

BETWEEN THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT AND THEATRE IN EDUCATION: THE COLLABORATIVE NEXUS AND APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

The concept of Theatre for Development (TfD) is mostly centred on mobilizing, enlightening, educating, sensitizing and informing the people, mostly for the needed development to enhance their wellbeing within a given community. Theatre in Education is an all-inclusive academic programme which is used as a tool for learning that bears upon the dramatic impulse and basically for the children. Both Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education (TiE) are connected in terms of concept which is basically on mobilizing, sensitizing, informing and educating the targeted people and children through the employment of theatre - drama. In the course of history, both drama and theatre have been periodically viewed, refined and codified into set of principles for use in formal and informal environment. This paper placed emphasis on the intentional connection of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education in their applications, approaches and purposes through the use of dramatic techniques to aid their intentions. With the nexus connecting Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education, it is recommended that they should be provided with necessary instructional and infrastructural facilities needed by the teachers and facilitators for effective practical application. This paper employed the Qualitative Research Approach in sourcing materials from relevant texts and journals in providing insights to knowledge of the various perspectives and approaches connecting Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education. The study established the similarities in the perspective of these phenomena fragmented by their respective intentions for the communities and schools in the areas of mobilization, enlightenment, education, sensitization, information and learning processes.

Keywords: Between, Theatre for Development, Theatre in Education, Collaborative, Nexus and Applications.

Introduction

Theatre for Development as an applied Arts form, offers a hand in fashioning out dramatic/theatrical techniques that can be used to facilitate community development. Theatre for Development practical engagements are basically intervention platforms for the translation of TfD's theoretical concept into developmental practices in the targeted communities. However, it is quite pertinent to note that these interventions need a total understanding of the appropriate and practical means or process that can be properly coordinated, guided with the required and design techniques, concepts, approaches and strategies in order to achieve the aims and goals as desired for expected development. According to Abel Idebe, "TfD is a communication intervention method that is primarily aimed at facilitating community and social development" (27). Emmanuel Iroh, agrees that "Theatre for Development, (TfD), Community Theatre, Theatre in Education (TIE), Drama in Education (DIE) , Prison Theatre, Theatre for Health Education, Museum Theatre and others take place in non traditional settings and apply theatrical and dramatical techniques in their practice" (142).

Theatre for Development reaches out to the people in various communities (including rural/local communities), to sensitize, educate and inform the people in order to enable them take decisions and actions by themselves, that will in turn have positive effects on the general well-beings of the people for developmental purposes. Theatre in this context refers to activities that involve the performers and the audience at certain place and time. EbukaIlukwe and Judith Ume agree that "Theatre for Development stimulate critical discussion, and bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical realities" (6319), through the active participation of community members.

Theatre in Education is a dynamic theatre practice for the children in the learning process. The method can be said to be unique in its practical components for bringing together diverse elements of performance and creating an avenue for interaction, participation, socialization and improvisation that have focused toward developing children/pupils. This method in education is a theatrical style which stresses participation, critical consciousness and dialogue. Suffice to state here that Drama and Theatre in Education in Theatre (Performing) Arts, concerns itself with the study of the utilization of drama and theatre tools to impart knowledge -these tools are practical-oriented in applications.

In the course of history, drama and theatre as applied in both Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education have been known to be avenues for development and learning. However, they have different perspectives and approaches for use in both formal and informal learning environment that bothers mostly on communal people as well as children in their formative ages. In the context of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education, theatrical performance does not refer to the literary composition meant for the consumption of the audience but most times relies on improvisation with designed aims and objectives.

The facilitators of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education are therefore committed to sensitize community people and educate children through improvised drama/play – making use of techniques in theatre and drama, where community casts and children are guided to imagine, enact and reflect on real or imaginary experiences. Speaking on the role of Theatre for Development, Ahmed Yerimah asserts that it "has become thought-provoking to the extent that it can ask the

audience to reflect on issue; social and political which affect their lives” (6). It therefore follows that Theatre for Development charts a course for overhauling of the society through change advocacy in various spheres. Also, according to Dorothy Heathcote, Drama and Theatre in Education “...takes the children’s world and develops it further using theatre techniques to create learning experiences for a better understanding of the participants” (43), which widens their group of social and moral thrusts.

From the perspective of Theatre for Development, it has the potential of addressing problems affecting the people and the community in the social, cultural, behavioural, political, economic religious and other aspects as corroborated by Komolafe and Apena that:

Theatre for Development (TfD) is a unique and powerful approach that utilizes the arts, particularly theatrical performances, as a medium for social change and community engagement. Unlike conventional theatre, which often focuses on entertainment and artistic expression, Theatre for Development aims to address and resolve specific social, political, and economic issues within communities (64).

Theatre for Development approach, the recognized forms of presentation are: acting, dances, songs and other theatrical improvisations. This is in agreement with the submission of Oga Steve Abah that “the ancestry of theatre for development is traceable to the various indigenous performance modes in our Nigerian society...such indigenous forms include storytelling, songs, dances, drumming, proverbs and festivals” (6). It should be added that Theatre for Development is a public-oriented theatre with the major aim of sensitizing the target people who have common cultural base and background.

From the perspective of Theatre in Education, Jonathan Neelands is of the opinion that drama should be unequivocally child-centred (i.e. making use of existing language, experience, motivations and interest), but at the same time learning drama depends upon a form of ‘teaching intervention’ which aims at bringing new shapes and fresh ways of knowing to children’s existing experience of “play” and other forms of interactive and imitative behaviour (31). Theatre in Education remains a useful tool of teaching in schools with the employment of drama, games, songs, dance, puppetry, poetry, story-telling, improvisation, etc., in the process. These dramatic methods play a vital role in fostering learning for the children. According to Richard Courtney:

The primary root of all educative activity is in the intrinsic impulsive attitudes and activities of the child, and not in the presentation and application of external material whether through the ideas of others or through the senses; and that, accordingly, numberless spontaneous activities of children’s plays, games, mimic efforts... are capable of educational use, nay are foundation stones of educational methods (219).

The above assertion shows that the integration of dramatic methods is a commendable useful approach to teaching children and gaining their full concentration. For the purpose of this paper,

it should be stated that the theatrical engagements in Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education are contingent on the resourcefulness, commitment and full participation of facilitators and teachers as the effectiveness of the processes involved is totally dependent on them. It is pertinent to state here that on these two methods, are basically on practical-based dramatic performances with connected techniques and approaches but for different purposes.

Conceptual Clarification of Theatre for Development

Theatre for Development helps the rural people by provoking their consciousness on how to solve their immediate problems, provide for themselves and maintain their environment without waiting continually for the government. This call for rural sensitization is basically a call for the adoption of sustainable development. Performance admonishes the people in the rural community to think about the present situation and state of things; in addition to making provision for the future and ensuring continuity of the community and people inhabiting the community.

As a concept Theatre for Development has the efficacy of advocating development in a community when there is a response to stimuli by the adoption of a new approach based on the profound nature of information made possible through performance. It is pertinent to recognize the fact that Theatre for Development is equated with and alternatively called “Community Theatre” - a term describing a group of methodologies that employ performance (song, drama, and dance) as a mode of sensitizing the public to engender rural community development.

Theatre for Development implements theatrical expressions at the grassroots level in order to research and analyze peculiar issues, situations and problems in an effort to create critical awareness and potential for action to solve those problems in the society as applicable. The implementation as the name connotes, refers to a process whereby theatre is used to research, analyze and solve critical issues in the community, empowering indigenous people to enhance or make change towards positive behaviours, knowledge and attitudes regarding vital social issues challenging their lives. According to Abah:

It is about the ability to understand the situation, the politics and cultural dynamics, the layers of meanings and the nature of relationship that exist in the community. Sometimes the ontological is important in so far as development is not simply a satisfaction of the physical needs. The psychological, the spiritual, the religious and the social must all be embedded in the process ... the amateurs must read meanings, must notice trends and sense dangers and conflicts (2004 ix).

It is from the above standpoint that Theatre for Development becomes a tasking and painstaking exercise that requires commitment, dedication, devotion, resilience, doggedness, open-mindedness, firmness and good observation in order to achieve the desired goal for the target community. Theatre for Development, mobilizes the rural people to the reality of the fact that they are actually responsible for any untoward circumstances faced in the society, and inspires them to take sufficient steps based on informed decision to change their *status quo* for better. It creates awareness through learning, watching, listening, setting agenda, putting ideas into the minds of

the public and ensuring that information are properly given to provoke them into positive action. It stirs them to depend most importantly on what they can afford to offer their communities without depending on the government for development and places the destiny of the people in their hands - prompting them to chart a positive course for themselves and the society. Theatre for Development can be regarded as a weapon capable of curbing the economic, social and political malady of the society through the process of sensitization, consideration and liberation through massive mobilization.

Theatre for Development helps in registering the protest of the community people to attract the attention of the government. In effect, the employment of creative and imaginative play, acted by the people of the target community, stimulates the potentials and sustains communal participation in the development process. By engaging the rural people's imagination and harnessing their creativity in a process that deviates from description of realities to analysis of situations and possibility for change, Theatre for Development serves as a medium for exploring situation and rehearsing for change. It helps the public to alter activities which threaten their sustainable livelihood and considers their impact on their environment. Through Theatre for Development, people in the target community are able to identify their challenges, articulate their problems and proffering solutions to these problems through participation in the research, analysis, drama-performance and evaluation

Ideological Perspectives of Theatre in Education

Theatre in Education does not refer to literary competition of play (put together by a script writer, dramatist or a playwright) meant to be enacted for audience consumption. Also, it is not intended to transmit theatre skills but it is aimed at the construction of imagined experience using drama and theatre tools "to bring fresh ways and new shapes of knowing to children's existing experience of 'play' and other forms of literature, and imitative behavior" (Neelands 6).

Just like in arts and crafts, drama and theatre in education is a social activity and the practical resources should be available to every learner. Sonny Sampson-Akpan argues that Theatre in Education refers to the dramatic process which the following essential qualities may be observed:

- i. The ideas are largely participants
- ii. The ideas are drawn from their experience
- iii. The ideas are shared with other participants during dramatic process (9).

Theatre in Education involves children in active role-taking situation in which attitudes; no characters are chief concern, lived as life-care (discovery at this moment, not memory based) and obeying the natural laws of the medium which are:

- i. A willing suspension of believe
- ii. Agreement to pretence
- iii. Employing all past experience available to the group at the present moment and incorporating any conjecture of imagination.

They are capable of an attempt to create a living, a moving picture of life which aims at surprise and discovery for the children (participants) rather than for the onlookers. For better understanding of the concept of Drama and Theatre in Education, Legan Pellar submits that:

Drama play is a free play for every young child. It is one way for them to explore their universe, imitating the actions and character traits around them. It is their earliest expression in dramatic form, but not be confused with drama or interpreted as performance. It is fragmentary, existing only for the moment. It may last for few minutes or so on for sometime. It may played repeatedly, if a child's interest is sufficiently strong, but when this occurs, the repetition of a creative experience, for the joy of doing it, has no beginning and no end (6).

The ideological perspective of Drama and Theatre in Education is basically centered on child development. The various approaches invented for this purpose have always proved it to be a potent learning instrument that promotes and enhances better child development. This method employs the convention of theatre as well as games and imaginative ability required in child play. Drama and Theatre in Education is a distinct discipline, an art form, teaching tool and educational process for teaching and learning.

Characteristics of Theatre for Development

1. It takes place usually in the community
2. Has a large audience depending on the population of the target community.
3. Comprises a group of actors (community people) working in role and in costume with and for the community. The performance centres around definable characters in a state of dramatic improvisation.
4. Because it takes place in the community, the subject matters, themes or messages of the improvised play should be relevant to issues bothering the target community.
5. The improvised play, combines elements of theatricality and areas where the community cast are directly spoken to.

Theatre for Development performance makes use of various community dramatic components and techniques to provide the desired experience and impact. Performance in Theatre for Development is imaginative in its own might with the glamour from the community participants in dramatic roles and costumes, thus providing available stimulus that can be found in a real situation.

Characteristics of Theatre in Education

1. It takes place usually in the school
2. Has a small audience between 60 – 100 children pending on the things to be done. It should not be more than 100 pupils in a session.
3. Comprises a group of actors (children) working in role and in costume with and for children. The performance in this regards centres around definable characters in a state of dramatic improvisation.
4. Because it takes place in the school, the subject matters, themes or messages of the improvised play should be relevant to an aspect of the school curriculum.

5. The improvised play, combines elements of theatricality and areas where children are directly spoken to.

Drama and Theatre in Education, is based on both children's play being an extension of 'child play' and a combination of theatrical and classroom techniques, to provide an experience. It is imaginative in its own right with the glamour of strangers (facilitators) in dramatic roles and costumes, thus providing a stimulus that is not normally available to the classroom teacher.

Aims and Objectives of Theatre for Development

Theatre for Development helps the rural people by provoking their consciousness on how to try to solve their immediate problems, provide for themselves and maintain their environment without relying on external help particularly from the government. This call for rural sensitization is basically a call for the desired development. Performance in Theatre for Development mobilizes the people in a target community to think about the present situation and state of things; in addition to making provision for the future and ensuring continuity of the community for the wellbeing of the people. Theatre for Development has the efficacy of advocating a sustainable development in a community when there is a response to stimuli by the adoption of a new approach based on the profound nature of information made possible through performance. It is pertinent to recognize the fact that Theatre for Development is equated with and alternatively called "Community Theatre" - a term describing a group of methodologies that employ performance (song, drama, and dance) as a mode of sensitizing the public to engender community development. Theatre for Development employs theatrical expressions at the grassroots level in order to research and analyze peculiar issues, situations and problems in an effort to create critical awareness and potential for action to solve those problems in the society.

Theatre for Development, mobilizes the rural people to the reality of the fact that they are actually responsible for any untoward circumstances faced in the society, and inspires them to take sufficient steps based on informed decision to change their *status quo* for better. It creates awareness through learning, watching, listening, setting agenda, putting ideas into the minds of the public and ensuring that information are properly given to provoke them into positive action. It stirs them to depend most importantly on what they can afford to offer their communities without depending on the government for development and places the destiny of the people in their hands - prompting them to chart a positive course for themselves and the society. Theatre for Development can be regarded as a weapon capable of curbing the economic, social and political malady of the society through the process of sensitization, consideration and liberation through massive mobilization.

Theatre for Development helps in registering the protest of the community people to attract the attention of the government. In effect, the employment of creative of imagination, acted by the people of the target community, stimulates the potentials and sustains communal participation in the development process. By engaging the community people's imagination and harnessing their creativity in a process that deviates from description of realities to analysis of situations and

possibility for change, Theatre for Development serves as a medium for exploring situation and rehearsing for change. It helps communities to alter activities which threaten their sustainable livelihood and considers their impact on their environment. Through Theatre for Development, people in the target community helps to identify their challenges, articulate their problems and proffer solutions to these problems through participation in the research, analysis, drama-performance and evaluation

Aims and Objectives of Drama and Theatre-in-Education

Drama and Theatre-in-Education as a contemporary method of educating children and as learning instrument for child development can be viewed from the perspective of the aims and objectives set to be achieved in its application of various enshrined approaches. The over-all purpose of drama and theatre in child education help in various dimensions including:

- (1) change in the level of understanding
- (2) change in attitude
- (3) change in expectations
- (4) change in behaviour
- (5) change in existing language experience
- (6) change in awareness of others and their needs.

Drama and Theatre in Education, in the context of learning, concerns itself with enquiry. It helps focus on the area of study where children are carefully supervised in the discovery of themselves through their experience. Through the use of drama and theatre, the enquiring spirit of children is evoked. This challenges the teachers or facilitators (students) to evaluate and intensify the thinking ability of every child, and by this, they are able to know and identify the thought, disposition and ability of every child.

Drama and Theatre-in-Education inspires a child to naturally find solutions and answers to problems and challenges. This inventiveness in a child is the skill that develops a child to become a teacher, doctor, nurse, engineer, artiste, surveyor, trader, politician, pastor, etc. Practical experimentation has been useful in the following areas:

1. Helping to cultivate skills of inventiveness and initiative.
2. Awareness of the fact that in today's world especially in Nigeria, people depend on band wagon ideas, imitation and copying to succeed.
3. Bringing out the spirit of inquisitiveness in child to help find solutions.
4. Challenging the child to think and create
5. Helping the development of four skills of language: speaking, writing, reading and listening.
6. Learning how to associate and interact with others.
7. Increasing capacity of awareness and co-operation.
8. Exposing children to new points of view, situations and innovations.
9. Better understanding of the environment and the world at large.
10. It has the capacity of exposing the children to learn about drama and theatrical conventions.

It must be noted that the aims and objectives are not limited to the ones stated above. Other benefits are being explored as the method is being utilized.

Highlighting Selected Approaches in Drama and Theatre in Education

This is the combination of the Theatre in Education techniques and the creative drama approaches. It is neither a play nor a lesson, but combines the method of communication used in the classrooms and on the stage. Others are: Drama-in Recreation, Developmental Drama, etc.

Children Theatre: This is simply referring to formal play production, meant for the children's audience, and performed by the children themselves. It also applies to the amateurs and professionals as well.

Child Play: This is a "make-believe" play orchestrated by the children. This form of play has no plot; no story-line and no audience. It is spontaneous activity done by child-player which is common to every child from the infancy stage. Child play could be done by a child with the use of a toy or playing with another child.

Child Drama: This method of drama in theatre embraces creative dramatics, educational drama, children's theatre and educational theatre. Child drama requires a facilitator teacher (student) and director's impulse.

Play-Making: Play making, in this context refers to normal play performed by children under the watch and supervision of the teacher/facilitator whose motive is centered on participation. Play-making, when it is for children, refers to formal theatrical productions whose audience is the target. In formal theatrical production, the teacher/facilitator gives advice unlike in the informal – being participatory.

Creative Dramatics: This entails an improvisation, non-exhibitional and process-centered forms of drama, in which participant are required to imagine, enact and reflect upon humane experiences. The teacher, facilitator or leader, in this case guides the group through dramatic enactments. Creative Dramatics can also be referred to as developmental drama, educational dramatics, spontaneous creative playing, improvisational drama, informal dramatics or play-making.

Psycho-Drama: This is an aspect of creative drama formally referred to as therapeutic drama. As the name suggests, emotional difficulties is its target. It can be used for both normal and handicapped children. Psychiatrists often employ this drama method and their patients.

Socio Drama: This is an aspect of creative drama that employs role-play in order to explore group and collective problems. It is broadly used in classroom, industries, congregations, human-relation clinics, etc.

Collaborative Perspectives and Approaches: The Nexus between Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education

The emerging techniques in the approaches and perspectives in the use of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education as developmental and learning tools provide some basis for the designing of a communication model through which the development message and learning techniques are intentionally utilized as they relate to the audience in specific contexts. Within these approaches in Theatre for Development, the idea is now well established that community people can be sensitized to adapt to what can bring development to them and the community. It means that the Theatre for Development makes the people not to be passive recipient of messages but more actively involved in the developmental process. The same applies to Theatre in Education, involving a broad section of the children in exploring issues relating to their common interest and sharing experience through dramatic action in efforts to facilitate their learning process provide the necessary educational impact.

In Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education, the first stage for the facilitators of the project is the location of the target community and the school respectively. The first visit by the facilitator in both cases is to the community head, school head, stakeholders and staff for familiarization, introduction and acquainting them with the intention of the project. It is supposed to be a robust and interesting session to highlight the need for the projects and it is important in order to gain access and acceptance to carry out the Theatre for Development or the Theatre in Education project. This meeting is strategic as it will also help the facilitator to have the opportunity to interact and identify the area that the project will be fine-tuned before moving on to carry out the project.

Another nexus connecting the approaches and perspectives in Theatre for development and Theatre in Education in the contemporary society is the stage of Interrogation and Interaction: this entails having special days fixed for the target community people to meet with the facilitators and having sessions with the children in the target school. Here the facilitators will have a face-to-face discussion concerning the project to be carried out: find out and understand the challenges and problems in the community as well as relating with the children to assess the willingness to participate in the dramatic process.

Participation is another major collaborative nexus in these theatrical methods. Through participation the community people and children are engaged actively in identifying, evaluating and exchanging views on how to contribute through their experiences to enhance development and learning. The practice of Theatre for Development indicates a strong alliance to reposition the society. According to Abah “Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) is an assemblage of tools and techniques which re-conceptualize the traditional... and makes them more participatory... in which community members are involved...” (124). However, the facilitators use the participatory

approach to facilitate a process of collective analysis and learning. This is necessary as a strategy in the project as it offered the opportunity to go beyond more consultation and promote active participation of the community people. In Theatre in Education, participation creates a learning environment for the children to share their experiences. Grand Bolton summarizes thus: “the new educational movement gives rise to “learning by doing and activity method, opening the door for drama in the classroom, this movement contradicted the accepted puritan belief that children should not play, in order to develop into productive adult” (21).

Improvisation is another nexus in these collaborative methods in development and learning. It simply implies the ability to take existing pieces and put them together in a new combination for a purpose. In Theatre for Development, Improvisation creates room for the local cast to contribute their quota to a performance they own. In Theatre in Education, improvising for the children in form of drama helps the children to develop their creativity, mental flexibility and thinking skills in numerous ways. It also develops their imagination and creates the ability to generate new ideas and thinking.

Improvisation, in this context, has to do with reaction of the moment through drama, based on what is going on or happening around the community and school environments. It entails spontaneous thinking (thinking on the spot). Improvisation also gives the facilitators or teachers the knowledge of creativity, manipulative skills and critical thinking. It encourages self-reliance and a feeling of confidence during the instruction delivery. It enhances and leads to better performance of the children during a given assignment, test and examination. Children found it easier to remember topics taught with the use of improvised drama than those taught without use of instructional materials.

Summary and Conclusion

Theatre for Development and Theatre-in-Education are methods of awakening the consciousness of the people for development and learning enhancer for the children. These methods, based on their peculiarities in perspectives and approaches make use of performances and other dramatic techniques in creating the collaborative nexus and has practically helped to facilitated development and learning for the target community and school children by educating, informing, entertaining, motivating and teaching them. Theatre for Development from the practical point of view is of immense benefits to any target community. It has established the plausibility and possibility of using its peculiar strategies as a theatre that promotes and mobilizes community people to dramatically realize challenges and problems with them to prompt developmental reaction.

Theatre in Education, on the other hand, helps the school children in developing the spirit of concentration and creativity, building their self-confidence and capacity as well as preparing their foundation for future academic engagement and by extension, enables them to rediscover their innate potentials and endowments. Again, “participating both in the decision-making process as well playing, instilled confidence in them, boosted their morals and improved their self-concept” (Iroh 146-147). These functions are made possible through the dramatic and theatrical techniques in song, dance, story-telling, recitation, games, craft works and other classroom activities.

This paper, in highlighting the perspectives and approaches of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education in terms of strategies, stages and techniques has established collaborative nexus between these methods in development for communities and facilitating the learning in schools for children. It is pertinent to conclude that the perspectives and approaches in these methods under study are similar but contextually different in applications. Drama and Theatre in Education is tenable and of greater advantage to complement the already existing teaching conventions available to the children in primary and secondary schools to facilitate their learning process. Capitalizing on this collaborative nexus, the Government and the Ministry of Education should consider repositioning the relevance of Theatre for Development and Theatre in Education methods for community development and facilitation of learning for school children respectively

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