakeholders.

The research also examined the monitoring and evaluation process and how participation was framed in and through live performance. The research concludes that community participation in theatre for development interventions takes on different forms at different stages of the project cycle, resulting in participation being handled differently at various stages.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of Community Participation

Community participation is a concept that means different things to different people in different settings. It occurs when a local group organizes itself and takes responsibility for managing its own problems (Chambers, 2000). Taking responsibility includes identifying problems, developing and implementing actions that need to be followed up. It can be understood as a two way process which involves promoting public understanding of processes and mechanisms through which problems are investigated and solved. This explains why there is an understanding among developmental practitioners that community participation is best seen as a process, rather than an outcome of an intervention. This study uses the definition adopted by the World Bank's Learning Group on Participatory Development which conceptualises participation as "a process through which stakeholder's influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank, 1996:3). The broad aim of participation in development is to actively involve people and communities in identifying problems, formulating plans and implementing decisions over their own lives.

The concept of community participation is not a new phenomenon as far as community development is concerned. It has been talked and written about since the 1950s or even before (Nelson and Wright, 1995). In recent years however, there has been a convergence of opinion as to the importance of participation in community development and there now exists a widely shared set of participatory approaches and methods. Participatory approaches have been widely incorporated into policies of organisations from multilateral agencies like the World Bank and bilateral agencies, to the smallest people's organisations. Indeed, some observers have argued that, in terms of thinking and practice about community development, we are currently in the 'age of participation' and it is the 'paradigm of people' (Oakley, 1991),

meaning to say that community participation is human centred, meant for the people, by the people.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have been setting the pace in embracing and practicing participation as an 'alternative development' strategy. Some commentators like Mosse (1996), Nelson and Wright (1995) and Shepherd (1998) have hailed NGOs for their commitment to the direct involvement of local people in development projects and programmes. However, a fundamental problem in assessing the experience of NGOs in participation is that the concept is unclear in practice.

The issue that prompted this study is that while many authors and development agencies argue that genuine people's participation can increase the efficiency, effectiveness, self-reliance, coverage and sustainability of development projects and programmes (Kumar, 2002), there is a diverse spectrum of views on the concept of participation and the ways of achieving it. One example is given by Ngujiri (1998:470) who comments that, "despite the increase in the number of NGOs, participatory methodologies, and after many years of poverty alleviation, poverty continues to be rife and communities continue to languish in it". There is no doubt then, that something is wrong. It must either be that in the NGO's participatory approaches, as the tools of their trade' are ineffective, or the NGOs use the participatory approaches wrongly.

There appears to be no agreement among development agents and professionals about the contribution of community participation to improving the lives of people, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Some completely dismiss its value, while others believe that it is the 'magic bullet' that ensures improvement, especially in the context of poverty alleviation (Chambers 2000). Despite the apparent lack of agreement, community participation has continued to be promoted as a key to development and has been acknowledged by some social development agents as

essential to programme planning (World Bank, 1996). Some of the reasons for community participation include:

- Local people have experience and possess indigenous knowledge on the history of their communities and how best projects can be implemented.
- Involving local participants in planning projects can increase their commitment and the sustainability of the project.
- Involving the community also can assist them to develop their skills and thereby increase their opportunities for employment.
- Community participation is a way to bring about 'social learning' for both planners and communities by developing partnerships between professionals and communities, as each group learns from the other (World Bank, 1966).

In the view of the above, it seems that despite the aims of participatory community development to involve people in development project that affect them directly, quite often, the reality of participation differs from the rhetoric on many counts (Nelson and Wright, 1995). According to Pretty (1995), the dilemma for many community development initiators is that they both need and fear people's participation. They also fear that this wider involvement is less controllable, less precise and so likely to slow down the planning and implementation process. Shepherd (1998) argues that participation is usually assumed, not demonstrated, as few development organisations have time to examine the indicators or follow the process of how participation happens, and what its effects are on participants and in the wider society. The major question in many community development projects, as Bunch (1995) postulates, is therefore not whether to increase participation but how to achieve effective participation.

Against the above background, this study examines the ways in which participation is being handled in community theatre for development interventions in Zimbabwe. The analysis provides an understanding on how participation takes place at the grassroots level, who participates and how, what motivates some individuals and

community groups to participate and what hinders others from participating actively in funded developmental interventions in their communities.

1.2 Savanna Trust as Research Context

Savanna Trust is a non-profit organisation based in Harare, Zimbabwe. It has been in existence since 2006 and acknowledges the power of theatre as a medium for social transformation. The organisation is being run under the Leadership of Mr Daniel Maposa who rose from a theatre performance background. The organisation runs on donor funding on variety of community theatre for development projects. The organisation places emphasis on Community Theatre for Development which I refer to as Theatre for Development (TFD) in this research. By design, Community Theatre for Development provokes and provides communities with a platform for dialogue, collective involvement and resolution of challenges. It seeks the empowerment of communities through the acquisition of information on various socio-economic and political dilemmas.

Savannah Trust focuses on Theatre for Development because they perceive it as a means of cultural expression that enhances a sense of ownership within the community. Savanna Trust applies Theatre for Development in community interventions as an artistic genre through which diverse and sensitive issues can be addressed without fear of victimization. Also, the message to be put across becomes an integral part of entertainment on enjoyable social occasions. Savannah Trust also approves the use of Theatre in Development Communication because theatre acts as a medium to make people not only aware of their problems but also active participants in the development process by expressing their view points and acting to better their conditions.

Savanna Trust emphasis in TfD is not the product of the process, the play, but on the process itself because in that way learning will take place at every stage of the process, and even after the session has ended. If emphasis is on the performance of the plays-the products- then all they will think of afterwards is how "good" they were. Differences in opinion are encouraged instead of being avoided so that they may be explored and the best options 'discovered'. Participants are made to feel that they

speak their own language, rather than having messages 'pushed down their throats'. As it is, TfD is not meant to be sermonizing; rather spectators are expected to come to terms with their own consciousness.

Savanna Trust embarked on a theatre-driven environmental intervention for the first time. During this period, the organisation addressed environmental and social challenges in order to help mitigate the impact of climate change. The project was implemented through the introduction of the wood saving stoves to minimize demand for wood fuel. Using theatre to mobilize community participation, Savanna Trust believes that sustainability of a project lies with the community. It is therefore important to understand how community participation was perceived and conceptualised in the study.

1.3 Research Focus

Chinyowa (2005) asserts that like folk media, participation is another category that has been used and/or abused for 'development' purposes. As a result, different notions of participation have emerged which can only serve to confuse rather than clarify the concept. Chinyowa (2005) acknowledges that there is a gap between theatre as a showy spectacle and the educational aspect which is intended to benefit the community. He further suggests that perhaps the possible way out is for theatre practitioners to approach development from the community's point of view. However, he does not suggest the possible ways in which community involvement can be framed when engaging with the community through community theatre. Also, in acknowledging that there is a problem in the way community participation is being handled, Kamlongera (2002) notes that raising awareness, creating knowledge and influencing attitudes cannot change people's attitude towards development. This suggests that community theatre for development practitioners needs to acknowledge the existence of communities and structures to begin with and the existence of indigenous knowledge systems such that they make it a priority in engaging the community at all levels of intervention.

This study seeks to find out how community participation can best be framed in community theatre for development contexts, given that power and control remain key aspects of development. By involving local people, most development practitioners and planners feel as if they are giving up their power and control over the design and management of projects. Many see this step as threatening and harmful because they can no longer be sure that the projects are making good use of the resources given to them. It is therefore necessary to carry out a research that aims to close the gap between theory and practice in community participation.

1.4 Research Questions

Due to the problematic and complex nature of community participation, this research attempts to answer the following research questions, all of which will be applied specifically to the Savanna Trust Wadzanayi Farm Project:

1. How has community participation been handled in community theatre for development interventions?
2. What is the significance of community participation in theatre for development environmental projects?
3. How can community participation be made to play a more effective role in theatre for development interventions?

1.5. Rationale

After completing my honours degree, I worked as an assistant projects officer at Savanna Trust in a number of theatre initiated development projects. This gave me the opportunity to observe their activities on community participation from the perspective of a practitioner both in theory and practice. In most of the field workshops that we did, theory and practice collided when it came to implementation. In most cases the theory on project proposals suggested something else which was difficult to find on the ground. Thus, this study intends to analyse why community theatre for development initiators are finding it difficult to balance the practice of participation with the theory of it. My observations during this study compel me to

adopt an outsider's point of view because sometimes as an insider one fails to see the gaps that need to be addressed.

Maldives (2007) asserts that environmental awareness should be promoted such that communities become aware of the dangers and effects of climatic problems. The communities get to share knowledge and skills on how to solve environmental problems. Agents of development should be motivated to develop communities' attitudes to participate in various environmental protection programs. Also, facilitators should try to inculcate knowledge about the environment and, develop positive and healthy attitude towards people's surroundings. Therefore there is need to organize and conduct educational interventions that focus on attitudes towards preservation and conservation of the environment.

The environment has also been identified as a priority in development work. This means that environmental interventions are important to communities. Communities not only derive more satisfaction from the joy that comes from direct contribution, but also achieve more results with greater benefits to them as a whole. From my understanding, participating communities succeed better than those that only pay lip service.

This study seeks to fill the gap that exists between the theory and practice of community participation. I intend to contribute to practitioners and communities understanding of the possible ways in which they can frame community involvement in environmental educational interventions.

1.6 Literature Review

Much has been written on community participation in development though little has been documented on the role of participation in environmental theatre initiated projects. In this section I want to review the existing literature on the role of

participation in community theatre for development projects and identify the existing gaps in relation to my study.

Advocacy and Communication Strategy for Environment Initiative in Botswana (ACSEI) acknowledges that their country is suffering from environmental degradation water scarcity, depletion of mineral resources, wood resources, and air pollution, and vulnerability to the impact of climate change. Ajiboye and Silo (2008) attested that ACSEI relies more on engaging the community through the distribution of pamphlets and magazines on environmental awareness. ACSEI acknowledge the use of community theatre as they suggest that theatre is a better medium to achieve genuine community participation. Thus in this chapter I will be looking into how Savanna Trust is using the theatre that is hailed by ACSEI to promote community participation.

Sensitization and Education through Kunda Arts (SEKA) is an art organization based in Zambia that uses theatre to address grassroots environmental issues with a focus on Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). They engage in different environmental awareness projects such as anti-litter campaigns, land use and game management. Their projects are donor funded and they call for community involvement. However they face difficulties in trying to balance theory and practice as they acknowledge the existence of challenges associated with the existence of different stakeholders in community development. The community comes in as the audience of plays created by SEKA and as participants in after-performance discussions. This study has similar research interests as SEKA in that it advocates for community participation and the use of theatre as an educational tool in environmental awareness campaigns. But while the study concurs with the activities of SEKA in addressing environmental problems, there is need to approach community participation through a bottom-up approach rather than a top-down approach.

Arikpo and Ayokoroma (2000) established Living Earth Nigeria Foundation's (LENF) Community Theatre Initiative in Cross River State, Nigeria. The LENF foundation advocates a bottom-up participatory approach to awareness and the development of rural communities through sustainable environmental awareness. By building partnerships with communities, Living Earth believes that indigenous knowledge and local experience can be combined with external technical expertise in developing educational materials to help communities have a better understanding of their environment. Communities are encouraged to develop their own projects and manage their own resources. The objectives of LENF's community theatre intervention approach have been summarised by Akala (2001) as 'stimulating discussion and debate, enabling communities to consider their impact on their environment, enabling community people to make informed decisions on issues concerning the environment and to help alter activities which deplete natural resources and threaten sustainable livelihoods'. This study will use LENF's approach but will expand the analysis to find out how best community participation can be framed in environmental educational interventions.

One key issue in environmental education has been to move from community education campaigns to active involvement. Most initiatives in the 1990's sought to motivate school pupils to address and solve environmental problems in their communities (Dunlap 1978). Previous approaches assumed that by exposing pupils to nature and by giving them a nature experience, their attitudes towards nature would change and they would become environmentally friendly and literate. However, environmental education has found its way in communities in a bid to involve all stakeholders in the community. In this study, the effort is made to examine how community participation is being handled by development agents.

The Brutland report (1987) calls for new perspectives and ways to halt environmental decline and introduce sustainable rural development. The approach is to get the community together, sensitize them to gather environmental data, and develop an action plan to be implemented and monitored at community level. In the case of

Savanna Trust Project, theatre was used as an educational tool to achieve development and community participation for sustainable environmental development. However despite the application of theatre as a communication tool, most projects on environmental education continue to lapse.

Over the past decades, there has been a visible tendency in developing countries to use theatre as an educative medium for social change and development (Epskamp, 1989). Two approaches have been used in theatre as development work; the endogenous and the exogenous approach. But the most common approach has been the exogenous model, based on outside intervention. This is usually project-oriented and implementers target a particular community for a set goal. Different projects will allow different space for the participation of the local/target community. Some interventions will achieve participation by opening up room for post - performance discussions. In this regard, participation is regarded as an end product. Other projects aim to achieve participation at research level, in order to incorporate the views of people. Mushangwe (2005) talks of participation at the level of action where the Theatre for Development troupe engages the community after performances in follow -up activities. This is to ensure sustainability of the project. In relation to the above literature this research analysed the levels in which community participation was handled in the Wadzanayi project.

By the 1980s, practitioners had moved towards more community driven Theatre for Development as in the case of the Kamiriithu Theatre in Kenya and the Tanzanian University-based theatre facilitating for a local village cultural group in undertaking ongoing processes in their village. According to Chinyowa (2010), the growth of these theatre-initiated experiments provided the impetus for the beginning of Theatre for Development practice in Zimbabwe. Kidd (1992) records the first Theatre for Development workshop undertaken in Zimbabwe occurred in 1983 with the aim of orienting development cadres and consolidating ideas in this field (1992:130). Despite the growing acceptance of theatre for development in community work, community participation remains ambiguous. The outside world and the community

still maintain some resistance on each other as power remains at the heart of the matter.

In his account of Kamiriithu Community Theatre, Ngugi (1998:224) cites some of the benefits of a collective community theatre. He identifies how collective theatre creates room for people to identify with content, form, language, issues and struggles. Such a theatre is most likely to evoke response from its audiences and not alienate their participation. In the same vein, Conquergood (1998:221) asserts that theatre for development works effectively as a tool for critical awareness and empowerment for the oppressed if it is rooted in the people's cultural strengths. Concurring with WaThiong'o this research analysed how the participation was handled where there was the application of local frames of references. This only comes to light if the community is not side-lined in the process, which, in theory, is a TFD priority.

From the literature reviewed above, it can be concluded that community participation is a concern as organisations are incorporating theatre to achieve community participation. However community engagement is not evident at all levels of participation, which calls for a concern that needs to be addressed. Therefore, this study addresses the gap that exists on how organisations are handling community participation in development.

1.7. Methodology

In the search for an appropriate methodology for this study, the ethnography of performance provided an insight in obtaining an in-depth understanding of the history, practices, values, traditions, and circumstances of individuals, groups, and surrounding natural and cultural resources that are attached to participation in community theatre interventions (Denzin, 2003). The ethnography of performance is considered to be a suitable method in studying human development. Thus, it was applicable o the investigation of how community participation can be framed in community theatre for development contexts.

Thomas (2004) asserts that the ethnography of performance is process-based and participatory. Participants become subjects rather than objects of the research process. They (participants) are closely implicated in exploring, reflecting and interpreting their own problems and taking action in transforming their situations. The ethnography of performance helped me in framing my research, capturing data, crystallizing and interpreting the data.

1.7.1 Participant observation

Most of Savanna Trust projects are process-oriented and participatory in nature, which means participant observation is an appropriate method in collecting data. Participant observation is a qualitative method with roots in ethnographic research, whose objective is to help researchers learn about human interactions. Participant observation takes place in community settings, in locations believed to have some relevance to the research questions. During data collection in this research, I became a participant observer in order to be able to collect subjective material. This method is distinctive because the researcher approaches participants in their own environment rather than having the participants come to the researcher.

Data obtained through participant observation served as a check against participants' subjective reporting of what they believe and do. Participant observation also became useful in gaining an understanding of the physical, social, cultural, political and economic background of the Wadzanayi Community; the relationships among and between people, contexts, ideas, norms, and events; and people's behaviours and activities – what they do, how frequently, and with whom. In addition, the method enabled me as a researcher to develop a familiarity with the cultural milieu that proved invaluable throughout the project. There is no substitute for witnessing or participating in phenomena associated with human interaction – interaction with other people, with places, and with states of being and becoming.

Observing and participating are integral to understanding the breadth and complexity of human experience – an overarching research endeavour for any development project. I therefore made visits to Wadzanayi Community in order for me to understand the community better. However due to time and financial constraints, I was able to dedicate only one week of intensive community engagement. Participant observation helped me to unpack community participation in environmental education as I was able to take a closer look into the process. This process was a useful guide for me to gain the empirical evidence that I needed for my research. I also made use of reflections on what I observed during the process of data collection including other participants' reflections.

1.7.2 Interviews

For data collection, a researcher needs to understand the target communities in order to analyse the extent of their participation. This can only happen through interviews. Interviews provide what might be called "targeted" data collection by asking specific but open-ended questions. During data collection, I managed to interview a number of participants from Wadzanayi farm including men and women. I also managed to interview some of the Savanna Trust representatives in the environmental project. The data collected formed the empirical foundation for this research. These interviews were both structured and unstructured, in addition to focus group discussions. Some of the interviews were formal, for example, the one that was conducted with the chairman of the community and with Savanna Trust representatives. The rest of the interviews were informal. The interviews guided me in understanding participation from a different perspective.

1.7.3 Journaling

Forms of reflective writing such as diaries and journals are widely acknowledged as important tools in promoting both the development and the understanding of a research. Learning from the process is critical in theatre for development projects, thus reflective writing through journaling is crucial. Journaling is a method frequently discussed in educational literature as an active learning technique that is meant to

enhance reflective practice. Reflective practice is a means of self-examination that involves looking back over what has happened in practice in an effort to improve or encourage professional growth. Some of the benefits of reflective practice include discovering meaning, making connections with experiences, instilling values of the profession, gaining the perspective of others, reflection on professional roles and development of critical thinking. My initial motivation for using a journal for my gathering of research material was the desire to share a rewarding personal–professional experience and a detailed encounter with community participation in the Wadzanayi Project. Through journaling, I managed to document the information that I gathered during interviews, observations and from listening to conversations during the implementation of the Wadzanayi project. As a researcher, I emulated the anthropologist, Malinowski's strategy of gathering information by using journals during the process of "participant-observation." This helped me to understand community participation in a more 'holistic' way.

1.7.4 Documents

Merriam (1988) describes documents as forms of data not gathered through interviews or observation. Chinyowa (2005) also asserts that documents are easily accessible and cost effective. Since Savanna Trust had carried out the larger part of the environmental project during my absence; I used the documented process in the form of photographs, video tapes and written reports. Also, I managed to secure documents in the form of books, journals and articles.

1.8 Ethical Considerations

This study was guided by rules and regulations from the school authorities. I consulted with the Projects officer from Savanna Trust for the permission to do a research with their organisation and the Wadzanayi community. I also managed to secure permission from the Wadzanayi community chairman. I was granted permission and advice by these authorities to work with Wadzanayi Community as My Case study. Information gathered during the research and names of participants were treated with respect and confidentiality. These ethical considerations were met

during and after the research. I managed to work with men, women, young boys and girls from the Wadzanayi community.

1.9 Chapter Layout

Chapter One: This chapter introduces the focus of the study and provides an overview of community participation and how it is perceived in the development sector. The chapter managed to problematize participation in community theatre for development interventions and posed some questions which this study attempts to address. The chapter also gather existing literature on community participation and identify the existing gaps.

Chapter Two: This chapter is the theoretical framework on which the research lances focuses on. Different paradigms of Participation are identified; these include participation as a means and participation as an end, transformative participation, representative participation and instrumental participation. These paradigms emerge throughout the study.

Chapter Three: The chapter introduces the case study in which different project stages are analysed. The goal is to analyse the way in which community participation is handled in different project phases. The goal is to identify better paradigms of participation that may be recommended for theatre for development practitioners to apply.

Chapter Four: This chapter analyses the manifestation of community participation in and through live performance. The goal is to analyse how community participation is being framed through live performance.

Chapter Five: The chapter examines the monitoring and evaluation process of the Wadzanayi project. The goal was to analyse how the principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation were being used in theatre for development projects to propagate active community participation.

Chapter Six: The Chapter concludes the research by briefing the findings of this research and recommends room for further research in the field of participation in community theatre for development.

CHAPTER 2

Paradigms of Participation as Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

The opening chapter explored what is meant by community participation and participation in general. It identified the problematic nature of the term participation. The chapter also noted how participation has come under increasing criticism for being political and vague and lacking a coherent theory that seeks to explain and articulate the role of agency in development processes. This explains the ambiguity that overwhelms participation in practice whereby it is expected to perform a wide range of functions for differing ideologies and projects. Participation has historically been used both to enable ordinary people to gain agency and as a means of maintaining existing relations of power. Thus, for a better understanding of community participation, this chapter theorises paradigms of participation, seeking to understand how they can be more effective in community theatre for development contexts.

2.2. Participation as a Means and as a Process

2.2.1 Participation as a Means

Participation as a means in theatre for development projects is seen as the way of achieving a set objective or goal (World Bank 1994). In other words it is a way of using the economic and social resources of the people to achieve predetermined targets. More so community participation is sponsored by an external agency and is seen as a method of supporting the progress of the project. However results are more important than the act of participation in itself.

Furthermore, participation as a means is essentially a static, passive and controlled form of involvement. It is the form of engagement more commonly found in rural

development projects. It is rightly argued that community development projects would benefit from more direct participation by the local people, but it is also important to ensure that such participation is not merely a way of facilitating the attainment of the project's objectives (Oakley, 1989). The mobilization of people in this form of participation is to get things done based on a fixed, quantifiable development goal that is based on externally–directed activities to community development.

In Community Theatre for Development, the external agents bring in finished products in the form of plays to the community without the input of the beneficiaries. The content is created to suit what is required by the funder/donor of the project, leaving the community's voice out of the process. Professional script developers and performers are appointed from outside to represent and to retell the story of the community without the full involvement of the community. Thus the community becomes an object rather than a subject in development. With participation as a means, communication is in the form of monologues in which the community is being fed with information about the project without or with little of their input. Participation as a means in theatre-initiated projects tends to silence communities in the crucial stages of the project, for example, the problem-identification stage.

However, to argue that no meaningful participation can take place if it is interpreted as a means is to suggest that it is impossible for the objectives of the beneficiaries to coincide with those of the aid agency. This may not necessarily be the case. For, despite the fact that the aid agency may have its own specific aims, the very fact that agencies and beneficiaries can work together means that they have at least a measure of shared ground. This ground is the general desire to improve the lives and livelihoods of the community.

Development agencies by their nature also have other objectives to fulfil. What usually differs and therefore needs compromise are the ways in which this overall objective is to be achieved in a way that allows the community to benefit but also enables the agency to harmonise the communities' priorities with the donor's organisational structures and operational procedures. In this case community participation can become a means of reaching this compromise (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980).

2.2.2. Participation as a Process

Participation as a process by some is referred to as participation as an end. Whilst participation as a means is externally driven and agent-centred, participation as a process is driven by the community and involves a progression in which self-confidence and cohesion among communities is built up (Adams 1990). Participation as a process in theatre for development interventions is a self-motivated, unquantifiable and essentially unpredictable element. It is created and moulded by the participants. It is an active form of participation, responding to local needs and changing circumstances. More generally, participation as process presupposes the building of influence or involvement from the bottom upwards. As a result, this form of participation has come to be associated with community development activities outside the formal or government sector and is concerned with building up structures from below in order to bring about change in existing institutional arrangements (Oakley 1989).

Participation as process in theatre initiated projects is viewed as an active, dynamic and genuine process which unfolds over time and whose purpose is to develop and strengthen the capabilities of the people to intervene more directly in their own development (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). Such participation is seen as the empowerment of individuals and communities in terms of acquiring skills, knowledge and experience, leading to greater self-reliance.

According to Bretty (2003), participation as process aims to empower the people to work in partnership with each other and with those able to assist them to identify their problems and needs, mobilise resources, and assume the responsibility to plan, manage, control and assess the individual and collective actions that they themselves decide upon. This mode of participation is concerned with development of skills and abilities to enable the communities to manage themselves and negotiate with existing development systems. Thus the community's participation can help to amplify unacknowledged voices by enabling the people to decide upon and take actions which they believe are essential to their development.

2.3 Transformative Participation

Participation as a means and participation as a process are not the only paradigms that speak to community participation in development. Among others is transformative participation which is one of the most preferred of the models of participation that is emulated by Theatre for Development organisations including Savanna Trust. Transformative participation is where participants determine their own needs and priorities and take collective action to achieve them and this is seen as practice of empowerment (Cranton, 1996). It is a process of effecting change using familiar frames of reference. The process is a rehearsal for change by the people, with the people and for the people.

This type of participation was demonstrated in Kenya under the Kamirithu Community Theatre project (Wa Thiong'o, 1997). The community realised the need to resuscitate its creative vibrancy and to learn more about its history and how it could overcome the forces against it. It was not the facilitator or development agents imposing their ideas on the community. The community owned the process from problem-identification to the implementation of the project. The community became the script writers and the developers of the story of their life that they needed to tell. They created characters that they related to, and whom they could easily identify with. The community became the actors of the play which gave them power to own the process. The creative process, thus, became a learning process for everyone

(Ravengai, 2010). Here with Transformative Participation, the development goal is of secondary importance, but the process is regarded as more essential and meaningful to community development. The community takes full responsibility of their own development. It leads to greater consciousness of what makes and keeps people incapacitated, and leads to greater confidence in their ability to make a difference. Transformative participation is about consciousness-raising which can be facilitated by exposure to information, knowledge, insights and the ability to see familiar things from a different perspective, thereby increasing one's self-awareness (Abah, 2007).

A cause for concern in transformative participation in theatre for development projects is where the name is used but there is little substantive participation occurring. It has become a buzz tool that development agencies, governments and theatre groups are using more often without including some of the core elements of genuine participatory practice. Cornwell and Brock (2005) argue that this has been a common trend in community development, words that once spoke of politics and power have come to be reconfigured in the service of one-size-fits all development recipes, spun into a politicized form that everyone can agree with.

The process that is taken on a project impacts on the participatory nature of the project (Adams and Goldbard, 2001). Theatre projects need a lot of time, and frequently a large number of people are involved. Therefore, they are relatively expensive. Thus, some donor agents may end up opting for participation as a means where they focus on the blueprint goals. It is not about simply creating a theatre piece but about the process through which the community arrives at the theatre piece (Adams and Goldbard, 2001).

2.4 Representative Participation

Whilst transformative participation is about the community as a whole owning and controlling the process, representative participation is primarily about the organised

intersection of leaders with community members. Debates about representative participation are increasingly gaining importance, especially as far as it relates to the 'cost of participation' for marginalised groups, who willingly hand over this right to others. According to Hickey and Mohan (2004), it is important to consider the synergies and tensions between the project that underpins moves towards greater participation and the wider project of democratisation.

In Theatre for Development projects, consulting with the local community is crucial for participation and the sustainability of a project. One of the methods of incorporating participation into project structures is to involve community members as representatives in the process. This alone is often not enough to engage active participation from the community. One of the challenges is on how to build institutions of accountable local representation for the effective sustainability of projects. This involves determining ways of integrating community participation into the representation process. In some theatre for development projects, the process is not completely surrendered to the community. The outside agents might bring in a written script and may choose a cast to act out the play on behalf of the community. In community based theatre projects, the most powerful representation is in the form of characters being projected in the play as they mirror the community as a whole, which is why it is important for the community to develop and project the story of their life.

Due to the high illiteracy levels that existed in the Kamirithu Community Theatre project, the community did not allow it to be a setback in writing a script. They went on to request Ngugi WaThiong'o and Ngugi wa Miri who came from the same community to write the script on their behalf. The community trusted the two organic intellectuals with the process as in their eyes they were a reflection of their community. The community then discussed the content and changed what they were not in agreement with. Thus community participation through representation becomes progressive, creating the space on which its voice can be heard.

Representative participation has limitations because of the delegation of power. If not well handled, it might destroy the notion of real participation. The community is in a better position of choosing the people they trust and believe in. In community theatre projects, the risk of neglecting some marginalised groups such as women and youths always remains high. This may jeopardise the community's involvement in the process. The range of involvement is narrow when only a handful of citizens or a particular socioeconomic group dominates decision making. Yet it becomes broader with the involvement of interest groups and is most representative when a large number of stakeholders, representing different socioeconomic groups, are directly involved (Boeren, 1992).

While opening spaces for community participation through representation is necessary, it is by no means sufficient to ensure effective participation. Much depends on how people take up and make use of what is available, as well as on supportive processes that can help build capacity, nurture voice and enable people to empower themselves. Here the contrast and the relationship between spaces that are created through representative participation and those that people create for themselves (Cornwall 2000) become especially important.

2.5 Instrumental Participation

As currently understood, participation involves various communities and interest groups having a say in and contributing to the development processes that affect them. Goetz (1995) asserts that in contrast to the representative participation, instrumental participation is understood as taping into local knowledge and other local inputs by the agents of change for their benefits. The trend in community participation in theatre initiated interventions in the 1990s parallels the pervasive shift in community development projects from non- participative to participatory approaches, and illustrates what Chambers (1995: 32) views as a shift in the past two decades from externally driven participation to community driven participation. Thus participation models associated with this shift may be viewed as instrumental

models of participation, or what White (1994) termed pseudo participation. In theatre for development projects this is when theatre practitioners bring projects that are set to benefit their organisations. Their concerns are not with the community but with their own financial benefits. Instrumental Participation occurs due to the fact that the agents in development maybe set to please the donors of the project. Thus Instrumental participation describes a co-opting practice, of mobilizing the community to reduce cost in which local people participate in what is called 'our projects'. Instrumental participation implies that local people have limited power in terms of involvement and decision making. The control and decision- making power actually lies with the development planners.

Recently, the idea of participatory planning has become rather fashionable, with projects led by both government and non-governmental organisations using terms such as 'stakeholder consultation' and 'people-friendly plan' in their project briefs. But the reality of participatory planning is that it tends to be limited to meetings with a few elite groups, where community issues are discussed – and then the professionals take the decisions on any future development. Sadly, such tokenism means that people's control over decision making remains elusive. This will continue to be the case as long as professionals involved in the project receive no training for facilitating meaningful participation in highly fragmented societies, and as long as multiple stakeholders and interest groups including women, children, youth, and the elderly and other marginalised people are excluded from consultations.

Nelson and Wright (1997) argue that the shift towards the discourse of the marginalised, who are regarded as the primary stakeholders, has been more instrumental than transformational. More often than not, communities are led into participating in theatre workshops using 'folk' songs, dances, poems and stories that have already been planned for them. It then becomes instrumental for people to take part in pre-planned workshops. Robert Chambers (1997) sums it up when he says the instrumental paradigm means that 'they' (local people) participate in 'our' project as opposed to the transformational in which 'we' participate in 'theirs.'

Transferring the ownership among the stakeholders in a project is far from easy; sometimes, such processes are regarded, in a very instrumental way by participants, as means to gain access to benefits or to improve their own access to services. Being involved in a process is not equivalent to having a voice. Voice needs to be nurtured. People need to feel capable of expressing themselves without fear of reprisals or the possibility of being denied audience. And this, of course, cannot be guaranteed no matter how well-meaning the instigators of the process may be. While those who initiate participatory processes at the community level may create space for dialogue, they have no control whatsoever over what may happen as a consequence.

2.6 Conclusion

The contention that participation means different things to different people may sound obvious but not informative in practice, differences in perceptions and understanding are often overlooked and can derail participatory processes. Practitioners and decision makers should ask themselves whether they consider participation as a means or as a process. They should, from the outset, make the distinction that has been described by Nelson and Wright (1995) in relation to 'instrumental' and 'transformative' participation. This distinction has profound implications for the type of participatory process chosen, the resources needed to support the process, the expected outcomes and the role of communities or stakeholder groups. Community engagement is not to be characterized as an inevitable outcome of insulated and intrusive modes of power but should be more open, transparent, and participatory. In the majority of community projects that are governmental and non-governmental driven, local communities are often taken advantage of such that their participation becomes instrumental. The question now to be asked is which model should be regarded as the best model? The following chapter examines Phases of Participation in relation to Savanna Trust as my case study. The goal is to understand how community participation is being framed by community theatre for development organisations.

CHAPTER 3

Phases of Community Participation

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined different paradigms of participation, showing their significance and challenges to community engagement in Theatre for Development interventions. The discussion led to the realisation that participation is a mixed bag which is understood differently in different situations. This chapter will analyse the way in which community participation has been handled by Savanna Trust.

Theatre for Development (TFD) has become widely accepted in Africa and in other parts of the developing world as a theatre of ordinary people used to address their problems, in their own terms, from their own perspectives and from within their own art forms. The people are seen as the protagonists, generating the themes and infusing the drama with conflicts from their daily lives (Kidd, 1980; Mda, 1993). The power, authority, responsibility and ownership will be in the hands of the community. Theatre for Development has deliberately moved away from mainstream western theatre which separates the audience from actors, talks for and not with the community and in its preoccupation with a finished product meant for consumption, rather than allowing for a process of creating together. In other words, TFD is concerned with, and derives its strength from local participation (Abah 2002).

Kershaw (1994) asserts that community theatre has the potential to create an immediate and lasting impact on the evolution of wider cultural, social and political realities. Yet Nicholson (2005) contends that such modes of applied theatre can be viewed as both a gift and a poison. Apart from the ambiguous meanings that may be attached to the metaphor of a gift such as dependency, patronage and surveillance, Nicholson (2005) argues that the practice of making theatre in community settings creates spaces that enable participants' voices to be heard. If people are left out

from the early stages of development programmes, they are less likely to appreciate the initiative. In theatre-initiated projects, community participation allows people the freedom to shape their destiny by harnessing their cultural resources in order for them to achieve the goals of community development. This chapter analyses the stages of participation that were employed by Savanna Trust in the Wadzanayi environmental project. The objective is to gauge how effective these stages were in terms of community participation and how best they could have been made to play a more effective role in community development.

3.2 Context of the project

Wadzanayi Cooperative Farm and the surrounding areas in the Lalapanzi District of Zimbabwe have witnessed an increase in the abuse of the natural environment since the year 2000. Settlers who invaded the farm disrupted the way of life once associated with the Wadzanayi farming community. The settlers embarked on extensive deforestation as they cleared land for farming and cutting down trees for domestic use and for sale outside the farm. For instance, Bondongwe forest situated within Wadzanayi Farm was the prime target for much of the deforestation that took place. Some wild animals were scared away as the settlers ravaged the area, and this negatively impacted on the woodland ecosystem and biodiversity conservation. Furthermore, the population significantly increased resulting in a high demand for natural resources particularly wood fuel. The area also lacked viable sources of livelihood and income besides farming. However the area was endowed with vast unutilized land and untapped groundwater that could be harnessed for income generating projects to enhance livelihoods and incomes.

The intention of the theatre initiated environmental project was to address the problem of climate change and combat and redress land degradation in the district. The intervention involved the use of wood saving stoves to minimize demand for wood fuel; the establishment of woodlots by embarking on afforestation and reforestation programmes; planting vertiver grass; invigorating indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) in environmental management; enhancing community

livelihoods and incomes by establishing an income generating project; and developing community capacity through training and information dissemination to appropriately and effectively respond to environmental challenges. Savanna Trust embarked on an integrated Theatre for Development project as an intervention strategy for communicating environmental issues and introducing environmental management and adaptation strategies in the Wadzanayi community.

3.3. Stages of the intervention

3.3.1 Problem identification

According to Freire (1972), human existence cannot be silent nor can it be nourished by false words but only the true words with which men and women can transform the world. To exist, humanity has to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namer as a problem and requires of them a new naming. Communities are not built in silence, but in words, in works and in action and reflection. Thus theatre for development focuses on communities making their own theatre and encourages the audience to identify what is needed to create change in their own lives. Slachmuijlder (2006:8) argues that if change within a community was to occur, it would happen only when a community is given a forum for sharing their own ideas, understanding one another and developing ways of affecting change together.

Prior to their long term relationship with the Wadzanayi Community which they had established during the democracy and peace building project that has been studied by Makumbirofa (2011), Savanna Trust decided to carry out an environmental project with the community. In this case, representatives from Savanna Trust visited the community to inform them about the new project they were intending to bring to the community. At this stage, they were not in a position of bringing together the community as a whole to discuss the new development. Instead, they approached the chairman of the community, thus, acknowledging the existence of leadership

hierarchies in communities. However this move at a later stage of the project created conflict of power and of interest within community members. Since Savanna Trust is a development organisation that works, in most instances, under a restricted budget, sometimes it is often necessary for them to choose a few people in the beginning of the project to represent the community. Also in externally-driven projects time and cost can be a problem. Thus, consulting with the community as a whole may take much time. Savanna Trust considered it important to acknowledge the diversity and dynamics that existed in the community so that all groups could be represented during the stage of problem identification.

Savanna Trust put into consideration what is advocated by World Vision (2002) that the crucial design principle in community development interventions is that local communities must play a key role in the identification of development activities though they did it through representative community participation. Understanding the notion of community participation, Savanna Trust began with the task of including the community through representation in identifying the area of concern. For Wadzanayi Community to engage in the project they needed to actively involve themselves in deciding on the project they want. A platform was created in the environmental project where local people were empowered to name the social, political, economic challenges they face in their community.

3.3.2 Planning

Wadzanayi community's role in the planning process of the project was limited. The greater part of the planning process took place in the central business district in Harare where the Savanna Trust offices are situated. The planning included the administration and financial aspects of the project and the implementation strategy. Savanna Trust set the goals and the desired outcomes of the project without the communities input. Yet in theatre for development projects this is the phase at which local communities are supposed to participate directly and actively. However this was due to limited budget and time that it was difficult for the organisation to plan the project with the community all the time. As for a project to be considered

participatory, planning and decision making must be the responsibility of the community as the outcome of the project is there to transform their lives. Participatory theatre may also be seen as risky by development agents as they feel there is an element of power transfer to a supposedly unprofessional set of people (the community) to lead the process.

However, some agents have come to the realization that it is possible to achieve full participation in development projects by engaging the community in every stage of the project. Thus Theatre for Development should not instruct people on what to do, but should, rather, arouse the people's capacity to participate and decide things for themselves (Mda, 1990).

3.3.3 Scripting

Savanna Trust has its own script writer, Raisdon Baya, who is commissioned to write scripts and among them is Makanya (You have done something wrong). The script was written on behalf of the Wadzanayi Community, focusing on the settler's environmentally catastrophic behaviour. The script was prepared without full involvement of the community. The community become the recipient of a product that was planned on their behalf. Yet consulting with the community is crucial for the sustainability of the project. However, when Baya was writing the script, He left out the political conflicts affecting the people and it jeopardised community participation at a later stage of the project. This omission affected not only the participatory nature of the project but also the artistic and entertainment quality of the work, as often core aspects of dramatic tension and audience engagement were missing.

In transformative participatory development the community creates and shapes the text based on their own ideas and those of others. They further improvise, act and interpret the text based on their own understanding of their situation. Due to time constrains, most theatre for development organisations including Savanna Trust employ an outside team approach explained by Ravengai (2010) as a group of

people going into a community, staying with the community, listening to and observing the people's problems and exchanging opinions with the people and then going away and writing the script and bringing back the play to the community. However this can be problematic as attested by Chinyowa (2008) that those working in the field of Theatre for Development, who in most instances are often outsiders to the communities can fail to fully observe and understand the cultural norms of target communities.

In theory, participatory theatre is led by the community, yet in reality it is often initiated by outside agencies with their own agendas of how and what they want the theatre projects to achieve. This, in turn has the potential to impact on the ability of the project to be participatory and for communities to bring about their own sustainable change (Malamah, 1986). Elsewhere, Kerr (1991) argues that within this tightly controlled creative matrix, it is difficult for theatre workers from outside to explore existing linkages within communities and the political, economic and social structures that perpetuate it. Perhaps Savanna Trust could have held workshops with the community to allow the community to speak for themselves.

3.3.4 Casting

Six young people from Wadzanayi Community were chosen to represent the community in enacting the production which was brought in and directed by Savanna Trust. Community participation was representational in that the young people were there to represent the community in the process. Nevertheless their participation can be termed instrumental in that the actors were not the creators of the story; they became implementing vehicle for the content. Thus theatre for development needs to focus on communities making their own theatre and encouraging the audience to identify what is needed to create change in their own lives.

Slachmuijlder (2006:8) argues that if change within a community is going to take place, it would come about only when a community is given the opportunity to input

its own ideas, understand one another and develop ways of affecting change. This will give the community ownership of the process from the beginning. Like what Savanna Trust did during the assessment process of the same environmental project where the community was given the chance to create the script, improvise the play, act it out and discuss the way forward without or with minimal interference from outsiders. By giving the cast a written script, they might not be in a position to question the content of the script due to the complexities of their position in the relationship. If they had been given the privilege and the power to construct the script from the beginning they would have been able to interrogate the content as it arose in improvisation.

3.3.5 Performance

Wadzanayi Community did not get the chance to create the play, *Makanya* but engaged with the performance as actors and audience. During the performance the audience could be heard clapping hands in agreement with the characters and laughing in response to the content of the play. Sayye (2004) argues that participatory theatre is a powerful tool for both education and entertainment and more so, for influencing the people's way of life. It promotes opportunities for positive dialogue. Adams and Goldbard (2001, p. 29) found that when communities are split over contentious issues raised through theatre performances, an opportunity for dialogue is created rather than the type of debate that leads to polarization.

The performance allowed other community members to be free to interact with the performance. The play was performed in the community hall where the participants are familiar with the surroundings because they constantly hold their community meetings in the hall. Thus the community members were free to voice their comments during the performance, unlike if it was a mainstream theatre space where the audience are detached by the proscenium stage. Thus, the Wadzanayi community theatre became theatre for the people, orchestrated by the people to transform the people and their community.

3.3.6 Post-performance discussion

During the post-performance discussion, the community related to the play and identified the areas they thought were going to be of importance to them. The inclusion of the community in the post- performance discussion allowed the community to actively participate in the project eliminating the chances of banking information to the community members. According to Freire (1972) banking education resists dialogue; problem-posing education regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality. Thus dialogue became the turning point in community participation; it enabled the community to speak to their own development. Savanna Trust had to move aside and allow the community to process their own development.

A young man who was part of the local drama group and of the Wadzanayi Community led the post-performance discussion where ideas were debated. The level of community participation was high because there was the surrendering of power into the community's hands as the community was at ease in contributing to their development. It was a platform where the community could critically dialogue on how they can work towards protecting their environment. The post-performance dialogue allowed the community to reflect on its experiences.

One of the community members shared an idea on how they could preserve their environment by constructing wood-saving stoves to reduce the use of firewood and the cutting down of trees. This idea was initiated by the scene in the play where cattle had died because they fell in a pit caused by soil erosion due to the cutting down of trees. Another community member mentioned how it would be important if they had a plantation to ensure that if someone cuts down trees, they should be obliged to replace them. This came out as a result of a scene were someone burned the community forest whilst trying to chase away hyenas which were terrorising their community to prey on their goats and cattle. Women from the community mentioned how important it was for them to have a cooperative garden so that those who were cutting trees and selling them may sell vegetables as an income generating scheme.

Thus, community participation became process-oriented with the community mapping the way forward rather than having it imposed by outsiders. This stage created a situation where the community felt responsible for the project and became agents of their own change.

3.4. Project Outcomes

Following the post-performance discussions, ten community members were selected five women and five men, to be trained on how to construct wood-saving stoves. One of the adult community members volunteered to train community members who were going to help in constructing the wood-saving stoves (see pictures below). The community also identified a space were they wanted the garden to be situated. Prentki (1998: 422) argues that participatory theatre can be facilitated by external agents but it must be owned by the community if it is to be a valid tool in assisting sustainable development. In the case of the Wadzanayi Community, participation became representative, with the community choosing for themselves who was fit to play what role in the training.

During the workshop held to encourage community participation, Savanna Trust facilitated some team building games to promote the spirit of working together. Building trust among participants was necessary for the community members who were taking part in this process as they were members belonging to two different political affiliations. Thus the medium of theatre made it possible to build on the skills that the people already had resulting in productive community participation.

3.5 Conclusion

In theatre-initiated development projects, effective community participation is evident when the community contributes in all stages of the intervention. This can be done by involving the community in identifying the area of concern and by allowing them to take responsibility of the themes to be developed (Kidd and Byram, 1982). From the phases of participation discussed above, participatory theatre demonstrated that it

has the ability to mobilise community participation. However, it was also demonstrated that community participation can be challenging as it tends to incorporate a number of paradigms of participation in a single project. If properly handled, participatory theatre builds community cohesion and can help communities address important issues. As Klotz (2002) argues, many projects do not succeed because they operate from the premise that a theatrical piece on its own can initiate meaningful change in society. If done well, participatory theatre does not just become another development project. It can be an experience that the community treasures and have pride in a shared process that can have a long-term impact on the community. In the next chapter, I shall examine how the monitoring and evaluation process of the Wadzanayi project has tried to handle community participation.

A



B



C



Picture **A** shows one of the community members training the community on how to build the wood-saving stoves. Picture **B** shows community members implementing the development initiative by constructing the wood –saving stoves. Picture **C** shows the community working on the new found community Garden as an income generating project.

Chapter 4

Community Participation in and through Performance

4.1 Introduction

In chapter three, the discussion revolved around the way in which community participation was framed in different intervention phases of the Wadzanayi farm community project. The chapter presented some fluctuations in the community's engagement from stage to stage. This chapter explores live performance and how it can be framed to encourage community participation. Performance involves the transaction and negotiation of meaning between performers and audience as they interact either actively or vicariously (Chinyowa, 2008b). The community rehearses for change by critically engaging with the content of the performance text. This chapter examines how participation can be manifested in and through live performance. The purpose is to understand the relationship between performance and community and how the performance text speaks to community participation.

4.2. The Performance Text

The performance text has been described as an ideological transaction and negotiation between groups of performers and their targeted audience (Kershaw, 1994). The language of the performance text, its signs or codes of signification, connect with the communities cultural frames of reference to forge a dialogue of their world- views. As a performance text, the play *Magariro* (Living together) was used by the Wadzanayi Community to create a platform where critical learning and understanding concerning the environmental project were conveyed and the community came together to dialogue about the future through participation. The play had six cast members who had dual roles and who were also members of the Wadzanayi Community.

The performance text was compiled by the Wadzanayi theatre group unlike the original performance text which had been written by an outsider. The composition of

the content was participatory as the community had the opportunity to contribute what they expected to see in the text. The Wadzanayi theatre group carried out random interviews in the community gathering information to make up the play. Admittedly, this process excludes other members of the community. However from an interview with Chido, one of the cast members, she pointed out how difficult it was to interview everyone as others had other commitments. The Wadzanayi theatre group had to select what they deemed necessary. The question will always remain whose voice counts even at the community level. Nevertheless, the creation of the performance text became participatory through representation of the community by its members.

4.3 Participatory Folk Media

Fernandez (1996:74) defines folk media as "any form of endogenous communication system which by virtue of its origin serves as a channel for messages in a way and manner that requires the utilization of the values, symbols, institutions, and ethos of the host culture through its unique qualities and attributes." In other words, folk media refers to all organized processes of production and exchange of information managed by local people using local frames of references. These include traditional theatre or drama, masks and puppet performances, tales, proverbs, riddles, songs and dances. They are cultural and endogenous responses to different community needs for information, education and social protest (Conrad, 2004). An important aspect of folk media that makes it unique and favourable in development is that it is participatory. Thus development agents are adopting such mediums of communication to facilitate transformative community participation.

Ansu-Kyeremeh (1998) argues that folk media, as traditional forms of communication, have evolved as grassroots expressions of the values and lifestyles of the people. Because they use local languages with which the people are familiar, they have become embedded in people's cultural, social, and psychological thinking. Folk media are used to communicate and at the same time bring communities together. Thus, it is necessary to understand how community participation is being

handled by theatre for development practitioners and agents. In a number of Savanna Trust theatre-initiated projects, folk media is a key tool for assessing community needs for raising awareness and mobilising the community. Savanna Trust has opted for this mode of communication because it brings the community together in addition to facilitating a collective process of learning between community members (Tillis, 1999).

4.3.1 Folk Songs

In the opening scene the performers sang the song *Mugariro* from the back stage:

> Tinoda mugariro wakadiiko muWadzanayi
>
> Tinoda mugariro mugariro wakanaka (x 3)
>
> (How do we want to live in Wadzanayi?
>
> We want to live together happily)

The song *Mugariro* was composed by the local theatre group as a thematic song for the performance. It was performed for three minutes, resulting in the audience singing along and clapping hands to it. Dutta (2008) asserts that these songs may be used to convey the aesthetic sense of people but the unique feature about them is that they belong to the community and they bring them together. The folk song was used as a communication vehicle for promoting and improving dialogue between and among community members (Zwaal 2000). It brought the community together because it was something related to the people's past, present and future.

As a platform for community participation, folk songs are particularly powerful because they engage with the narrative of the community and resonate with the stories that circulate within it. Thus, the song *Mugariro* was used to invite the community into the performance, creating a relationship between the audience and the performers.

4.3.2 Folk Dances

Folk dance reflects the expectations of a community in so far as it bears witness to the group's cultural and social identity. Its standards and values are transmitted orally, by imitation or other means (UNESCO, 1989). For instance, *mbakumba* which is a traditional Shona harvest celebration dance was used to celebrate the coming of the environmental project to the community. The performers went into the audience and invited some of the audience onto the stage to help them celebrate the new development in the community. The audience members later became participants at this ceremony leading them to be part of the cast.

Dutta (2008) asserts that folk dances are the most convenient means of reflecting the life of the community, its social customs and manners, and its hopes and aspirations. However, using dance and song as means of community participation has its own problems. It may not guarantee authentic community participation as some members may participate in the song and dance but this does not mean that they would be willing to discuss development issues. The dancing does not necessarily mean they are participating meaningfully or that they are able to relate the dance to the message being conveyed in the text.

Mlama (1990) asserts that folk media techniques rooted in traditional communication forms help with people's participation by concretizing the problems in theatrical performances, highlighting their own perceptions on the root of the problems and the possible solutions. By virtue of the grassroots origin of folk media, George (1990) has also noted that it is immediately compelling and possesses the ability to communicate directly to community groups and it involves the members of the community as producers and performers.

4.4 Call and Response Relationships

Odhiambo, (2008) asserts that call and response is a form of interaction between a performer and one or more listeners, in which every utterance of the speaker elicits a verbal or non-verbal response from the listener or listeners. In theatre performance

call and response is an interaction between the performers and the audience. Through this call and response, an integrated relationship is formed between the community and the actors, as call and response enables the community to actively engage with the content of a performance.

In the process of delivering the play, Magariro, the performance constantly received feedback from the audience which created a call and response relationship. A platform was created where the community could share and contribute their thoughts, at the same time enhancing community participation. For example in one of the scenes where Mai Ruza sings an emotional song complaining about her estranged husband, responses emerged from the audience:

> Zvepano pamusha handichina zororo,
>
> Saka ndoitasei handichina zororo,
>
> Murume wandinetsa handichina zororo
>
> Saka ndoita sei?
>
> (There is no peace in this house
>
> So what should I do?
>
> My husband is constantly troubling me
>
> So what should I do?)

The responses included phrases like “pack your bags and go”, “talk to him”, “you cannot leave your family because of that”. There were also agreements and disagreements coming from the audience such as “sure”, “yes”, “shame” and “do not go”. The song carried within it some sorrowful tones and questions that needed answers. It resulted in the instant feedback from the audience creating a platform where the audience were free to chant their thoughts.

Through the call and response technique, performers managed to elicit the audience’s identification with them. This gave audience the opportunity to stand outside the conflict, watch each adversary in action, and empathize with each side.

However it could be a dangerous assumption to assert that everyone was fully participating in the process. The audience is usually addressed as a group by theatre artists, but an audience, like any community, is made up of individuals with varying backgrounds and points of view. In close-knit societies, with shared values and histories, the differences among audience members may be less marked, but no two people bring the same set of life experiences to a performance, and each audience member perceives a theatrical event through a personal lens. This was evident with some audience members who did not comment from the beginning to the end of the performance.

4.5 Participation through Forum Theatre

Can theatre exist without an audience? At least one spectator is needed to make it a performance. So we are left with the actor and the spectator. We can however define the theatre as "what takes place between spectator and actor" (Grotowski, 1969: 32). However, audiences are seen as passive participants, resulting in many practitioners wanting to challenge this. For example, Brecht wanted to mobilize his audience by asking questions and not giving them answers, thereby getting them to think for themselves; Brook talked about the existence of a triangle of relationships within a performance: the performers' internal relationships, the performers' relationships to each other on stage, and the relationship with the audience. Artaud wanted to affect the audience directly at a subconscious level. Boal (1979) wanted his audience to react directly to the action which led him to come up with forum theatre. Boal (1992) suggests that forum theatre encourages autonomous activities; it sets a process in motion thereby stimulating transformative activity.

The practice of forum theatre developed through Boal's work as a director in San Paulo, in the 1960s where he was presenting theatre for and about the oppressed (Babbage 2004). The method was developed by which ownership of the theatre process could be transferred from the actors/directors to the audience or spect-actors through enabling communication at all levels without hierarchising one above another, and respecting the knowledge that participants already had. He was keen for participants to demonstrate their life experiences through the creation of their own theatre, how these oppressions impacted upon their lives, why the oppression occurred and how the participants could overcome it.

This reflection led Boal to find alternative methods of giving the oppressed a voice through the medium of theatre. Thus, forum theatre was developed as a vehicle to give voice to the voiceless (Babbage 2004; Nissley et al. 2004). With this in mind, Boal came up with different structures that could be adapted according to the groups he was working with. While such structures emphasised participation by the audience or spect-actors, they also involved different levels of community participation (Babbage 2004).

Apart from using folk media as a means to facilitate effective community participation, Magariro borrowed some elements of forum theatre to facilitate participatory development. In the beginning the performance made use of a narrator/joker who introduced the play and welcomed the community to the performance. In the narration, he gave a brief history of Wadzanayi Farm, focusing specifically on how it used to be rich with resources, trees, wild animals and water. Thus, forum theatre created a discussion that was set to transforms the community by encouraging cooperation, building a participatory community through networks of communication and understanding, and developing collaborative ideas for community progress. Through uttering words, the Joker becomes the unifying factor between the audience and the performance.

In the play, one of community members who was representing Savanna Trust project facilitators had to stop the performance to ask the community for help following the misunderstanding between the two characters Baba Biggy and Baba Ruza about the location for the borehole. Thus, forum theatre gets the audience to actively participate in discussions on issues that the community would otherwise ignore in daily life. In the fictitious settings, the audience can take ownership of problematic issues and come up with solutions. The performance had moved from the stage to the audience allowing the community to participate. The community responded to the call from Mai Mugwidi, an audience member suggesting that they should look for a

health inspector who could help in locating the borehole. While other members thought that the Headman should have a say on where the borehole should be located. Thus, forum theatre encouraged audience participation through, interactive role-playing and shared experiences. In forum theatre there are no spectators, only active-observers or spect-actors. The action was transferred to the 'auditorium' rather than the 'stage' in a bid to encourage active community participation (Boal 1995).

During the performance, the cast had a one on one interaction with the audience, thus, allowing the audience to author some of the content of the play. Thus forum theatre accorded power to the audience to state their needs through dialogue. The following conversation between Baba Biggy and Mai Jessy (a member of the audience) is quite revealing in this regard:

> Baba Biggy: Mai Jessy help us, what should be done here?
>
> Mai Jessy: You are brothers from the same family You should learn to respect each other's opinions.
>
> Baba Biggy: But I am the educated one and our father left me in control of this land. He should listen to me.
>
> Mai Jessy: If you keep on fighting with each other, you are going to lose this project and you will make the wholecommunity suffer because of your petty issues.

Thus forum theatre in this case placed audience participation at the centre of development. By allowing audience participation in one form or another is seen as a given, participants at such events being both performers and audience (Coopey: 2002). Through forum theatre, the platform became empowering for the community in that they got the chance to dialogue with the issue at hand. According to Freire (1993), it is essential to foster communication, that is to say, mutual dialogue between the facilitators and the learners. Active participation and problem- solving encourages conscientisation and opens the dialogic space that Freire (1993) argued for. This is echoed by Cohen-Cruz (2006) who asserts that theatre, being a

collaborative art form, is not driven by hierarchical structures but by the people themselves. Thus dialogue was not just about an improved understanding of the subject matter, but the start of a transformative process through community participation.

The only problem with participative theatre of the type advocated by Boal (1979) and others is that it does not offer an option of non-participation. The emphasis on active participation ignores the possibility that individuals may still engage with the event even if they do not appear to be overtly participating. Furthermore, while participation is cited as the key to learning, there are those who feel uncomfortable in such situations. George (2007) notes that participants engaged in theatre activities sometimes express deep seated concerns to engaging in theatre forms in which they felt they had limited talent. This may result in dissonance and discomfort to the extent that they are likely to feel excluded and marginalised rather than involved. However through forum theatre practices, vicarious participation was taking place in the process. The process of vicarious participation through which a spec-tator is able to follow the interaction of others though not overtly taking part is an implicit enactment of roles. The observer takes the roles of the various actors alternately and reciprocally. Unlike active participation, the taking of roles remains implicit or covert. The vicarious participant, the spectator, is not acknowledged or addressed as a participant. He exerts no direct control over the observed encounter. His is, indeed, a recognized status that carries both the privilege of observing and the obligation not to intervene.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter explored the use of live performances to facilitate community participation in development projects. The chapter affirmed the view that community participation is enhanced when local frames of references are used to address problems. It has also been noted that rather than adopting external theatre forms, Theatre for Development practitioners may also make use of folk media and forum theatre as these relate and speak better to the experiences of communities. The use of forum theatre allowed the participants to achieve border crossing by breaking the

fourth wall that is created by a performance. The constant engagement between characters' and the audience during the performance allowed the audience to participate in the drama throughout the performance. Community participation in this case is viewed as an active, dynamic process which unfolds during and through live performance and whose purpose is to develop and strengthen the capabilities of the people to intervene more directly in development initiatives (Cooke and Kothari: 2001). Over the course of time the interaction between performers and audience binds them together in a common institution or, better, a common "world" which has its own well under stood values and norms of reciprocal behaviour derived from the common social matrix, its own history and course of mutual development.

CHAPTER 5

Participation as a Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, folk media, forum theatre among other indigenous theatre forms were recommended as effective communication tools in facilitating community participation. More so the monitoring and evaluation process of the Wadzanayi farm project was another crucial stage in Savanna Trust's engagement with the community. This chapter will analyse how community participation was handled in the monitoring and evaluation of the project, placing emphasis on how different parties' interests were negotiated and represented.

Monitoring the progress and evaluating the impact of applied theatre projects has long been considered important to ensure projects sustainability. Besides being accountable to funding agencies theatre for development organisations are increasingly using participatory monitoring and evaluation strategies for the maintenance and improvement of community involvement. The problem with most participatory theatre projects is that there is limited community participation in the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process. As Conrad (2004a: 110) argues, 'it is difficult to know the impact of the work done by the people as the effects are rarely immediate, observable, measurable or easily articulated. This means that there is need for greater focus on community participation in the monitoring and evaluation of community theatre for development projects so that a clearer understanding of benefits is identified. In this section I will analyse the ways in which Savanna Trust framed community participation in the assessment stage of the Wadzanayi farm project.

5.2. Monitoring and Evaluation in Theatre for Development Projects.

While the concept of participation has been in community development circles since 1970s, there is a shift towards a new approach to project evaluation. This approach is based on negotiation and consensus building among all stakeholders involved, to secure shared commitments and accountability with regard to management and results. Within the context of a project, community participation at the evaluation stage is not only about involving or consulting with the people from time to time, but rather involving them in decision making. This then is referred to as participatory monitoring and evaluation.

The Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) can be understood as a process through which stakeholders at various levels engage in monitoring or evaluating a particular project, program or policy. There is the sharing of control over the content, the process and the results of the M&E activity. PM&E focuses on the active engagement of the primary stakeholders. Furthermore, an interest in Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) arose due to dissatisfaction with conventional approaches to M&E. While there are many variations to conventional M&E practices, it has been principally oriented towards the needs of funding agencies. Many argue that conventional approaches attempt to produce information that is objective, value free and quantifiable, hence outsiders are usually contracted to carry out the evaluation for the sake of maintaining objectivity (Rubin 1995). Therefore new ways of monitoring and evaluating community development interventions have evolved. These innovative approaches aim to make M&E more participatory and effective by including all the stakeholders at every stage of the process. Savanna Trust has also tried to adopt a Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation model in its community theatre for development projects.

In what may be regarded as the first and perhaps rare monitoring and evaluation report for applied drama and theatre practices in Africa, the two adult educators, Kidd and Byram (1982) provide a sketchy self-assessment of their intervention in the

Laedza Batanani project in Botswana. Laedza Batanani was a pioneer experiment that paved the way for other prominent applied theatre projects in Africa such as Kamiriithu in Kenya, Murewa in Zimbabwe, Kumba in Cameroon and Maratholi in Botswana. The evaluation of the Laedza Batanani project ended up having community leaders, government officials and development workers imposing their ideas on the villagers by dealing with issues and concerns of the dominant class rather than giving voice to the marginalised (Chinyowa, 2011). For example, in 1976, the project focused on health issues which were clearly influenced by the large and vocal participation of the government health staff. The Laedza Batanani project can be regarded as an M&E summary of many other applied drama and theatre projects in contemporary Africa which did not account for the involvement of the community during the implementation process.

However, Monitoring and Evaluation of community theatre for development projects in Africa has largely been premised on product rather than process (Feuerstein 1986). Pria (1995) asserts that there has been increasing interest among international donor agencies, Theatre for Development organisations and other stakeholders in adopting participatory strategies in M&E practice. More so, most of the applied drama and theatre projects being carried out in African contexts tend to be one-off events with limited follow-up in terms of building the capacity of target communities and organising them for action. Besides bringing people together for workshops, performances and post-performance discussions, such projects simply pass by with little or no impact. The few that have been given attention remain trapped within conventional monitoring and evaluation (M & E) processes (Chinyowa, 2011).

5.3. Principles of Monitoring and Evaluation

Both in theory and practice, community theatre for development has given increased importance to the PM&E principles of integrated participation, experiential learning,

mutual negotiation and adaptive flexibility. This makes PM&E a logical step towards incorporating monitoring the progress and evaluating the impact of community theatre for development projects.

5.3.1 Integrated Participation

Savanna Trust and the Wadzanayi farm community come together in the monitoring and evaluation of the environmental project. The purpose of the community engagement was to enable all stakeholders to join hands in helping to empower the people with organisational and management skills for monitoring and evaluation of the environmental project. Integrated participation allows local communities, funding agencies and practitioners to work together in order to monitor progress and assess the impact of projects. The PM&E process will be geared towards balancing the needs of target beneficiaries with those of funding agencies, policy makers and other outside experts. The main goal of integrated participation in monitoring and evaluation is for the project to achieve transformative social change through participation.

The integrated participation in the monitoring and evaluation of the Wadzanayi community started from the beginning to the end of the project. A meeting was set up with the Wadzanayi Chairman, Savanna Trust and Raisdon Baya, the script writer. This marked the beginning of the evaluation of the project. As for Savanna Trust they were bringing in a project, for Baya he was gathering the baseline data to prepare a script and for the Chairman he was representing the community at large. The coming together of the different stakeholders was representative of participation.

Through interviews, the community provided information that was used by Raisdon Baya to create the script entitled *Magariro*. The community made use of their own observations, experiences and attitudes to provide information for the play. Savanna Trust incorporated the community's voices with their expertise in theatre and improvised a theatre piece which was used as a basis of the monitoring and evaluation process.

Savanna Trust identified six young people from the Wadzanayi community and trained them in their skills transfer programme. At the end of the programme, the young people formed a theatre group called Wadzanayi Theatre. The theatre group represented their community by producing theatre pieces to address the environmental problems the community was confronted with. The formation of the theatre group made it easy for Savanna Trust to be able to transfer the process into the community's hands. The process became participatory in that the community created their own play that was used as an assessment tool for the project with the assistance from Savanna Trust.

The play, *Magariro* tackled issues that were hindering community participation in the environmental project. The play expressed concern at how the social, economic and political situation in Wadzanayi Community was affecting community participation. Through the use of folk media and forum theatre the play created a space where there community could participate freely. Savanna Trust's role in the process was to document the proceedings of the process whilst the community engaged in dialogue in a bid to evaluate progress and to forge the way forward in monitoring the process of the environmental project.

Integrated Participation between Wadzanayi community, the donors and Savanna Trust created a space where all the stakeholders could dialogue and discuss the problems and challenges that the community was facing. Thus monitoring and evaluation of the project become participatory through the collective participation between the agents of development and the community. Feuerstein (1986) describes the essential feature of PM&E as a real partnership in development where people are involved in deciding when and how to monitor and evaluate, analyse, communicate and use information.

5.3.2 Experiential Learning

Elements of folk media which include local dances and songs were used to mobilise community participation during PM&E process. The community participated in the process through singing and dancing. PM&E process is experienced as a means of local capacity building in terms of planning, problem solving and decision making. More importantly, the experiential learning process builds on what people already know and develops such knowledge to enable them to evaluate their own progress.

Thus local frames of references such as folk media were used to invite the community into participating in the process. Everything else comes from there because 'folk media' is created from peoples everyday actions. The Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation approach recognises the significance of people's experience and knowledge, particularly the poor, in conducting and drawing together proposals for change and influencing improvements to their realities as well as managing their own information within the context of a development projects

5.3.3 Mutual Negotiation

The performance of the play, *Magariro* was followed by post-performance discussions that engaged all the stakeholders in interactive dialogue. The discussion was among the Wadzanayi community members, the community theatre group and the Savanna Trust members. The dialogue process allowed mutual negotiation among the players as they sought to evaluate the process and map the way forward together. The mutual negotiation also enabled community participation to be enhanced as stakeholders engaged in a dialogue (Thomas 1996) through negotiating their needs, interests and expectations in order to achieve their development objectives. While the PM&E process involves striking a balance between the competing claims of various stakeholders, the opinions of local community members are often given particular recognition.

The post-performance dialogue incorporated a participatory M & E strategy where all the stakeholders were engaged in a process of collective inquiry. During the post-performance dialogues, the community interrogated, reflected on and interpreted its own world in partnership with Savanna Trust. Guba and Lincoln (1989) argues for what they call the 'fourth generation evaluation' which regards M & E as a process of negotiation that takes into account the diverse perspectives of stakeholders without ignoring the value systems of the specific context. The mutual dialogue (between the stakeholders) was part of an on-going monitoring and evaluation process that created a platform where community participation was elevated and magnified.

5.3.4 Adaptive Flexibility

The Wadzanayi community had to incorporate song and dance as indigenous theatre forms. The adaptive flexibility enabled the community identifies better with the content of the play that was presented to them. Through this adaptive process the community was free to chant their needs, thoughts and beliefs during the performance. Thus monitoring and evaluation process was continually evolving and adapting to the specific needs and interests of the different stakeholders, particularly those of the community. The context specific nature of the PM&E process took into account local cultural and socio-economic realities and created room for adjustments or adaptations in the PM&E process itself.

5.4 Conclusion

The chapter analysed how the principles of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation were used to stimulate community participation in the Wadzanayi project. The chapter concluded that community participation is being handled differently in different stages and phases of developmental projects. The participatory M&E approach has emerged as an instrument that allows the evaluation of projects to take place as 'a process within a process' (Garaycochea 1990, 66). The monitoring and evaluation exercise does not remain an externally driven event but a continuous process involving experiential learning, dialogic interaction and mutual sharing of ideas between stakeholders. The Savanna Trust methodology had the makings of a

success story for a participatory monitoring and evaluation strategy. Whilst this chapter examined ways in which community participation manifests itself through PM&E, the following chapter will look at the ways in which community participation can take place in and through live performance.

CHAPTER 6

General Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This research examined the ways in which community participation was handled in the Savanna Trust Wadzanayi farm project. The goal was to identify better participatory practices that may be applied in community theatre for development interventions. Savanna Trust's Wadzanayi farm project on environmental change was used to analyse the way in which participation is being framed in theatre for development projects. In a bid to locate a more effective means that allows meaningful participation in community development, a number of paradigms of participation were explored and analysed in relation to the Wadzanayi farm project as a case study.

6.2 Summary of the Findings

Community theatre for development practitioners have increasingly called for greater participation by local people and development organisations in the initiation, design and implementation of development initiatives (Blatner and Wiener, 1984). However a gap still exists between the theory and the practice of community participation. There has been an increasing recognition that top-down forms of development imposed on local communities often result in failure; that local people best understand their own needs and what is likely to work and not work for them. This study has shown in practice that the interpretation of participation varies from stage to stage resulting in community participation becoming a mixed bag. In most projects the community is often not actively involved in identifying a project of their choice. Participation in this stage becomes more instrumental than transformational.

The widespread adoption of the term participation across the field of development, from non-governmental organisations to local government bodies to the World Bank, raises questions about what exactly community participation has come to mean. In an attempt to understand participation in community theatre for development interventions, the research identified a number of paradigms of participation.

However, it was also demonstrated that community participation can be challenging as it tends to incorporate a number of paradigms of participation in a single project. But, if properly handled, community participation builds group cohesion and can help communities address important issues. It can be an experience that the community treasures and have pride in a shared process that can have a long-term impact on the community.

Through Savanna Trust environmental project it was evident that theatre practitioners are applying different paradigms in different phases of projects. In the Savanna Trust project, community participation ranged from instrumental to transformative participation. The reason for this variation was pointing to time and cost. Therefore, the question to be asked is which model should be regarded as the best model? From the findings transformative community participation proved to be an effective paradigm of participation. It creates a space where all stakeholders can actively participate in all the stages of a project by integrating ideas and creating mutual negotiations. It also creates a platform for the voice of the marginalised community groups such as children, women, and youth to be heard in decision-making processes (Freire 1976).

Through this research it came that the application of local cultural frames of reference such as folk songs and dances in live performances results in the elevation of community participation. Thus it is important for theatre practitioners to understand people's indigenous cultures such that they incorporate these in developmental interventions in order to facilitate effective community participation.

Furthermore, community participation in the Wadzanayi project was elevated by means of integrating all the stakeholders in the monitoring and evaluation of the environmental project. There was a transfer of power among the players. Community participation was aimed at creating an enabling environment for people to explore their local human and material resources, to improve their socio-economic

conditions and general well-being. However, it can be argued that though community participation offers much scope for improving the chances of success in community development, it is unlikely to succeed unless planners and development professionals address the challenges associated with it through active engagement with the community.

More often than not, development experts dominate decision-making and manipulate, instead of facilitating, the development process. The trademark of being 'development experts' means that they always know best and therefore, their prime function is to transfer knowledge to communities who are deemed to 'know less'. The reason for this assumption is that, as professionals they are trained in ways that tend to disempower others by telling them what they should do and think. This has contributed to professionals regarding themselves as the sole owners of development knowledge and having monopoly over solutions which consistently underrate and under-value the capacities of local people to make their own decisions as well as to determine their own priorities (Rowlands, 1995).

6.3 Recommendations and Further Research

Participation in community theatre for development projects often assumes the notion of 'common purpose and common good'. A re-negotiation of the relationship between those who control the resources (donors) and the recipients of those resources (communities) is needed. Involving people can be expensive in various ways and, in some instances, can paralyze decision-making, holding development investments hostage to unproductive activism and reinforce local power structures and power struggles. Community participation can use enormous amounts of time, create endlessly delays and circularize decision making. The challenge for those involved in development work is to recognize these obstacles and how they can effect community participation.

Consultation with the community is a crucial step in any developmental project. Real participation is active and gives people a meaningful stake in a project. Involving

people at all stages of the project may result in the community achieving transformative participation. A platform should always be created where the community decide together, acts together and supports its own members to have ownership of the project, make decisions.

Practitioners in theatre for development projects need to take note that acting together with the community helps to transform people from being objects to subjects. Also deciding together recognises that participants bring knowledge and ideas to projects. Building relationships of trust with the community is essential for securing their commitment, which in turn is necessary to ensure the sustainability and the monitoring and evaluation of the work.

I would like to recommend that for community participation in theatre initiated projects to be effective the project cycle needs to be followed from the funding agents and implementing agents to the community and back to the funders. This is because there are power structures that constantly hinder community participation which require close attention. The relationship between the donor community and the community also needs attention in order for all the players to understand some of the obstacles associated with participation.

To understand the ways in which community participation can be handled and framed in theatre for development interventions should be the ultimate goal for development practitioners. The research acknowledged the challenges involved in identifying better paradigms of participation that can be applied in theatre for community development. However the paradigms differed in terms of application and impact. Transformative participation was more effective because of its capacity to transfer power by creating space for mutual negotiation among all the stakeholders.

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Appendix

Makanya

Scene 1

Enter the actors singing a traditional song sung during roora negotiations. They all take their positions. Among the actors is a narrator who is dressed differently. The narrator begins the story.

NARRATOR: Once upon a time a group of landless people came together and bought a farm. On this farm, this land they called Wadzanai Farm, they lived together in peace and harmony. The farm had everything to make their lives comfortable. The land was good, rich. It had mineral resources, wild animals, birds, water, and a huge gumtree plantation. The rains fell in time and the farmers had good harvest. The forest provided firewood, meat in the form of wild animals and birds. It was paradise. However, all that is gone now. The good land is getting poorer. One by one the animals have left. The rains which used to come on time now avoid the place. Now the farm needs saving. The land needs protection. No one can save the farm. No one can protect the land. No one but us, the people who live on the farm, can save or protect the land. Ladies and gentlemen, our story begins at Rungano's homestead where her future husband, Biggie, has come to ask for her hand in marriage. Here is our story.

The actors unfreeze, sing their song for moment. Biggie and his Sadombo are seated in one corner. Rungano's family is in another corner. It is mainly her father, mother and a relative. The father, Rupiza, is talking.

RUPIZA: We are expecting nothing less than five walking beasts and two bags of maize as roora for our beautiful daughter.

SADOMBO: Five beasts and two bags of maize!

RUPIZA: Yes. Is that too much to ask for a young woman has not wasted her womanhood on other men?

SADOMBO: No. It's not too much. But things have not been good for everyone these past years. There has been a terrible drought and the economic meltdown that saw every family selling most of their prized possession in order to survive.

RUPIZA: Our daughter is a good child. She has kept herself for one man. She is obedient, respectful and will make your son happy.

SADOMBO: That we have no doubt. It is actually the main reason we are here.

RUPIZA: So what's the problem? She is worth every cent we are asking for her.

SADOMBO: There is no problem, vaRupiza. However, we don't want to agree to pay something that will give us a problem in future. We won't be able to pay five beasts and we don't want to be indebted to you for the rest of our lives.

RUPIZA: But roora is never paid in full at once. We know that in our culture. You can pay what you can afford now and then pay the rest in installments.

SADOMBO: We think two cows and two bags of maize is enough and affordable to us.

RUPIZA: Two cows! Two cows is an insult to my daughter and this family. It would be like giving her away for nothing. She is worth more than two cows.

SADOMBO: Your daughter is coming to join our family. We are not here to buy her. Look at the cows as a way of strengthening our relationship and not as payment for your daughter.

RUPIZA: Alright. Two cows and two bags of maize meal. I am only agreeing to this because I don't want to stand in my daughter's way of happiness. Two cows, two bags of maize and majazi amai plus a complete suit for me. Complete suit and shoes.

The Sadombo claps in agreement while nodding his head.

NARRATOR: And so the negotiations were concluded. The future was bright for the young couple. Both sides were happy. And celebrations were in order.

There is clapping hands by everyone as a celebratory invades the stage. Everyone stands and begin to dance.

SCENE 2

Biggie's homestead. Biggie's father is seated inside the main house. He is working on his broken axe, tying the wooden handle with some piece of black rubber. Enter Biggie's mother. She has brought some drink for the husband. A cup of Mahewu. She kneels and offers her husband the cup.

AMAI: Baba, when are you planning on going to the fields? I was thinking we could go together later when the heat has cooled off a bit.

FATHER: Kwapisa ka?

AMAI: Kwapisa chaizvo nhasi. Walking in the open is like walking under a ball of fire.

FATHER: Times have changed, Mai Biggie. This place used to be known for its cold weather and not this sweltering heat.

AMAI: Times are changing. We never used to have a drought year after year. We always had rains. We always knew what to expect from the sky. Not anymore.

FATHER: This heat and this drought that doesn't want to leave us will drag everyone to their graves, Amai Biggie

AMAI: I have come with something to wet your throat, baba Biggie.

FATHER: Tatenda Madamu! And has Biggie come back yet?

AMAI: I think it's him I hear outside. He must be back. Let me check on him.

She goes out. Father picks the cup of Mahewu and takes a long swig. He wipes his mouth as Biggie comes into the house.

BIGGIE: Good afternoon, baba?

FATHER: Aah Biggie, you are back! And how did you go with your roora negotiations?

BIGGIE: Everything went well, baba. I went with a good Sadombo. An excellent negotiator.

FATHER: How many cattle did he negotiate to pay?

BIGGIE: They wanted five cattle.

FATHER: Five! Your in-laws must be crazy. Where do they think we can get five cattle?

BIGGIE: We managed to negotiate them down to two beasts.

FATHER: Two beasts?

BIGGIE: Yes. Two beasts!

The mother comes back. She stands near the door.

AMAI: There is a child outside, baba' Biggie. You should hear what he is saying.

FATHER: And what is he saying, mai mwana?

AMAI: You should talk to him. He is outside.

FATHER: Is it bad news? I hope someone has not died as we can't afford another death on this farm.

AMAI: Talk to the boy, he is outside.

The father goes out. Biggie and the mother are left in the house. Immediately the father comes back.

FATHER: Biggie, come with me. Something terrible has just happened.

BIGGIE: What has happened?

FATHER: There is no time for questions, Biggie. Get the big axe and the wheelbarrow and let's go.

AMAI: Baba Biggie?

FATHER: The boy says kune mombe dzawira mugoronga.

AMAI: How many?

FATHER: Two beasts, mai mwana. Manjuma na Orange. Both cannot get out.

Father and son rush out. Silence.

WOMAN: Gogoyi pano!

AMAI: Svikai zvenyu. Aah inga ndimai Chikwari. Svikai zvenyu. Pindai. Ko kusvika nguva dzino mukati kwakanaka here?

WOMAN: That hyena ate my goat while I watched. It grabbed and attacked the goat before my eyes. I was so helpless. This time if the wild life people don't do anything fast I going to burn the bush and hope the hyena burns with everything.

AMAI: But burning the bush will only worsen our situation.

WOMAN: How many times have we asked them to come and kill the hyena? They are taking their time while the stupid hyena continues to feed on our livestock.

AMAI: The hyena problem is not our only problem. Biggie and his father have just been called to rescue two of our cows that have fallen into a ditch.

WOMAN: Are you talking about the ditches left behind by miners? The same ditches that nearly killed vachiBhodoro last year when he fell into one of them coming from Lalapanzi? Lucky for him the ditch was full of water.

AMAI: The same ditches, Amai Chikwari. Now they have claimed our cattle.

WOMAN: I knew this would happen.

AMAI: Then we have the Chinese people processing chrome outside our farm. They have no regard for private property. How many roads have they created right through our farm, without our permission?

WOMAN: MaChina kudherera chete. If this was a whiteman's farm would they be doing what they are doing? If this was a rich man's farm - a richman with pockets full of money, politically connected and knowing the laws of this country - would they being doing what they are doing to us?

AMAI: No. They wouldn't dare.

WOMAN: It is people who do not live on our land that are busy destroying our land. The ditches that claimed your cows were created by strangers who were trying to mine on our land. The same strangers who are busy throwing poison into our rivers and other sources of water.

AMAI: We are also to blame as we are not doing anything. We are just looking and watching while we lose everything, land, mineral resources, and even our dignity.

WOMAN: MaChina arikutikhanya Mai Biggie. Do you know that local people are not even benefiting from the resources that are coming out of their own land?

AMAI: They are just taking from us, from our land and not giving anything back.

WOMAN: MaiBiggie ini ndati if the heyna continues eating my goats I am going to burn the bush and get rid of it forever.

AMAI: But the hyena is not the only animal that lives in the bush.

WOMAN: I will have done a lot of people on this farm a favour if I kill the hyena. The baboons troubling everyone in the fields will also be killed by the fire.

AMAI: It is not only baboons and the hyena that live in the bush. The trees, grass and birds will also die.

WOMAN: Then pray the wild life people come and hunt this hyena down. They must get rid of it fast or else I will do it my way.

AMAI: Mai Chikwari, don't do anything foolish. I know you are angry. Infact everyone on this farm is angry at what is happening but we all have to think before we do anything stupid. Usade kukhanya hupenyu wakho shamwari.

WOMAN: Mai Biggie, I just thought I should tell you what is in my head. Regai ndioende. I will talk to you mangwana.

As the woman leaves Biggie comes back. He looks down.

AMAI: Biggie mwanangu, how did it go?

BIGGIE: It's bad. The two cows broke their legs. They couldn't walk anymore.

AMAI: So what did you do to them?

BIGGIE: We put them down. They were in serious pain.

AMAI: Both?

BIGGIE: Yes. We had to kill both of them and it was a difficult decision for father.

AMAI: It must have been terrible for him. Vakhanyika zvakaoma baba vakho mwanangu.

BIGGIE: He says I must postpone my marriage to Rungano because the family can't afford to pay for Rungano's lobola anymore.

AMAI: I am very sorry mwanangu.

BIGGIE: How will I face her? How will I tell Rungano?

AMAI: Tell her anything.

BIGGIE: I can't lie to her.

AMAI: Biggie, rume risinga nyebe harirore. Find something to tell her.

BIGGIE: I am past lying to her, amai. She is my future wife.

AMAI: Then tell her the truth. It is not your fault or your own doing.

BIGGIE: Uku ndiko kunonzi kukhanyika chaiko manje.

She walks out. Biggie is left standing in the room, confused.

The play can pause for a moment here. Have the narrator throw some questions at the audience just to keep them thinking and involved. Some of the questions are as follows:

1. *Is burning the bush to kill the hyena as suggested by Mai Chikwari the best solution?*
2. *If were you Amai Biggie what would you tell Amai Chikwari about her plan to burn the bush?*
3. *Two cows have fallen into a ditch and died. We all know how dangerous the ditches are to animals and people alike. What are we doing as people who face that danger everyday? Are we going to wait for something bad to happen before we fill up the ditches?*

SCENE 3

Somewhere in the farm. The two young lovers meet. Rungano has been collecting firewood. There is tension between them. Biggie is looking a little lost and uneasy.

RUNGANO: Biggie.

BIGGIE: My love.

RUNGANO: What happened? I can tell something bad happened. Your face is a book on which I can read strange matters.

BIGGIE: Life is not fair, my love. Life is just not fair.

RUNGANO: What happened? Has someone passed on? Someone I know?

BIGGIE: No one died.

RUNGANO: So what is the sad news? Tell me. And please don't keep me waiting.

BIGGIE: Two of my father's cows fell in a ditch and broke their legs. We had to kill both cows and father is busy trying to sell the meat as we speak.

RUNGANO: I'm sorry, my love. I didn't know.

BIGGIE: Why did it have to be my father's cows and why did it have to happen now? Now of all the time!

RUNGANO: Bad things happen to us all the time.

BIGGIE: Those cows were supposed to pay for your roora, Rungano. My father was going to give them to me so that I pay for you.

RUNGANO: Are you saying our marriage is no longer going to happen because your family has just lost two cows?

BIGGIE: Rungano, I love you and I cannot live without you.

RUNGANO: Are you going to marry me or not? That's all I want to hear now!

BIGGIE: My father says we have to postpone the marriage.

RUNGANO: And you? What are you saying?

BIGGIE: Your father will not accept dead cows, will he?

RUNGANO: This is not a joking matter, Biggie.

BIGGIE: I am not joking. Without roora I cannot take you as my wife.

Mother rushes in. She looks frightened.

AMAI: Biggie, manya mwanangu, come and see this! Our maize fields are all on fire!

BIGGIE: What?

AMAI: Someone has just set the whole farm on fire. Look up there. Can you see how thick the smoke is? That fire is going to consume everything in our fields!

BIGGIE: Who could have started the fire?

RUNGANO: Probably some wood poachers. They are becoming a nuisance.

BIGGIE: Our maize! Someone has to save our maize fields!

He rushes out, followed by Rungano.

AMAI: I know who started that fire and if it destroys my fields she is going to pay with everything she got. I warned her not to burn the bush. If the fire destroys our fields I am taking her to the chief's court and she will pay through her nose. *(calling with a loud voice)* Baba Chando! Imi wamuTasa. Minda yaphera iko nemoto!

SCENE 4

Outside the Chairman's homestead. The chairman comes out of the house. He is carrying a small bag and is putting on his jacket. It is obvious he is going out. Biggie's father appears.

FATHER: Chairman, I can see I came at the wrong time. I was hoping to have a word with you.

CHAIRMAN: I am running late. I am trying to get to Gweru before end of business today. I have a meeting with people from the Save Our Environment Campaign.

FATHER: I had a small matter I wanted to discuss with you.

CHAIRMAN: Can't it wait until I come back from Gweru?

FATHER: Two of my cattle fell into a ditch and died. The same ditches we have been complaining about since Chibhodhoro nearly drowned in one of them late last year.

CHAIRMAN: And what do you want from me? Remember I said those ditches should be filled up and no one listened to me.

FATHER: I want the people responsible for the ditches held accountable for the death of my cows. I want them to pay.

CHAIRMAN: Those people are not part of this farm. How do we bring them to book? I am powerless against them. And you know that baba' Biggie.

FATHER: If you are powerless then let me go and talk to them. I know I can make some noise.

CHAIRMAN: What kind of noise? I hope you are not talking about fighting people.

FATHER: Someone has to start making noise, Chairman. We have been silent for too long. Today it was my cattle and tomorrow someone may die in those ditches.

CHAIRMAN: Violence will not solve our problems, baba' Biggie.

FATHER: What other choice do we have when peaceful means have failed? Just imagine it was your child or mine that died instead of cows. Would you be saying what you are saying now?

Enter Biggie's mother - running.

AMAI: Chairman, the maize fields are burning. Someone set fire on the bushes around the fields and the fire is now uncontrollable.

CHAIRMAN: Who started the fire, Mai Biggie?

AMAI: No one knows at the moment. Just look at how big and dark the clouds are. The fire will destroy everything in our fields.

FATHER: Chairman, whoever started the fire must be brought to book. Everyone in this community knows it's a crime to start bush fires. We must find the person responsible and make them pay.

CHAIRMAN: My trip to Gweru has been destroyed. How can I go when the farm is on fire? Let me put my bag back in the house.

He rushes back inside and comes back without his jacket and bag.

CHAIRMAN: Let's go and see what is happening to that fire.

SCENE 5

Enter the Narrator.

NARRATOR: The fire was not good. It was huge. Like a marathon runner it raced across our land and ate everything in its path. It ate our grass and drove the remaining birds out of the farm and away from us. It drove the few wild animals that remained in our farm to

neigbouring farms. It ate the life out of many trees and burned the soil. The fire left us poor - with nothing.

Enter Biggie. He looks tired. He is carrying a tree branch that he had been using to beat down the fire. Biggie looks confused. Enter the chairman. He too is carrying a small green branch.

CHAIRMAN: Biggie, what really happened? Any idea of who started the fire?

BIGGIE: I have no idea, chairman. My mother saw the fire headed towards our fields and alerted us. We ran to try and put it out before it reached our fields but it was too big and moving fast.

CHAIRMAN: The grass was too dry. It burned faster. But I know you tried your best.

BIGGIE: We tried but the fire was too strong. Helped by the wind it was too fast for us. Most of our maize is gone. Our best efforts were not enough.

CHAIRMAN: Don't blame yourself. You did well.

FATHER: Chairman, we must find the person who started the fire and make him pay.

CHAIRMAN: This time we need fireguards. If we had fire guards the fire would not have travelled this far. We could have contained it and saved a lot from our fields.

FATHER: Fire guards or not we must find the person who started the fire.

CHAIRMAN: And if we find the person, what will we do to him? We are not the law.

FATHER: We can take him to the police and have him arrested or banish the person from this farm.

BIGGIE: That will not bring your maize back.

FATHER: At least it will serve as a deterrent to other people. People will know that if you commit a crime you will be punished.

BIGGIE: Maybe we need more than punishment. Maybe we need education.

FATHER: What education?

Enter Biggie's mother

BIGGIE: Education on how to control the fires. Education on how to live in harmony with the land. How to save it and how to make it serve us? We must be able to give as much to the land as we are taking from it.

FATHER: You're talking nonsense. The police need to be told, Chairman. This was criminal.

AMAI: I know who started the fire. She told me she would start the fire.

FATHER: Who started the fire? Tell us. Who started the fire?

AMAI: Amai Chikwari started the fire in order to kill the hyena that had eaten her goat.

CHAIRMAN: Are you sure about this?

FATHER: She must be brought to book. We must make an example of her.

CHAIRMAN: Go and get her now. Bring her to my house. We can have her tried by the whole community.

They all exit. Save for Biggie.

RUNGANO: Today has not been a good day for your family.

BIGGIE: It has been terrible.

RUNGANO: Do you want to do anything? I can make you forget what happened today.

BIGGIE: I cannot forget. I don't want to forget.

RUNGANO: What do you want? Perhaps you want me to go?

BIGGIE: What happened today must not be allowed to happen again. Never!

RUNGANO: But the ditches are still there. Anyone can still fall into one of them.

BIGGIE: The ditches must be filled up.

RUNGANO: By whom?

BIGGIE: By us. The ditches are a danger to us and our animals. Do you think the Chinese or the people who dug them care about what happens to us?

RUNGANO: But the others won't agree. They won't do it.

BIGGIE: We must persuade them. Rungano, our people must start doing things for themselves. Waiting for people from Gweru or the Capital city to do things for us will not work. We will always wait for them and they will always disappoint us.

RUNGANO: Come, let's go. I have an idea.

SCENE 6

Outside Mai Chikwari's homestead. Find her just arriving from collecting firewood. She throws her bundle of wood down as Biggie's father and another man appear.

FATHER: Amai Chikwari, we have come to take you to the Chairman's homestead. We know you are the one who started the fire that destroyed our fields.

WOMAN: I didn't start any fire.

FATHER: We know you did. And we know why you did it. We know you wanted to kill the hyena.

WOMAN: I didn't start any fire.

MAN: We know you did. Can we go, please? We don't want to drag you there. We can if don't want to go on your free will.

WOMAN: You are making a big mistake. I didn't start the fire.

WOMAN: Was it your wife who told you?

FATHER: My wife told us nothing.

WOMAN: She is the one I told I would start a fire if the hyena that is troubling us was not killed. She is the only one I told.

MAN: The hyena was not killed and so you started the fire

WOMAN: I was planning to but didn't.

FATHER: You will explain everything to the whole community. The chairman has called a meeting where you will be tried.

WOMAN: Tried?

FATHER: Yes, tried. You committed a crime and if found guilty you will be made to pay heavily.

WOMAN: And who is going to try me? The chairman himself or you?

FATHER: You will be tried by the whole community and if you are found guilty you will be asked to leave our lands and go somewhere else.

WOMAN: I didn't start the fire.

FATHER: Let's go. You will defend yourself in front of the whole community.

WOMAN: You are making a big mistake. The person you want is out there.

FATHER: You are wasting our time. Let's go.

WOMAN: What about those that dug the ditches? Are you also going to put them on trial? And those that are busy poisoning our sources of water. Are you also putting them on trial? And the wood poachers? Will they be tried too?

MAN: Woman, let's go!

They lead her away.

SCENE 7

The meeting gathers. It has been called to try Amai Chikwari for starting the fires. She walks and defends herself. But no one believes her until one man stands up and confesses that his son was with fire and it got out of control. Amai Chikwari is set free and the meeting tries to find solution to their problem.

CHAIRMAN: Amai Chikwari, do you know why you have been brought before the people of this farm?

WOMAN: I am in the dark, Chairman. Perhaps you care to explain to me why I am here.

CHAIRMAN: I thought the people who brought you here explained everything.

WOMAN: They were very vague, Chairman. You are the leader of this place. You can tell me yourself.

CHAIRMAN: Amai Chikwari you are here to face charges of starting the fire that destroyed most of the maize fields in this farm. This is a serious charge that carries a serious punishment.

WOMAN: So this is like a court?

CHAIRMAN: It is a people's court.

WOMAN: I see.

CHAIRMAN: And how do you plead to the charge.

WOMAN: I didn't start the fire.

CHAIRMAN: I put it to you now that you started the fire because you wanted to kill the hyena that had just eaten your goat.

WOMAN: Did you see me start the fire, Chairman?

CHAIRMAN: No. I didn't see you start the fire, Amai Chikwari.

WOMAN: And did anyone see me start the fire?

CHAIRMAN: You told someone you were going to start the fire.

WOMAN: And who is this person I told?

AMAI: You told me Amai Chikwari. You told me you will start a fire to kill the hyena.

WOMAN: But did you see me start the fire?

AMAI: No.

WOMAN: I didn't start the fire, Chairman.

CHAIRMAN: Amai Chikwari may I remind you that the penalty for your crime is banishment from these lands. If you are found guilty you will be asked to leave our farm.

A man stands up. Everyone looks at him.

MAN: Chairman, a grave mistake has been made. Amai Chikwari did not start the fire.

CHAIRMAN: Do you know who started the fire?

MAN: Yes. My son started the fire. He was trying to roast some mice he had caught in the fields.

CHAIRMAN: Roast some mice?

MAN: Yes, Chairman. The boy is but eleven years and was excited when he caught the mice.

CHAIRMAN: How come you were quite all this time? You should have stood up before this meeting began.

MAN: I didn't know what to do.

WOMAN: I told you I didn't start the fire. Now do you believe me?

MAN: My son is young. I had sent him to chase away the baboons. He must have been hungry to want to roast the mice right in the fields.

There is a moment of silence. The chairman does not know what to do. He looks about and then clears his throat.

CHAIRMAN: Amai Chikwari, you are free to go. Please accept our apologies for not believing you in the first place. Ladies and gentleman, we have big problems in our land. Our land has become poor. Its natural resources are slowly getting finished. The rains have forsaken us. Hunger is staring us in the face. What should we do? You are here? What should we do? We have talked about having fireguards around our fields and this has not happened. We have talked about filling up the ditches that were left by people who were mining in our land but the ditches are still open and a danger to us and our animals? The natural resources in our land are not benefiting us. The same people that are taking our chrome away are the same people that are killing our land and making it poor. If we don't do anything now we are likely to starve to death. So I ask you once more? What can we do to save our land and in the process save ourselves?

A song. The people are moved. The narrator stands up.

NARRATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, we have told you our story. We have told you the problems in our community. But we are not going to tell you how to solve these problems. The solutions must come from you. The solutions are among us, among us.

The narrator can start by asking the people to indentify the problems that were discussed in the play. As the list comes the narrator writes them down. Then problem after problem he tries to get the community to suggest solutions.