

**FRAMING DIALOGUE FOR CONSCIENTISATION  
IN SELECTED THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT  
ENTERPRISES IN KENYA**

**BY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
ARTS IN THEATRE**

**DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE, THEATRE AND FILM  
STUDIES SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MOI UNIVERSITY**

**APRIL 2016**

## DECLARATIONS

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## DEDICATION

**I dedicate this research work to my lovely wife and my lovely children (who are to come by faith) and the church of Christ to which I am a member. May the Lord richly bless you and multiply the fruits of your hard work. “.....*the most high rules over the kingdoms of the world and gives them to anyone he chooses*” Daniel 4:25(b) (NLT)**

## ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt at understanding the appropriate framing of dialogue which yields participatory learning in Theatre for Development enterprises; which according to leading theorists, brings about conscientisation of the target community. Conscientisation is imperative in community empowerment because it enables members of the target community to be the drivers of the change they want. This study therefore sought to examine how dialogue can be framed to encourage participation using the selected Theatre for Development enterprises, and as such be in a position to advice on what constitutes appropriate framing of dialogue for conscientisation. The objectives that guided this study were: to examine how the selected theatre groups frame dialogue in pursuit for conscientisation; to examine the paradigms of participation in Theatre for Development; and to examine the intervening factors that influence the framing of dialogue in pursuit of conscientisation in Theatre for Development. Three theories were applied in this study. Mda's concept of intervention, Boal's *Poetics of the oppressed*, and Freire's theory of dialogical action were applied. It is a qualitative study largely dealing with non statistical data such as: intervention, attitudes formed, and levels of participation and therefore data collected were largely descriptive in notes form. The main sources of primary data and units of analysis were: Sponsored Art for Education in Kenya (SAFE) Kenya, Legal Resource Foundation, Imara Players', and Moi University 2014 Tfd Project. The instruments of data collection were: participants' observation, interviews, and literature from secondary sources. In analyzing the collected data, the transcribed notes of various aspects of data were categorized in a way that offers description of how framing of dialogue was done. Literature from secondary sources helped develop new insights, deepen the understanding of the researcher, cut out ambiguities and remove irrelevancies. Among the key findings was that the prioritization of the communal problems while executing a Tfd enterprise is critical so as to realize high levels of participation because vaguely felt needs cannot attract sufficient attention. Also, Minimum Cognitive Requirement (MCR) on the part of the target community is a critical component for progressive dialogue because it is what drives them to start dialogue without being persuaded. The study therefore concludes that educational levels of the target community influence the likely levels of participation in the dialogue process. This is because an educated population has a better understanding of communal problems and therefore to them, constructive contribution is inevitable. Among the recommendations of this study is the need for a government policy on education that focuses on promoting literacy levels especially in rural and urban slum communities. This is because the educational level of any community is the basis of developmental communication.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, my special thanks goes to God the almighty, the giver of life and with whom all things are possible, for leading me through the tangled web of life and making me a winner. In this journey, I have not been walking alone. I have been accompanied by dedicated friends whom I can never thank enough.

Secondly, I give special thanks to my parents and my siblings (the family of Mzee Samson Eliud Masinde Wefila) who have continuously supported me morally and financially to remain in the university all this time. You have denied yourselves many pleasures for the sake of my education and comfort. I cherish your many prayers and the best of wishes all through my academic journey. May the Lord God almighty richly bless you and enable you with long life and good health.

I wish to extend my deepest thanks to my supervisors Prof. Christopher Joseph Odhiambo, and Dr. Fredrick Mbogo, of the Department of Literature Theatre & Film Studies Moi University, whose professional expertise, constructive criticism and commitment to supervise my work provided me with the support and inspiration that has made this thesis come to fruition. My warm gratitude also goes to the members of the Department of Literature Theatre & Film Studies who made it possible for me to gain the wealth of knowledge and provided helpful insights that shaped my thesis.

My sincere thanks also extended to all the people and others who are too special to mention. At every turn of the road you have helped me with my load and since I have no gold to give but love alone to make amends, my daily prayer is that “God make me worthy of my friends”.

## DEFINITIONS AND CONTEXTUALIZATION OF KEY TERMS

### 1. Conscientisation

The term conscientisation is derived from a Brazilian word *conscientizao* (Freire 1970:85) to mean the critical awareness that comes with constructive “dialogue”. Nonetheless, there is a sense in which the term has been anglicized and one would easily conclude that its root word is *conscience*. Its usage stems from the work of Paulo Freire (1970), a Brazilian educationist in his pedagogy of the oppressed to mean the critical consciousness that the oppressed get upon gaining understanding of their social reality and striving to bring change. The term is now widely used by many TfD practitioners to mean the same. Freire (1970:26) notes that “the greatest humanistic and historical task of the oppressed is to liberate themselves and their oppressors.” But he argues that liberation must be informed by their heightened consciousness (which is conscientisation) of the social predicament and the hope that it is possible for change to come by if they fight for it. This is further aggravated by the fact that this predicament is because of forces that are from without and not from within. So the term conscientisation in this study shall be used to refer to that moment when knowledge among the oppressed has been gained and they are beginning to express their willingness to take action against the status quo.

### 2. Theatre for Development

The phrase *Theatre for Development*, normally abbreviated as TfD, is believed to have been coined by Byam in 1973 in Botswana to describe an approach that attempted to reconcile Freirian concepts to development that used theatre as a stimulus (Odhiambo 2008:19). Mda (1993:48) defines Theatre for Development (TfD) as “modes of theatre whose objective is to disseminate messages, or to conscientise communities about their objective social political situation.” Odhiambo (2008:18) says “...it’s a performance

about the people by the people, for the people, expressing their struggle to transform their social conditions and in the process changing those conditions.”

This is therefore a progression from less interactive theatre forms to a more interactive theatrical process where theatre is practiced with the people or by the people with the aim of arming the people with the change effecting information, listening to their concerns, and then encouraging them to “dialogue” and solve their own problems. This practice is said to target poor communities in rural villages and urban slum areas that are faced with challenges ranging from diseases to ignorance. It is assumed that these people have the solution to these problems but they lack forums to talk and dramatize them with the view of trying out what their world should be. Boal (1979), calls it rehearsal for real change though it may seem fictional in a limited space.

### **3. Dialogue**

Dialogue in this study shall be understood the way Freire (1970) puts it. It is a situation where human beings exchange information mediated by their world. Human beings collectively participate in interrogating their world and re-evaluate their human contribution on advancing it. Incidences that Freire (1970) implies as “dialogical” includes collective investigation into the generative themes, the collective naming of the world – warning that no one should name the world for the other but discussions should help deal with contradictions so that at the end of the day all agree on one common naming. It is this agreeing on a common naming that constitutes “dialogue” which in itself carries acts of cognition. The term “dialogue” and its derivatives such as dialogical, dialogically, and dialogic shall be used in this context to imply this scope of definition. He (Freire) uses codifications as catalysts of “dialogue”. Among the codification(s) include dramas, charts, photos, etc as didactic instruments. These examples illustrate the

context in which the term “dialogue” was used in this study. (In fact photos and charts involve the use of the sense of sight.)

#### **4. Participation**

The term participation simply refers to acts of involvement. There have been attempts in exploring how the term is used in other disciplines. This exploration reveals that the term has many dimensions of application depending on the approach of the discipline. Such disciplines include: political science, sociology, industrial democracy, among others. Courtney (1992:100) helps us understand this when he reminds us that:

In political science, the term refers to the various ways in which individuals signal involvement within the political process for example voting, marching in protest. Sociologists have used the term to refer to membership in clubs, community involvement, as well as the most casual neighborhood encounters. The term has also typically meant involvement in decision making processes and the degree of influence carried by different members of a group as in the concept of workers ‘participation’ used in discussions of industrial democracy

He (Courtney 1992:100) further explores the reasons why participation is undertaken to imply that it (participation) is not just for the sake but must have a bearing making reference to its degree. It therefore means that the degree of participation has its footing in the knowledge of the topic under discussion.

...the act of participation is both an individual and a group phenomenon...it is associative... its qualitative, in that it reflects not only the degree of involvement but, also, less easily enumerated properties such as an individual’s understanding of the organization, attitudes towards its operation, beliefs about his or her influence within it and so forth. Finally, participation is almost a means to an end, and not an end in itself. People who become involved in organized learning activities almost always have a goal they wish to accomplish. Thus, learning according to this view, learning- for-its-own-sake – Houle’s learning – orientation – is not so much a goal as something which accompanies a goal by enhancing the learning process.

A number of deductions can be made out of this quotation especially in regard to what participation entails and what participation can yield. One, an individual's understanding of the organization insinuates learning and therefore the formation of opinions. By suggesting that participation is always a means to an end and not an end in itself, insinuates that participation is not the product being sought, but the process to the realization of the end product. In a TfD context therefore, this implies that dimensions of participation have to be investigated and articulated.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 History of Tfd: Contextualizing the Practice

The term Theatre for Development (Tfd) is said to have been coined in Botswana in 1973 to describe an approach that attempted to reconcile Freirian concepts to a development project that used theatre as a stimulus (Odhiambo 2008:19). It was around this time that planners began to shape the discipline. No doubt, they were influenced by Freire's work of "dialogic" and participatory learning. Theatre for Development by practice it is a discipline that is philosophically inclined towards a Marxist-socialist ideology given its revolutionary means of dealing with inequalities born out of collective participatory. The theatrical methodology was specifically important because of its aesthetic nature of delivering serious messages in a rather humorous manner. Apparently, that is the reason why Collin's in Murundu (2010:122) notes:

The experience may be pleasurable even if the subject matter may not itself be pleasurable... it is the art form through which the artists vision is given shape that enables us to see, perhaps understand what in real life would merely sicken or confuse us. At its best, the aesthetic experience is arresting, intense and utterly engrossing: it seizes one's imagination and convey (its subject) so vividly that the result is delight and knowledge.

However, this study wishes to recognize what other practitioners (both in theatre and outside theatre) whose ideas may have midwife Tfd discipline, to some much later and to others long after they had passed on. I will therefore look at what I have called in this study; *Parallels of Tfd in various philosophical/religious advancements, theatre practice, and teaching methodology* up to the time when Tfd as a discipline manifested.

### **1.1.1 Parallels of Tfd in ancient Philosophical and Religious works**

Tfd practice must have borrowed from the ancient philosophical and religious works. Traces of Tfd can be seen in early works of Socrates popularly known as the *Socratic Dialogue* (Kern n.d.) Socrates was described as the Athens street corner philosopher who used to teach in public places. He asked questions that provoked people to think and find answers to them hence understanding there surrounding and the problems that besets them. His method is said to have laid the groundwork for western systems of logic and philosophy. In his confession he said, “I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think” (Kern n.d.)

The bible, in the book of Luke 15:1, Jesus narrates three accounts that in Freire’s words qualify as codifications. They include: The story of the lost sheep, the story of the lost coin, and the story of the lost son. All the three stories were meant to teach the people what God’s love was to men. That the heavenly father loves them so much that if any one of them gets lost, he will do everything to bring him back to the fold just as the shepherd leaves the ninety nine sheep to go and look for one lost sheep. The case is the same with the lost coin. Out of the ten coins the woman has, if one gets lost, she lit the room and sweeps every corner until she gets the one coin. She is a happy woman. The story of the lost son also carries the same message. That the heavenly father loves them so much that even when they mess up like the lost son did, he is willing to receive them back and celebrate them if they go back to him in repentance (New Living Translation (NLT) Bible). These stories were deployed to jog their memories and provoke them to think and

consequently enrich their understanding of what he was trying to teach them about the love of the heavenly father.

### **1.1.2 Parallels of Tfd in various Theories of Drama**

With time, more theories of drama emerged that sought to radically divert from the traditional Aristotelian Drama that had dominated the theatre practice since the inception of the Greek drama in Athens. The first drama theorist with seeds of Tfd was Artaud who did most of his theatrical productions in the 1930s (Wilson & Goldfarb 1991). Worth noting here is that other undertakers of participatory learning like Socrates and Jesus never engaged theatre passé and were never known as theatre lovers. Socrates was a philosopher and Jesus was a prophet preaching new religious values. Therefore strictly speaking, ideas of Artaud can be seen as the real genesis of Tfd.

Artaud had ideas that might have influenced Tfd in a monumental way. He for instance advocated for a reorganization of the theatre space where the audience took the centre of attention criticizing Stanislavsky's realist theatre that placed emphasis on the actor. This opinion is shared by many other 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre artists like Jerzy Grotowski, Erwin Piscator, and Peter Brooks. Artaud wanted to break from the traditional proscenium stage that characterized conventional western theatre arguing that productions can be staged in places that were not originally intended for theatrical presentation. He further said theatre could act as a tool of cleansing modern society of all that is ugly.

This thinking is synonymous with Tfd in a number of ways. One, Tfd radically distances itself from a conventional proscenium stage that privileges the few who can afford to pay tickets; two, Tfd focuses its attention on the spectator with the objective of empowering



through the awakening of the creative power of dramatization in the people; three, Tfd seeks to unite the community in the struggle for their liberation. Therefore this statement resonates with Artaud's view that theatre should cleanse the society of all that is ugly.

Bertolt Brecht seems to have advanced this line of thought but within the spheres of theatre. He is said to have worked with Erwin Piscator (another antirealist) in the 1920s and his (Brecht) ideas about Epic theatre are said to have been greatly influenced by Piscator (Wilson & Goldfarb 1991:398). He said Epic theatre should instruct and provide an intellectual climate for social change; (Jacobus 2005:622). He renounced theatre created purely for mass consumption and entertainment terming them as culinary art. He worked to detach the audience from the dramatic action saying that each production element should independently indicate the political message to the audience. Brecht also wanted the audience to analyze the political, economic, and social realities critically and see that they are not immutable (Jacobus 2005:622). He achieved this by using prologues and narrators to comment on the dramatic actions in between. The audience was made aware of what was coming next and so they were to simply engage their minds. Indeed, he to some extent was a threat to the Nazi regime in Germany to the extent that his plays were banned from public staging during the Third Reich (Jacobus 2005:621). This thinking must have influenced Tfd in the following senses: for one, he introduced a drama that contested the notion of creating an illusion of reality; secondly, he urged spectators to engage intellectually with what was happening on stage. He believed theatre can heighten the intellectual climate for social change. Emotional detachment is a typical characteristic of Tfd.

### **1.1.3 Parallels of Tfd in African cultural performances**

There are ideas that may have influenced Tfd from the African cultural performances. These are many and can be compared to the ancient Greek festivals in honor of Dionysus; the Greek god on the slopes of Mt. Acropolis in Athens, (Anonymous, Greek Myths). These trends are common in nearly all the African societies. Mda (1993:8) says that in most African communities, people moved from village to village performing their arts. Examples of the traditional performance were: the *Alarinjo of Nigeria* whose art was composed of storytelling, dance and drumming. A mimicry of these that has a syncretic nature in the recent times according to Mda (1993) is the *Malipenga* of Malawi, *Ghanian concert party*, and *South African musical theatre*.

Ngugi (1981) narrates the African theatre at the fire place –where the elderly performed to the young ones. These stories, songs, riddles among others, Ngugi says, they later performed them to their fellows while gardening. The stories of the Hyena, Elephants, and squirrels among others were didactic and meant a lot to the African child; don't be like an Elephant; so big yet not intelligent. Be like the squirrel; very intelligent though small. So in terms of raising consciousness which is a critical aspect of Tfd, these performances served the purpose and these elements must have greatly influenced Tfd.

### **1.1.4 Parallels of Tfd in Colonial and Post-colonial Theatre**

The colonialists mainly propagated their ideology through their theatre terming the African theatre as retrogressive and uncivilized. Ngugi (1981) again narrates how English became a standard measure for intelligence and how learners at school were told not to speak their languages but were only restricted to communicate in English language. Those who spoke in their mother tongue were punished. In Uganda they enacted the anti

witchcraft law of 1912 and the abolishing of the *ndongo*; Kiganda wedding dance (Mbowa in Breitinger (Eds) 2003:123,124). Important to note here is that because of the keen eye of the colonial masters, and the enticements from the colonialists, we don't see a spirited recorded account of theatre activities in the African communities.

Different countries in Africa had different political climates after independence. Therefore in each country, the prevailing political climate shaped the theatre of the day in a particular manner. For instance, the socialist Ujamaa political ideology in Tanzania enabled the flourishing of theatre activities as opposed to Uganda and Kenya which had largely dictatorial regimes with limited democratic space; (Koch 2008). In both Kenya and Uganda much of the theatre that went on was heavily masked (coded). In Uganda for instance, (Mbowa in Breitinger (Eds) 2003) narrates the rocky process theatre has gone through during the repressive colonial regime; as well as in the equally oppressive post-independence regimes of: OboteI, Idi Amin, OboteII, and Museveni. The general picture she paints is the resilience of theatre in the face of turbulent political times in critiquing these repressive regimes. Among the leading playwrights she cites are Wycliffe Kiyingi, Byron Kawadwa, John Ruganda, among others. It is then important to stress here that the happenings on the political scene shaped themes of the theatre of the time. Worth noting is that Tfd has its roots in conventional theatre that had been entrenched by the colonialists after decades of suppressing African traditional theatre.

Kenya too had its share of challenges. The dictatorial regimes could not have permitted theatre with its critical nature to flourish. Those who were overt in the architecture of their theatre like Ngugi were detained and their open air theatre destroyed (Abah in Breitinger (Eds) 2003:98). It was until the repealing of section 2A of the Kenyan

constitution in the early 90s that gave way for multiparty democracy that necessitated the flourishing of theatre activities in the country (Odhiambo 2008).

### **1.1.5 The University Travelling Theatre**

The University theatre groups that included: *Ibadan* of Nigeria, *Chikwakwa* of Zambia, and *Makerere* of Uganda took up the initiative of sensitizing rural communities on the challenges that bedevils them through theatre. Sooner than later, many other ethical issues embroiled the whole practice (pushing the practice to the verge of the real Tfd) of Travelling Theatre and first among them was the criticism that it addressed themes that were far removed from the world of the target community (Mda 1993:17). A phenomenon of using the African legends like the Baganda's creation story of Kintu and Nambi; and the explanatory story of Labong' and Gipir; to create plays in an attempt of patterning it with traditional art forms was also witnessed especially in Uganda where I personally participated. Worth noting is that these performances were made in the western sense of *Conventional Theatre*. It is these criticisms that have constantly shaped Tfd in being what it is in the contemporary sense after an intense re-visitation of the theories of Freire and Boal by many other scholars. More participatory approaches were emphasized as the most appropriate methodology. Tfd at this point took shape and its central element is participatory "dialogue" an aspect that particularly distinguished it from the mainstream theatre.

### **1.2 Background to the Study**

Dialogues and debates have been cited as some of the best democratic practices recommended in conflict resolution and learning in classrooms (Freire 1970). This is a digression from the vertical learning paradigms that have traditionally informed learning

methodologies that emphasized top-down approach modes of learning (Boal 1979), (Mlana 1991), (Mda 1993). Many advantages have been enlisted by the proponents of participatory learning chief among them being its potentiality of empowering the masses to be the drivers of their own change. It is upon this principle of learning that Theatre for Development (TfD) has gradually gained relevance. All leading TfD theorists seem to concur on the notion that a collective critical awakening can only be realized through collective participatory learning; other factors remaining constant.

A close examination of the philosophical underpinning of this subject reveals that it is propagated by those who are inclined towards a Marxist-socialist ideology that has the preponderance of labor over capital and therefore enhancing the dominance of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie; the owners of labor and capital respectively (Butake in Breitinger (Eds) 2003:101). Actually, this is what Brecht had in mind. Coming from a communist background, he (Brecht) believed that it is only communism that can rid the world of its capitalistic tendencies that subjects some people to abject poverty whereas others live in affluence. This means that Theatre for Development in its practice advances a Marxist-socialist ideology of reversing the superstructure necessitated by capitalism.

### **1.3 The Concept of Participation**

Takem (2005) underscores the essence of participatory learning through an exploration of case studies of environmental conservation in Cameroon. He demonstrates high levels of successes in TfD enterprises that had high participation by the target community and little success in TfD enterprises that employed the elitist approach with minimal participation.

Kamlongera in Murundu (2010) notes that theatre for conscientisation is only possible when both the actor and the spectator participate in the codification and de-codification of issues affecting them. The actor and spectator engaging in the codification and de-codification of issues imply a “dialogical” participation. For theatre to act as a vehicle to raise critical awareness, or conscientisation, the target communities should be active participants not only in the performance of the plays, but in the actual planning of the program, the selection of the content, and even in the choice of the medium of articulation (Kamlongera in Murundu 2010:72) .

Mlama (1991:58) takes stock of where participatory theatre (not in the conventional Tfd sense) has been used by the masses especially during the colonial period in the struggle for independence; bringing down the walls of oppression and exploitation. This took a “dialogical” participatory approach and was never through persuasion. Among the informal theatre organizations she cites are: the *Mau mau* in Kenya, *Frelimo* in Mozambique, *ZANU* in Zimbabwe, and *Pungwe* in Zimbabwe. She further argues that the present Popular Theatre that are of “dialogical” dimension are a continuation of the long practiced tradition within the African society, saying there is nothing new.

Odhiambo (2008) looks at Tfd as a theatre of the people by the people for the people. He explores a number of Tfd enterprises in his study and also calls for a Tfd practice that embraces “dialogical” participation. While analyzing the various forms of codifications, “the Pandora’s Box” (implicit codification) and “Mosquito mask” (explicit codification), the bottom-line to both of them is that they should facilitate the participation of members of the target community in their decoding. Theatre for Development, normally abbreviated as Tfd is a practice that has come to utilize participatory learning

methodologies. Following this, many studies/researches have been carried out on participatory “dialogue” in Theatre for Development (TfD) and they all seem to emphasize the essence of “dialogical” participation as a learning methodology and as the means to conscientisation. And whereas it is agreeable by many that “dialogical” participation is of utmost significance in TfD enterprises, the challenge has been meaningful participation of the members of the target community. An analysis of the many TfD enterprises reveals that high and effective participation in interrogating communal problems is still wanting and therefore hypothetically speaking, this is the reason why TfD has suffered many setbacks in enhancing critical awareness in the masses. The study therefore set out to examine how “dialogue” is framed at various levels of TfD intervention initiative to attract participation.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

This study was inspired by the enormous potential Theatre for Development (TfD) has in empowering members of a community to negotiate their own change and in effect determine their own destiny. But this empowerment is no doubt founded in a participatory “dialogical” process by the targets of conscientisation (Mda 1993). Upon a close examination of a number of TfD enterprises however, effective participation in the “dialogue” process was found to be wanting, especially when it comes to engaging with the real problems that besets the targets of conscientisation. This study was therefore concerned with why such little participation or participation that gives birth to little critical consciousness. This prompted this study to attempt to cross-examine how framing is done by agents of developmental communication and the appropriateness/suitability of this framing in terms of triggering responses that enhance deeper analysis of the problems

that faces the target community. Precisely, the study sought to examine the framing of “dialogue” in the selected TfD enterprises through a re-examination of their constitutive elements like codifications, theatrical techniques and the intervening factors.

### **1.5 Assumptions**

The study therefore proceeded from the assumption that those engaged in the practice have little knowledge of the various theoretical paradigms that would guide the “dialogue” process as espoused by leading scholars and practitioners in the practice of TfD. Hypothetically speaking; many of these TfD enterprises have rarely adhered to these theoretical paradigms. The other assumption was that the theories may be rigid tools whose usability is not flexible and therefore their usage cannot guarantee participation. In interrogating the selected TfD groups, the study sought to find out the degree of compliance with these theoretical paradigms.

### **1.6 Objectives to the Study**

This study had one broad objective and three specific objectives

#### **1.6.1 Broad Objective**

The broad objective of this study was to find out what appropriate framing of dialogue is by examining how the selected theatre groups frame their dialogue in pursuit for conscientisation.

#### **1.6.2 Specific Objectives**

To examine how the selected theatre groups frame dialogue in pursuit for conscientisation

To examine the paradigms of participation in Theatre for Development



To examine the intervening factors that influence the framing of dialogue in pursuit of conscientisation in Theatre for Development

### **1.7 Justification to the Study**

Serious engagement in “dialogue” in Tfd enterprises is what guarantees critical awakening, other factors remaining constant (Freire 1970). But this serious engagement is informed by how this very “dialogue” is framed (Odhiambo 2008). To realize the assumed conscientisation that has its basis in “dialogue”, necessary information at the disposal of the Tfd practitioners is critical. It was therefore important that this study be conducted to evaluate how Tfd enterprises have embraced the concept of “dialogue”. This study is pertinent also because an evaluation of how “dialogue” is framed among the local theatre groups involved in development communication is of great significance in determining the level of participation in the “dialogue” process.

The study sought to establish how much of the theory is in practice by those engaged in the practice and suggest ways in which more adherences to the theories can be ensured for the efficacy of Tfd practice. Despite the overwhelming literature on theory based on the practice of Tfd, the study sought to find out why little impact had been realized in the Tfd enterprises so far. In addition, the study sought to establish the challenges faced by Tfd practitioners in framing “dialogue” and perhaps establish the loopholes within the theory (if any) and where possible make proposals on how they can be addressed.

It must be remembered that this study and Tfd as a discipline advocates for democratic principles and the people’s empowerment. Democracy is a common vocabulary among the political elites and the global politics is full of campaigns for the democratic values in

institutions of governance. The adherence to these democratic values which provide an enabling climate for the flourishing of Tfd therefore is a key ingredient to the development of any society. But how can they adhere to them if they do not know them? And how can they know them if they don't learn? And how can they best learn if not through "dialogical" participatory approach?

This is particularly important especially to developing countries like Kenya that have rolled out grand development plans with time limits among them being the 2015 millennium development goals and vision 2030. The vision for Vision 2030 for instance looks towards creating a globally competitive and prosperous nation providing a high quality of life to all anchored on three key pillars; economic, social and political governance. The aspects of competitiveness and high quality of life speaks volume into this study because its findings are meant to increase the competitiveness of the discipline and the competitiveness of the discipline leads to high quality life of the beneficiaries of Tfd enterprises. The findings and recommendations of this study will be significant in the sense that they seek to empower the people, motivating them to be the shapers of their own destiny.

### **1.8 The Scope of the Study**

This study involved the analysis of five video-recorded performances of theatre groups in Kenya. The groups included: Sponsored Art for Education (SAFE), Legal Resource Foundation (LRF), Imara Players Society, and Moi University 2014 Tfd Project. The study analyzed two productions from Imara Players (a narrative and a poem); and one item each in the rest of the groups. The study was concerned with the framing of aspects such as songs, dances and how these theatrical techniques facilitate the participation of

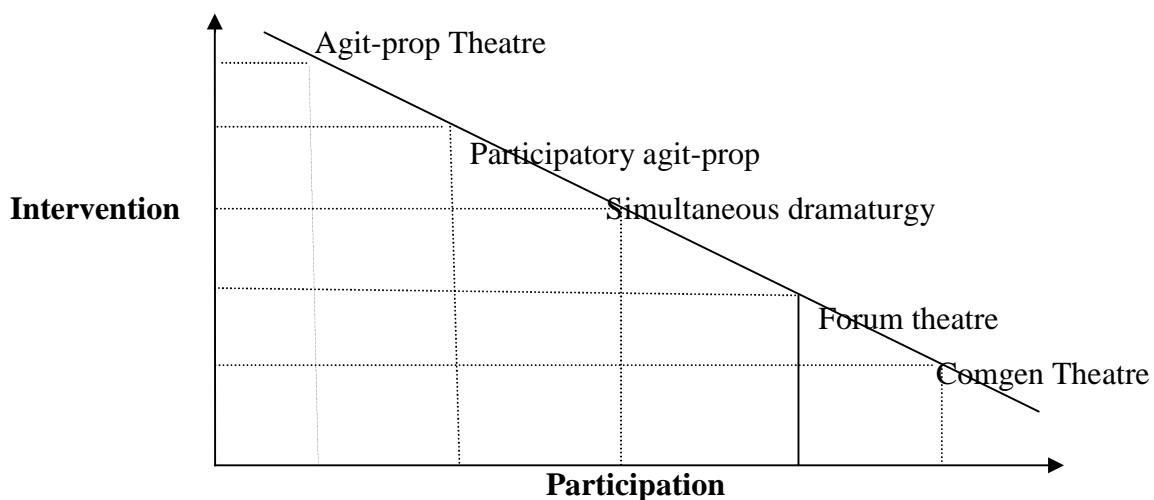
participants. It was also concerned with the understanding of the real state of affairs of the communities in terms of the communities understanding their social reality before the TfD enterprises. The study also sought to find out the educational levels of the participants in workshops and play creation and how this affected their level of participation.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

This study draws its theoretical framework from the following ideas: Mda's *Concept of Intervention*, *The Dialogic Action Theory* of Freire and *Boal's Poetics of the Oppressed*.

### **1.9.1 Mda's (1993) Concept of Intervention**

This study applied Mda's (1993) concept of intervention testing the aspects of optimal participation and optimal intervention. In his concept, Mda has graphically demonstrated how these variables interplay in their various proportions in pursuit of equilibrium. In response to how participation can be intense yet little conscientisation be realized as witnessed in the *Alcoholism* play, (Mda (1993:165) attributes to a variable known as intervention which must operate within the process of participation in order to realize conscientisation. He cites situations drawn from the practical experiences of the TfD enterprises carried out where excessive intervention led to *Agit-prop Theatre* and excessive participation led to *Comgen Theatre* and the two can never lead to conscientisation. He says intervention then should play at optimal levels which is the best compromise between the opposing tendencies of participation and intervention in order to serve the three functions of naming, reflection and action. Therefore in applying this concept, the study was interested in making comparisons between intervention and participation in the "dialogue" process. This is graphically illustrated below:



**Figure 1.0: Participation versus Intervention**

**Sourced from Mda (1993:170)**

As can be seen from the diagram, the various points at which participation and intervention intercepts refers to the kind of theatre that the two yields given their various proportional levels in the “dialogue” process. This graph was used to locate various Tfd enterprises at various levels classifying them as *Agit-Prop*, *Participatory Agit-Prop*, *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, *Forum Theatre* or *Comgen Theatre*. It must however be noted that forum theatre according to Mda is the most ideal and is achieved at a point of optimal participation and optimal intervention. The study found this concept to be important especially in the analysis and presentation of this work. It digresses from mere descriptions to graphical demonstrations that shift the information from imaginations to visualization. This in effect enhances an understanding now that we sometimes best conceptualize things when they are in pictorial form.

What perhaps Boal and Freire did not contemplate on was the emergence of what Mda has called *Comgen Theatre* – excessive participation which though is limited in conscientization, he does not entirely condemn but notes that it is actually the most ideal

but only at that point when the community assumes the role of the catalyst. This is one critical element that called for the prioritization of the concept in this study. That is, conscientisation can only be possible if there's optimal participation and intervention.

### **1.9.2 The Paulo Freire's (1970) Theory of Dialogic Action**

The dialogic action theory advocates for a problem posing approach to learning where the teacher and the learner meet as cognitive actors and the cognizable objects (far from being the end of the cognitive act) intermediates them both resolving their contradictions in the process of learning. The theory revolts against the banking concepts of education which assumes absolute ignorance on the learner - a characteristic of the ideology of oppression which negates education and knowledge as a process of inquiry but a gift bestowed upon a few who consider themselves knowledgeable. He notes that the process of liberation is praxis; the reflection and action of men and women upon their world in order to transform it saying that liberation needs acts of cognition and not transfer of information. He further holds that the generative themes should be explored collectively which is in away; investigating peoples' way of thinking. Another aspect that Freire raises still as problem posing is codifications (Freire 1970:96). He outlines such codifications as charts, drama, pictures, among others which he further says should not be slogans or offer solutions therein but cognizable objects that challenges participants towards the critical reflection of the decoders.

This study was therefore interested in seeing how these groups in engaging the local communities involve them in investigating generative themes collectively and exploring various codifications (as problem posing instruments) and how these codifications enhance critical awareness of their social realities and how they lead to other related

themes. The study was also interested at understanding the explicit or enigmatic nature of these codifications. Codifications in this study included: the narratives, plays, poems, charts, pictures, among others.

### **1.9.3 Boal's (1979) Poetics of the Oppressed**

Boal's (1979) *Poetics of the oppressed* advocates for the handing over means of theatrical production to the people to utilize them for their own pedagogy. This stems from the revolutionary Marxist-socialist ideology of reversing the social infrastructure (production relations) dictated by capitalism that perpetuates an oppressive and exploitative superstructure. In his theory, he seeks to empower the spectator to think and act for himself and be the transformer of the dramatic action. He calls this a rehearsal for a revolution though it may seem fictional and limited to a space (Boal 1979:141). Boal also privileges games as critical in theatrical production especially in developing the right muscular structure to enhance the expressive ability of the body. This expressive ability is what enhances the transformation of a spectator into a spect-actor. At this point he says discussions need not take the form of words but a body language that provides a variety of means of expression. Boal describes the actions of the actor as intervention which is actually a form of participation.

In looking at various degrees of the theatre language, he explores various forms of the theatre languages where theatre should be practiced as living and present and not finished product. These theatre languages include: Simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, and forum theatre. In simultaneous dramaturgy, he says the spectator writes simultaneously with the acting of the actor (Boal 1979:126). In image theatre he says the spectator intervenes directly speaking through the images made with the actor's body (Boal

1979:126). In forum theatre he says the spectator intervenes directly in the dramatic action and acts (Boal 1979:126). In using this theory, the study was first interested in seeing how the means of theatrical production (which is the creation and acting of the drama) are handed over to the people to utilize them, and how games are used to enhance the expressive ability of the bodies of the participants. The study was also interested in the nature of the dramatic language employed by the organizers of various enterprises like simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, and forum theatre.

## **1.10 Literature Review**

### **1.10.1 Introduction**

This section entails literature from Theatre for Development practitioners who have theorized on the subject. It entails critical thoughts on the fundamental aspects of the participation process such as the dynamics on the use of cultural art forms and aesthetics in TfD enterprises.

### **1.10.2 Speaking into the practice**

Takem (2005) looks at how TfD was used in Cameroon to mitigate the effects of environmental degradation after it came to the public limelight that Cameroon's forest cover was getting depleted and it therefore posed a big threat to the environment. In doing so, he analyses a number of Theatre for Development enterprises in Cameroon that were aimed at offering environmental literacy. Various policy strategies were employed including educational policy, media campaigns, and NGOs. It is the NGOs that employed theatre for this case and his (Takem) entire work therefore examines theatre's role as an instrument of promoting environmental literacy.

In exploring the various paradigms theatre has taken in different historical periods as dictated by the prevailing socio-political and economic climates, Takem (2005:110) observes that African theatre was perceived in terms of the ideological position it privileged depending on the prevailing socio-historical exigencies. In the pre-colonial period for instance, he says theatre articulated the ideological interests of the powerful like chiefs and elders. But this was not entirely so. There were moments when it appeared to mediate the agenda of the common folk. Theatre then gained militancy during the struggle against colonialism especially in Kenya and Nigeria. In Cameroon however, due to increased exploitation of the underclass, tools of challenging these exploitations were sought and therefore TFD's liberation paradigms came into focus to foreground the agenda of the majority. The theatre's paradigm shift from an ideological tool to militancy in effect meant a shift in its framing in order to serve the function of its framers. In respect to this study, it means that for theatre to serve a certain function, it has to be framed in a particular manner to yield the desired results.

Arendshorst (2005) reiterates Freire's bottom – up approach arguing that this frees an individual's thinking. He argues that by actors participating in Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT), it allows one to step outside his/her own reality and even be able to try different alternatives and be able to appreciate the point of view of their enemy. I find this to be critical especially when laying grounds for constructive participatory "dialogue". Ideas are then aired objectively without being influenced by biases. Another very critical point raised by Arendshorst was that theatre provides an avenue for the operation of collective thought. This statement implies the sharing of common knowledge and collective critical awakening which is a key ingredient to collective action. As a



foundational work, he (Arendshorst) observes that the Amani people's Theatre employs carefully researched dramatic pieces for easy facilitation of "dialogue" among the target communities. Perhaps this aspect may want to point at the dynamics of engagement – the ground work that must be done before real "dialogue" takes place. While quoting Amollo Amollo, he (Arendshorst) notes that the more the community gets deeply involved in the creation and implementation of any form of development in their area of occupation, the more likely it is to receive the mandate of popular approval. This statement means a number of things: One, the essence of "dialogue" in TfD has been emphasized, and two, the intensity of the involvement in the "dialogue" process by the target community has equally been emphasized. Still on the same note, Arendshorst (April 2005) notes that a well designed Drama for Conflict Transformation (DCT) provokes spontaneity and stimulates participants to transcend themselves by creating a sort of vacation from the routine of everyday life. However, he does not go further to illustrate how this drama should be organized and structured to yield the intended results.

Mlama (1991) underscores the relationship that has existed between culture and development and clearly identifies capitalism as the threat to this relationship. It (capitalism) reneges on the culture of the majority and as such perpetuates the hegemonic status quo. The negation of this non-capitalistic theatre in the TfD enterprises, she says has robbed the African people ideological tools to challenge the exploitative forces. In fact, this has driven artists to sieving the educational content of their artistic pieces and remaining with entertainment. This in itself indicates the challenge that TfD has in accomplishing its mission of empowering communities. Touching on the framing of "dialogue", Mlama exalts a theatre that has hitherto been framed in a manner that

promotes development but is now being framed in a manner that does not promote collective development but exploitation. The capitalists were so crafty that they did not entirely disregard the African culture but sieved the elements that were not compatible with the entrenchment of capitalism. They (capitalists) framed their “dialogue” through several media like television and books. Such frames include: books, films, videos, music, among others with the content that creates in the African people a taste for a way of life that is compatible with the capitalistic infrastructure.

Mlama further takes stock of where popular theatre has been used by the masses especially during the colonial period in the struggle for independence – for bringing down the walls of oppression and exploitation and triumphing. Among the movements that employed performances she cites are: the *Maumau* in Kenya, *Frelimo* in Mozambique, and *ZANU* in Zimbabwe, and demonstrations against high food prices in Zambia and Sudan in the early 1980s. Indeed such demonstrations have been witnessed even here in Kenya especially when the county government passed legislations to tax even the slaughter of chicken. In doing all these, actually Mlama is attempting to demonstrate the mutual relationship that has existed between theatre and social welfare. And therefore she observes that the resurgence of the present Popular Theatre is a continuation of the long practiced tradition within the African society and not an innovation of the 1960s theatre movement inspired by the university travelling theatre to bring theatre back to the fore after many decades of colonial suppression of the local art forms as it has variously been implied by some scholars. This information underscores the centrality of theatre in driving the agenda of the masses by presenting this study with

the benefit of such experience. It is like she is saying the framing of theatre that initially promoted ideology has come back and is dictated by the need of collective development.

Mlama (1991) explores a number of TfD enterprises in Tanzania among them being The Malya Popular Theatre Project, Bagamoyo, Msoga, and Mkambalani popular theatre projects. Mlama however does not comment on the extent to which these TfD enterprises were successful but says only Mkambalani emerged successful in accomplishing its mission. A reading of these other TfD enterprises however reveals that successes were registered at various stages in terms of adequacy in framing. For instance, in Malya, members of the community had actively participated in the play creation process and even performed it before the villagers who further engaged them in a discussion over the same. What kept the energy of that “dialogue” process is what this study would have loved to capture because it deals with the framing. What attracted the villagers to remain together and create their own drama that reflects their social realities and re-enacted it without people from outside is an aspect this study is earnestly seeking to articulate. It is actually what Mda (1993) has called a conscientizing *Comgen* Theatre - members of the community taking up the role of the facilitator and initiating progressive “dialogue”. The failure of others was majorly for reasons that had to do with the framing of the dialogic process. For instance, in Bagamoyo popular theatre project, communal problems were captured in the play but people were numb when it came to talking about them openly because of the presence of the *Mwinyi*'s (landlords) who could bewitch those attempting to challenge the status quo. This perhaps points at inadequacies when it comes to the framing of this codification (the play) to enhance participation in interrogating the subject at hand. Certain critical issues must have been overlooked. It must have been an overt

codification which is not appropriate when dealing with politically sensitive topics that seeks to challenge the status quo. Perhaps a covert codification would have served better.

Koch (2008) articulates the state of Tfd in Tanzania, commenting on what other scholars have propounded and the general practice of Tfd citing its challenges in bringing about sustainable change. She raises pertinent issues that are cardinal to the progress of the Tfd practice and as such, they affect the framing of “dialogue” to attract participation. For instance, she notes that TFD is an external intervention even if all the stages are shaped by the participants themselves because the when, where, and how is decided by external forces and therefore such participation is done within the framework of the organizers. She argues that since the debate began from outside, external TFD model is incompatible with aspirations of the grass root structures,

Tfd in this sense is not a medium of the marginalized classes, as it portrays itself, but one that intellectuals and later aid organizations have thought up for this lower classes and which they would like to see as their medium. It is exactly this discrepancy between ideal and practice and its ambiguous position between co-determination and outside interference and participation or patronization that makes TFD so interesting as a form of theatre (Koch 2008:118).

This argument perhaps seeks to emphasize the point that Tfd should purely be the business of the communities and traces of external intervention should not be spotted. In effect, the argument dilutes Mda’s emphasis on the heterophily concept of external intervention. This study was therefore interested in noting incidences where Tfd initiatives were conceived by the communities and “dialogue” framed by the communities and described the circumstances that enabled the thriving of the same.

To avoid the technicalities of jostling with the local cultural art forms and remaking them to suit the occasion, Koch (2008) points out at indigenous art forms in various ethnic

communities that address social problems and advocates for art forms that already fulfill the functions of TFD in ethnic communities. Such forms include satirical dramas that had the power of changing people's anti-social behavior and thus restoring the social equilibrium. But Koch forgets that the circumstances that led to the creation of these very satirical drama is also different and may not serve this purpose. Also, the nature of social-economic problems that the development agent sees may not be seen with a local in the same light and magnitude hence lack of linkages.

Murundu (2010) in her master's thesis on intervention theatre techniques based on the works of Theatre Arts Students at Moi University, looks at theatrical techniques and how they are applied to realize conscientisation. Murundu (2010:21) notes that "Specifically, the study analyses certain aspects of theatrical techniques such as characterization, plot, metaphors, and symbolism among others." The study therefore actually set out to examine how the above mentioned theatrical techniques are applied to enhance conscientisation. It limited itself to the theatrical techniques. But a close examination of the theatrical techniques shows that she was actually dealing with the aesthetic; those aspects that evoke spectacle, humor and others to kill boredom and attract attention. In fact, in two of the objectives of her study she says: To identify and analyze the suitability of interventionist theatre techniques used to communicate to the University student population and to examine the communicativeness of the interventionist approaches in conscientising the University student population. Suffice it, to say, is that these two objectives can only be arrived at by interrogating the theatrical techniques employed.

The works done by Moi University Theatre Arts Students according to Murundu were generally plays, verses and narratives performed between the periods 2000-2008. Though

the works touched on other issues related to students' life, the main focus was HIV/AIDS. In one of the plays *The Poison*, the study indeed focuses on how the theatrical techniques have been used. She recommends for instance the title which symbolizes the HIV virus that poisons the immune system of the victim. Another one is background sound and interactive "dialogue".

The second play *Campuserian* had many captivating theatrical techniques. Murundu highlights them from the mobilization familiar Luhya songs that brought almost everybody on board – encouraging participation. There was code switching from English to Kiswahili and then sheng' that very well placed the play within the repertoire of the student's language. Worth noting is that by the time the play was ending, a member of the audience remarked; Aaah *imeisha!* Meaning, the suspense created was so strong that it ended so soon. Other performances discussed in this study included: *Mkristo and The Pimp (plays)*, a narrative: *Indebendebe*, verse: *Me!* A close examination of the studied projects reveals that projects that embraced more of the theatrical techniques like: *First Class Honors, Campuserian, Mkristo, Inmate Production and Indebendebe* attracted more participation and were more fruitful than those that did not embrace them such as *The Pimp*.

This study differs with Murundu's study majorly on the ground of scope of the study. Whereas her (Murundu) study looks at the theatrical aspects in intervention theatre, this study looks at the framing of "dialogue" process right from preparation and mobilization plus other intervening factors. This study therefore takes the theatrical aspects as part of the small component it is covering. Secondly, the samples or units of analysis in this study are from a wider geographical location in the Kenyan republic. This study may

therefore be more revealing of the state of Tfd in the country and beyond. But for the benefit of this study, Murundu's work informs this study on the significance of employing theatrical techniques in the frame as they are catalysts for participation.

With the participatory bottom-up approach in Tfd enterprises selling, Kerr (1998) anticipated much radicalism in the social behavior of the communities in Zambia. Having mastered the ideas of Freire (1970) and Boal (1979), Kerr and others went to the communities with pre-packaged plays with radical content and to their dismay, very little awakening was achieved. Definitely something was missing in what they were doing. The new approach hatched was that facilitators should help the indigenous community revitalize their cultural art forms in order to help them promote social innovation and change. The re-embarking on cultural art forms as a methodology to conscientise the communities was in itself revisiting the framing of "dialogue" to enhance participation.

Kerr then questions how the indigenous cultural forms are removed from the context of their formation and adopted by the cultural communicators; views are shared by Koch (2008). With this he says; the best institutional solution to the problems is to do away with the mediating agencies out to fulfill certain expectations from the donors and have strong grass root civic organizations. With this he says communities can be able to negotiate their own change cohesively. But he adds that such a move requires national and regional networking in order to provide effective mutual solidarity. This argument seems to borrow from what Koch and Mluma have said about Ujamaa villages in Tanzania that were in themselves structures of cohesion that enhanced "dialogue". Perhaps grass root structures or any other cohesive grass root organization can be very supportive in terms of enhancing participation. A number of interesting observations

follow. Strong grass root organization; made by who? If NGOs are removed, what shall be their replacement? Shall it be the government? But it will also need to use these very cultural art forms. With or without NGOs therefore, a people driven change is what is to be the focus. It is also true that the outside agent is cardinal in jumpstarting developmental communication (Mda 2003). The faulting of the use of traditional art forms out of the context in which they were formed may to some extent be true (Kerr 1998:247). But what is the other option? It is the view of this study that apart from some few minor cases, the changing of cultural art forms to suit the developmental agenda has been successful. A good example is the Kenya National Drama Festivals. Many of the interludes in narratives and plays are actually cultural songs with lyrical changes, but with the same tune and they are normally fabulous.

Marion (1995) assesses the role theatre has played in advancing developmental communication in Uganda. She (Marion) discusses the communication process in a Tfd venture, underscoring the essence of addressing the cognitive and the affective domains of an individual in the communication process in order to change behavior. She takes the “dialogue” process to new heights when she says that changes in behavior are as a result of learning which is the process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation, provided that the characteristics of the change in activity cannot be explained on the basis of native positive tendencies, maturation or temporary stages of the organism, (Marion 1995:105). She also raises the fundamentals in the process of communication. Such questions she asks include: What is the content of communication? What does it say or attempt to say? How is the message expressed? What is its style? Which techniques are applied? And in what language is the play



performed? It means that the development agent in framing “dialogue” should directly or indirectly seek to get responses that answer the above questions. Only then can we describe such a participation to be informed and informing.

Butake in Breitinger (2003:102) seeks to radically divert from Freire’s view when he observes that it is these oppressors who need conscientization and not the other way round because they relentlessly hold the economy hostage yet with their realization that they should share what they have with others, oppression can stop instantly. Bole Butake therefore opted to conscientize the rich upper class through plays that target them. This is a very interesting observation which Tfd practitioners should give a careful thought. He staged a number of plays that radically attacked the political elites. For instance, *The Rape of Michelle* (1984), *Lake God* (1986), *The Survivors* (1989), and *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* (1990) were all questioning the integrity of senior government officials. *And Palm-Wine Will Flow* (1990) play that had a TV version ended up with the detention of all the journalists and speakers involved in its production. When *The Rape of Michelle* (1984), and *The Survivors* (1989) were performed, they were banned never to be performed again. Unfortunately for Butake, his plays were elitist and had limited room for participation by the targets of conscientisation.

Odhiambo (2008) in his quest for effective methodology emphasizes the need of incorporating the cultural art forms of the target community as an important aspect of methodology. This does not just stop at the cultural art forms but also language use which in this case features as an intervening factor. For instance, the CLARION’s project experienced this kind of problem when it was suggested that more participation would have been realized if the mode of communication would have been Meru dialect

(Odhiambo 2008:117). The study points at the dynamics of engagement during the “dialogue” process and emphasizes that language is a critical component in “dialogical” participation and should seriously be factored in while framing the “dialogue” process.

In response to the factors underlying the success of Kamiriithu project, Odhiambo (2008) says that the success of Kamiirithu in Kenya is partly attributed to a concept founded in the Boalian and Freirian theories of collective communal research. In fact Ngugi (in Odhiambo 2008:89) says the people of Kamiirithu understood the principles of Boal because they were embodied in a way they could easily recognize and understand. This to a big extent contributed to the success of the Kamiirithu project. To this study, this is an alarm bell that the theoretical framework employed should be that which the target community can identify with.

Odhiambo (2008) further explores a number of issues that deals with the framing of “dialogue”. He for instance attempts to look at codification in the dialogic process; questioning whether explicit or implicit coding can help achieve heightened consciousness among the participants. This is especially critical when dealing with taboo subject like sex related topics in a typical African setting where issues of sexuality are only discussed in muted voices. His two examples of the dramatic performances: “the Pandora’s Box” (implicit codification) and “Mosquito mask” (explicit codification) serves to demonstrate this. This whole concept of codification (implicit or explicit) perhaps deals with the dynamics of engagement in the dialogic process which is a very critical element to be factored. However, Odhiambo (2008:156) warns that a codification should not just be seen as an end in itself or just as a maze, but as a catalyst engaging the community in a meaningful and serious introspection leading them to reflect upon and

consequently transform that reality. There's however a danger of having what again Odhiambo (2008:172) calls *pseudo-participation* and call it participation.

## **1.11 Methodology**

### **1.11.1 The Type of Study**

This study took on a qualitative research methodology because it is largely a social science research that primarily looks at the qualitative aspects like the degree of intervention by the facilitator/catalyst; the underlying structural issues that informs “dialogue”; attitudes formed in the process of “dialogue” that either implies that they are happy with the direction the “dialogue” is taking or not. This study used four theatre groups. The groups included: Sponsored Art for Education (SAFE) - analyzing *Ndoto za Elibidi*, Legal Resources Foundation (LRF) analyzing one of their production known as *Shamba la Mfukeri*, *Moi University 2014 Tfd Project*, and Imara Players analyzing *Mshale Nyama* (poem) and “*Beauty*” (narrative). Specifically therefore, the study collected its data from the following sources.

### **1.11.2 Sources of Data**

This study had a number of sources of data. One of the sources of data was video recordings of the sampled Theatre for Development projects that included *Ndoto Za Elibidi*, *Shamaba la Mfukeri*, *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'*, and *Moi University 2014 Tfd Project*. The other source of data was Directors and Actors of the various Theatre Groups under the study. Directors and Actors were especially important for interview and they provided critical information on the preparation before the programme was jumpstarted. For instance, were ethical issues considered like seeking permission from the authorities? And after the performance, was the post performance discussion carried out? This was

especially important when looking for intervening factors. The details can be found on the interview schedule.

Also serving as a source of data was TfD related literature. This study used literature from secondary sources to further buttress its findings and conclusions. The TfD literature was specifically critical in clearing heresies, and reinforcing arguments. This was especially important when pointing out the loopholes in the theories used in this study and therefore the challenges which TfD as a discipline faces. The study also employed discussions by TfD specialists and in the process raised pertinent questions and answers to the same sought.

### **1.11.3 Methods of Data Collection**

This study employed various methods of data collection. One of them was the use of the critical eye to read the attitudes and implied meanings of the participants in the process of the exercise. This also was used to analyze the kind and the nature of the audiences'. The researcher specifically used the critical eye in identifying and picking out features that enhances "dialogical" participation.

Another method of data collection was the use of interview. The study conducted interviews with directors and actors of the various theatre groups under the study. The researcher wanted to know the ethical considerations taken while administering the project. For instance, did the group do publicity to make members of the target community aware of their visitation, what was the extent to which they engaged the target community and why? In one of the projects (*Moi University 2014 TfD Project*) the researcher took the video in person. This was especially important for reference as the

study continued. The researcher therefore had the advantage of having both experiences; referring to the video and also observation experience.

#### **1.11.4 Type of Data Collected**

The type of data that the researcher collected was varied and was majorly by description. These included: descriptions of emotions and attitudes formed at various stages of “dialogue”, descriptions of facial expressions and tonal variations, descriptions of costumes, descriptions of the preparations for the said projects. There was also the description of language employed, description of songs used, Photos, Props and instruments used, descriptions of staging, descriptions of set and backdrop. This applied to all the TfD projects (*Shamba la Mfukeri*, *Ndoto za Elibidi*, *Moi University Theatre for Development Project*, and *Mshale Nyama&‘Beauty’*) analyzed. The researcher sought to describe the problem raised by the discussants and how the experience of the problem was shared by all. The researcher was keen to record the change of attitudes and the emotional power of expression with the view of describing how the facilitator/catalyst attempts to bring the discussion back on course in case of any deviation from the subject matter, describe how the facilitator/catalyst stimulates his audience – psyching them up to speak more with minimal restrain, and finally, how does the facilitator/catalyst help resolve the problem? A description of twists and turns of the “dialogue” process was monitored and noted.

Another type of data collected was related literature on framing of “dialogue” in TfD enterprises. This enabled the researcher to gain more understanding and was able to give more substantive descriptions and illustrations that further solidified the base of the research findings. Related literature helped develop new insights, deepen the

understanding of the researcher, cut out ambiguities and remove irrelevancies to come up with substantive findings.

#### **1.11.5 Data Analysis and Presentation**

This study analyzed data and presented it in the following manner. Data drawn from the research findings was analyzed and presented largely in a descriptive way. A description of how different variables (intervention and participation) affect each other was made.

Another descriptive analysis and presentation of data was descriptions from the researcher's observation. The researcher gave a detailed account of his experiences and observations giving deductions as he prepared to give elaborate conclusions.

Another mode of description was the comparison between what was observed and the theories which this study was referencing to. It was particularly concerned with concretizing various thoughts with the view of increasing the validity of this study.

At the end of it all, the researcher came up with conclusions putting the manner in which various "dialogical" aspects were framed and its consequent implication to participation. Descriptions as to how particular framings gave birth to certain levels of participation (low or high) were made. Mda's graphical illustrations were used to illustrate the degrees of intervention, conscientisation and participation. This study also has recommendations pointing out policy areas to help streamline the TfD practice.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE DIALOGUE PROCESS

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed description of how the animateurs of the selected Tfd enterprises framed their dialogue to trigger the kind of participation that enables a deeper analysis of the problems that faces the target community. It therefore critically looked at the suitability and appropriateness of the codifications employed by the organizers of the enterprises as frames to pull the members of the target community into owning up dialogue and actively participating in their own pedagogy. Some catalytic methods of engaging the communities to negotiate their own change are what Freire (1970:95) has called codifications. These include charts, pictures, dramas, and by extension therefore: narratives, songs, and poems among others. These codifications are interrogated further to find out how they are deployed to involve the target community in dialoguing over the problems that faces them. But given that the above said codifications (charts, narratives, poems, songs e.t.c.) are artistic by their very nature, and aesthetics being an integral part of art, a brief discourse on aesthetics at this point becomes necessary.

#### 2.2 Aesthetics

Koch (2008:135) refers to aesthetics as “all aspects of sensual perception that are offered and triggered by the performances as well as the theatrical and dramaturgical structures according to which they are built.” This implies the feelings of pleasure and pain generated by a performance as a whole. The laughter it evokes, the annoyance and irritation it generates, the mental pictures it paint, among others. All these have a way of shaping the perception and attitudes towards the themes the performance is espousing and

in effect triggering certain reactions. In this study therefore, aesthetics largely refers to the artistic elements that appeals to the senses and thrills the imagination. These artistic elements include: songs, dances, laughter, attitude formations and facial expression, among others; and their role in enhancing the rendering of the performance (dialogical). Other aspects of aesthetics that appeals to the senses and imagination include costume, props, décor, and stage movements, among others. At this point, it is important to note that there is a possibility of an aesthetic element serving as a codification at the same time. Such codifications include: songs, questions, and dances, among others. Important to note is that these aesthetic elements are found in the people's cultural life. People do express themselves using symbols, proverbs, idioms, satire, among others. They express themselves through songs, dances, costumes, and laughing among others.

As human beings, we are naturally attracted to beauty and naturally repulsed from ugliness. Beauty entertains our senses and refreshes our imagination. Achebe (1958:5) singles out one aesthetic element (proverbs) in Igbo community saying "... proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten"; underscoring the significance of aesthetics in a conversation. The aesthetics in a people's way of life is what sustains their fellowship and therefore a sense of community. In visiting a community to carry on an awareness campaign therefore, it is wise that the performance reflects these aesthetic elements.

## **2.3 SAFE (Sponsored Arts for Education) KENYA**

### **2.3.1 Background Information**

SAFE Kenya is based in Nairobi. S.A.F.E.; an abbreviation of Sponsored Arts for Education is a Kenyan NGO and UK charity that uses street theatre, films and community programmes to educate and inspire social change (Craig n.d.) They strive to



tackle a range of social issues including HIV/AIDS, post-election violence, gender-based violence, female circumcision, unsafe drinking water and environmental destruction. SAFE has been known for its progressive role of changing lives across Kenya for over ten years now. They for instance featured in the Oscar winning film *The Constant Gardener* and their first feature film *Ndoto za Elibidi* on sexual violence and HIV/AIDS won ten international awards (Craig n.d.) SAFE Kenya has also produced other feature film which includes among others: *Ni Sisi* (highlighting issues to do with Kenyan identity and peace). This was released in February 2013 to the international acclaim (Craig n.d.) SAFE's work was also recognized by *The STARS Foundation* in 2009. SAFE has also received an AfriComNet 6<sup>th</sup> annual award in 2012 for its excellence in HIV/AIDS strategic communication in Africa. In general therefore, SAFE can be described as an organization with international reputation whose work has gained the attention of a number of reputable international organizations.

### **2.3.2 An Overview of Ndoto za Elibidi**

*Ndoto za Elibidi* was a SAFE sponsored TfD enterprise that was taken around in many parts of Nairobi slum areas. These included: Mukuru kwa Njenga, and Kariokor. It was also performed in Eldoret region. But *Ndoto za Elibidi* (now under analysis), took place in Mathare slums of Nairobi- Kenya in the year 2005. The play carried the message of HIV/AIDS revealing how victims of the disease in the society are discriminated. Such lessons picked from the drama were: that one cannot contract HIV through touch. This message was passed through Alphonse to his wife who was discriminating his brother who had run away from his family on the account that his children were infected with HIV. Also, having diarrhea and frequent coughing does not necessarily mean that one is

HIV positive. It is only through testing that it can be confirmed if one is HIV positive. This was brought out through the character Ken who could not kiss his girlfriend just because he thought he was HIV positive and therefore feared spreading it further. On revealing this to Pablo, Pablo offers to take him to a VCT centre for testing. Pablo is also encouraged to test. To the contrary, Pablo tests positive and Ken tests negative. The audience learns that though one can look very healthy yet one can still be HIV positive. The only way therefore of confirming this is to go for an HIV test.

It is also clear that the safest way of curbing HIV/AIDS is abstinence. This is demonstrated through the life of Mshere and Vinnie who agree never to engage in sex until they are married. Each one of them lives to the promise and we see them at the end wedding. The other message is that it is bad to run away from your family because they are HIV positive. Sick people need care and love especially from close relatives and friends. This is seen when George Alphonse (the father of Petronila, Nite, Shiko and Mshere) confesses at the end and we see him embracing his family again. It can also be deduced from the performance that one can still live a happy and prosperous life even if he/she tests positive provided he/she gets the right information and properly uses the Anti-Retroviral Drugs. This is demonstrated by Shiko, a television presenter, now working with "Citizen Television."

The constant use of condom is the other message that comes out in the performance as a form of protection from contracting HIV. Also from the play it is evident that parents should freely talk about sex to their children to teach them about some of these issues. This is conveyed through the character Shiko who complains that the parents never talks to her about sexual life. There is also the demystifying of the myth that when one has sex

with a young virgin girl, he will never contract HIV/AIDS or can be cured if they are already infected.

## **2.4 Framing Ndoto za Elibidi for conscientisation**

### **2.4.1 The Back Drop as a Codification**

The background décor is graphically written *SAFe GHETTO*. The letters are visible from a distance and are painted in deep red and black colors. Moreover, they have been given a calligraphically aesthetic touch by convoluting some letters. The writings; *SAFe GHETTO*, are in themselves question posing. One would begin to ponder; safe from what? This therefore is mind engrossing and perhaps before the performance comes to a conclusion, one can answer himself/herself that SAFE Kenya is here to sensitize people against HIV and therefore have a community that is safe from the virus.

According to Kamau Wa Ndung'u the director of *Ndoto za Elibidi*, the project began by investigating the problems that face the slum dwellers of Nairobi city. But he says they first had a clue of what they wanted to do basing on the reports that HIV/AIDS was rampant in the slums. So, together with other members of the cast, went to the community to try and establish the main causes of HIV and then assembled and the main focus now was the work of coming up with a play.

We had a rough idea of what we wanted to do. But we did not want it to look like it was purely our own idea. To encourage participation, we gave room for members of the cast to have their input. We took a long time making the drama and it kept on evolving. Before we came to record it as a film, we had staged it in many places and many adjustments had been done (Interview carried out on 21 Jan. 2014 by phone)

The strategy of not just coming with a finished play but having at least some people who were prospective members of the cast in the slum participate in creating the play was

applied. There was also after-performance discussion that enabled the community interrogate issues raised in the play.

As a framing strategy also, the character, Elibidi, deliberately employs a mishmash of languages that encompasses Luhya, Kiswahili, English, sheng' adopting a joker style kind of speech. This apparently deals with the cosmopolitan population of a city slum that does not have an exclusive medium of communication in terms of language. For instance, "*Nilijikasa kisabuni nikapata kasi ya kutengenesa sabuni huko industrial area... Nilipopata mshahara wangu wa kwanza tu hivi, siku moja niliamua niende uhuru paka nichipatie treat*" (I tried so much and got a job at of soap making and when I got my first pay, I decided to go to Uhuru Park and have fun). Again Elibidi goes, "*Mchama, wewe ndiye unapikanga watu picha?... Nataka unipike picha kama nimekalia KICC*" (You man, are you a photo man?... I want you to take me a photo like I am seated on top of KICC). This is humorous and therefore a source of entertainment. It is not only Elibidi who capitalizes on this but even Jackie Nyaminde alias *Wilbroda*. For instance, responding to Alphonse's question on whether she is married or not she replies, "*Mimi bado kuolewa, wewe taoa mimi?*" (Am not married, will you marry me?). The love scenes that characterize the conversation between Elibidi and Njoki are a thing that many young people identify with and they therefore served as a catalyst to participation.

The irony of a wife (Agnes) publicly harassing a husband (Alphonse) is in itself a beholding moment. It presents a situation that breaks from the traditionally known culture of men harassing women to women harassing men - a deconstruction of gender relations. Alphonse appears timid and inferior before Agnes (his wife). He looks down when questioned and does not exude the confidence of a man when responding to the questions

from the wife. This leaves the audience wondering what sought of a man Alphonse is; shrinking even when the wife is physically assaulting him. This in effect creates anxiety among members of the audience.

After the departure of Elibidi from the family, the family is entangled in quarrels on many occasions. But after the three girls (Petronila, Shiko, Nite, and Mshere) re-examining their lives and the challenges that face them, they see the sense of uniting and staying as true sisters. They even hatch an idea of forming a band. They together interrogate the challenges they are going through as a family. Such challenges included being abandoned by their father and meeting domestic expenses. They deliberate on the rationale of the father abandoning them because one of them is HIV positive; each one of them making positive contributions. They agree to set aside their personal differences for the sake of family unity. These kinds of deliberations enlighten members of the audience who may be going through similar challenges. That it is actually possible to overcome some of these challenges if people can set aside their differences.

Other songs like those celebrating Elibidi's journey to town *mwana wa mbeli* (first born celebration song) to begin a new life because of poverty in the village were didactic. They were popular luhya songs with simple lyrics severally repeated and therefore enhancing participation. The injustice committed against the girls (Petronilah, Shiko, Nite, and Mshere) is sensationally irritating and morally repugnant. It makes the audience restless and given chance; they would speak. It breaks the silence by awakening all the human senses to engage with the issue at hand.

### 2.4.2 Aesthetics in *Ndoto za Elibidi*

A number of aesthetic tools were employed in *Ndoto za Elibidi* to enhance communication and below I cite some. The repeated love scenes which by their very nature are aesthetic: Elibidi courting Njoki, Abedi courting Kadogo to sing, Ken carrying Nite, and Alphonse courting Agnes which given their aesthetic nature commands attention of the audience. At some other instance, Agnes satirically asks Alphonse (supposedly then her prospective husband), “*Aih wewe ni mrefu. Wewe ni Mrefu kila pahali?*” (Aih you are tall. Are you tall everywhere?) This question sparks a thunderous laughter in the audience dispelling the melancholic mood and therefore standing out as beautiful. This presents aesthetic experiences that are not so removed from their day to day experiences and therefore to the audience, this is a story worth watching. Needless to mention, these members of the audience are often times in love and therefore this becomes their story. But as they do so, the intended message is passed on to facilitate conscientisation.

The audience is also treated to the drama of typical villager’s first-time experience in the city to learn how to cross the jam, to see chicken openly on the street fried in the oven, and to see KICC and refer to it as the ‘house’ he sees on ‘money.’ They are fascinated with sky scrapers, hooting and honking vehicles in a jam trying to make their way out, many people headed in different directions among others. This blows Alphonse’s imagination out of proportion and he begins to jump with his hands up as though he were on a football pitch jeering. The first time visit to the city by Elibidi and his brother Alphonse presents refreshing experiences to the audience. Probably this is how many of them arrived in the city and this cannot therefore be somebody else’s story but theirs.

The team used trumpets as a way of mobilizing the community. Of essence here is their blaring and audible sound. The fact that the trumpets are somehow rare and are glossy (aesthetic) to behold may have mobilized them to come out in their numbers. Aesthetics also entailed uniformed men and women (costuming) matching like soldiers in a line, commanding the attention of the slum dwellers. The youths and the young were curious and had to abandon whatever they were doing and join them. Conspicuous in the drama was the popular Citizen TV actor – *Jackie Nyaminde* alias *Wilbroda* and given her celebrity status, many might have wanted to interact with her and in effect, mobilizing them to the site of performance.

## **2.5 Critique of Ndoto za Elibidi**

Though SAFE Kenya managed to articulate issues on HIV and especially the myths that surround the HIV scourge, their big setback had to do with the methodology that did not promote wider participation of the target community. The drama offered solutions therein. Of importance to note is that the play creation was by work shopping and a post-performance discussion over issues raised in the performance. Also, the play was not confined to a proscenium stage but was taken to the target community, used art forms and the language that members of the target community were familiar with - *Kiswahili and Sheng'* in a Nairobi city slum.

## **2.6 Legal Resource Foundation (LRF)**

### **2.6.1 Background Information**

Legal Resources Foundation was first established in 1994 as an autonomous project of the Kenya Human Rights Commission which then registered in 2000 as an independent

legal entity, (Legal Resource Foundation Trust). Since then, Legal Resources Foundation has grown into a renowned fully-fledged organization which has developed innovative methods to raise legal and Human Rights awareness among the young, underprivileged, and the under-educated classes in Kenya. As part of the development therefore, it has developed a number of programmes which among others include: community Based paralegal training, Theatre for Civic Education, legal and Human Rights Education for Secondary Schools, production of educational Radio programmes, and publication of materials to be used in its own and similar educational projects, (Legal Resource Foundation Trust). Perhaps it is within the two programmes: Theatre for Civic Education and Legal & Human Rights Education for Secondary Schools that *Shamba la Mfukeri* project was conceived and implemented.

Though it is not clear when the organization began to use TFD for advocacy, the earliest can only be thought to have begun at around 2001. This is because the researcher was unable to access the organizers of this TFD enterprise for interview. According to Mburu Gitu, the CEO - Legal Resources Foundation [in his post-performance submission (recorded)], a majority of Kenyans, access to justice is still a problem primarily because they cannot afford high costs of litigation. The primary mission of the organization therefore is to enhance legal awareness amongst the citizenry because unless citizens know they can neither make demands of their rights nor recognize violation of their rights.

Among the strategies they employed in disseminating this information includes reaching out to schools. In a post-performance submission, Mburu (the then Chief Executive Director of Legal Resources Foundation) observes:



We reach out to schools to take to them the information on justice to inculcate a culture of human rights at secondary schools. We therefore do this by developing human rights material including newspapers and booklets. We have a magazine called *The Young Boys* and we give them an opportunity to write articles to be published in that magazine

The organization uses theatre as a means of disseminating the information on issues of democracy and governance.

In a pre-performance submission, the Project Officer Mr. Odanyiro Wamukoya, observes that (*Shamba la Mfukeri*) is participatory and is meant to awaken the critical consciousness of the communities. He particularly points out that the quest for change is a tricky issue asking how the change should be especially constitutional change. “If we want change and especially when we are talking about constitutional change, how do we go about it?” he asked. He therefore narrates the approach given to the play as a reflection to the so many social-political and economic issues in Kenya through the eyes of farmers fighting for their rights.

### **2.6.2 An Overview of Shamba la Mfukeri**

*Shamba la Mfukeri* is a TfD drama that has been performed in many parts of western Kenya i.e. Kisii, Kisumu, Kakamega, Kapsabet, and many other places according to Odanyiro Wamukoya the project Officer of Legal Resource Foundation in his prologue submission. It is a fictitious drama that seeks to address various social challenges in the farm, the constitution being the entry point. The drama reflects on the injustices committed by the colonial administrators and how *Mfukeri* - their fellow African leader in the struggle for freedom was endorsed to lead them, only to perpetuate the old practice of his colonial master. A key hindrance to their true freedom is the constitution because it

was mutilated. Mfukeri amassed all the powers by changing the constitution without involving his fellow freedom fighters. For instance, he is the only man to employ government officials. The colonialist prevailed upon them to plant cash crops like coffee, tea, cotton, and sugarcane, abandoning food crops like beans and potatoes. Those who defied this order were punished by the police. He introduced taxes on all the goods supplied to the locals, established a hierarchical ruler ship of the chiefs that were answerable to him. People were spied on and sometimes beaten without due cause. These very injustices were carried out by Mfukeri - their fellow African leader. The land they all struggled to liberate was called *Shamba la Mfukeri*. In effect this meant that actually the entire country belonged to Mfukeri.

The general message relayed in this drama is that the fruits of the struggle for freedom have not been actualized. Pademba is forced to plant cash crops in her farm. Payment of the cash crops after harvesting takes too long to come by. She has eight children whom she cannot now feed. Girikasha (elected leader) is not cognizant of the challenges his people go through. This is characteristic of the many political leaders who forget what they promised their electorates immediately they assume power. Dictating to the farmers to forcefully plant cash crops without consulting them is the perpetuation of the ideology of oppression that characterizes banking concept of learning. This drama gives room for dialogue to interrogate issues that besets them.

## **2.7 Framing Shamba la Mfukeri for conscientisation**

### **2.7.1 Allegory in Shamba la Mfukeri**

The word *Shamba* is a Swahili word simply meaning a farm or agricultural land belonging to somebody. Following what is going on in the film, one is quick to conclude

that it is not just a fictitious story for fiction sake but has been used allegorically to actually mean the country Kenya. This is because the events that unfold in the farm are synonymous to what went on in Kenya immediately after independence. There are a number of other allegories. They include: *Kamati ya wazee* loosely translated as; Committee of elders, to mean the senate and *Kamati ya wateule* loosely translated as Committee of Representatives to mean Parliament. *Mkataba* - meaning the constitution that was changed to serve the interest of Mfukeri and a few of his cronies. By calling the farm Mfukeri's farm also implies that Mfukeri is the owner of the farm and precisely the owner of Kenya.

With these revelations, it can then be argued out that the organizers of this project, who are Kenyans, were actually talking about their own problems at home and not some anonymous farm or anonymous country somewhere in the world. It was about themselves and their country; a people exploring their country by interrogating the challenges that faces them to act on them and transform their country. Allegory (a way of framing) is particularly important especially when tackling politically sensitive subjects because of intolerance in dictatorships. Indeed over the years, theatre practitioners have used allegory in their fight against bad governance. Cases at hand are the works of Byron Kawaddwa's *Song of Wankoko* and John Ruganda's *The Floods* in Uganda, and George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

The performance begins by the facilitator inviting the community to a play which he says afterwards they will have a discussion. His opening remarks are that they have come to the community to discuss with them the problems that beset their farm and in the end come up with suggestions that can collectively better their lives. He gives an introduction

of what the play is about. This in effect must have in advance prepared the audience to arm themselves with questions concerning the play and therefore participating.

The opening song had repetitive lyrics that facilitated the participation in the singing. There was also the interchange of narration and action of how the freedom was gained. The song went: *Tukapambana tukapambana* (we struggled, we struggled) recited repeatedly enhancing the musicality. This must have enhanced the understanding of the storyline and in effect facilitated participation. The dramatization of what the successive leaders did that rendered the country bankrupt gave a good moment for the community to participate. The catalyst led the chant of *wanachovya*; a Swahili word literally meaning the little by little scooping of honey from a container to imply the pilfering of public resources by those in authority and the rest of the members responded the same (*Wanachovya!*) - emphasizing the act of looting by the leaders. This in itself is infuriating and heightens the much needed stakes necessary for participation.

The facilitators begin by displaying a story board with drawings (codification) of the farmer being beaten. They do not first engage the members of the audience to interrogate this codification but stages the drama and creates the necessary stakes through the plot of the play. Upon coming to a scenario where the soldier is about to beat Pademba, members of the audience are brought to the reality of the injustice committed to Pademba, and are invited to give their suggestions. In fact, members of the audience are asked to say what the drawings mean and truly, they say accurately what the drawings are communicating; the boss is ordering the soldier to beat Pademba. This is strategic in the sense that it is opened at a time when the input of the members is highly needed and for a

specific purpose. The opinions of the members at such a time therefore can never be misdirected but objective; focusing on the issues at hand.

The codification also tries to trace the genesis of the Africans problems as of colonial times by giving a deep exploration of the injustices committed by the colonialists. In the course of interrogating the law, one woman asks; ‘in the Executive Committee of Mfukeri, who represents women?’ This question seeks to address such democratic issues as the rights of women. It in effect raises gender debates and in a society where women are marginalized, this could be very ideal forum for advocating for the rights of women. Again, issues are raised freely - creating a sense of liberty and an impression that we should learn the culture of questioning whatever is going on in our government and therefore breaking the culture of silence.

The stakes are high when Girikasha is ordering the soldier to beat up Pademba. Everyone is irritated by the action of Girikasha (elected leader) ordering the security man to beat up Pademba. This is irritating and the people want to pour their anger. The stopping of performance at a point when the stakes are high, members of the audience can identify with a particular character in the play because she is not receiving a just treatment from the other inconsiderate oppressive party (Girikasha and the entire leadership), is in itself stimulation to participation. The injustice being committed to Pademba is an issue that raises the stakes. Continued engagement in dialogue with Girikasha (elected leader) enlightens members to discover that there are actually some laws which are oppressive and should be discarded. At this point, we see Pademba - a community member taking on the catalyst role saying that she knows the law and it is outdated because it oppresses

them. **Girikasha:** *Hautavunja sheria kwa kuniletea taabu zako za nyumbani* (You will not break the law by bringing me your family problems). **Pademba:** *Hii sheria niliona ikiandikwa, sheria gani hii? Kama imekuwa mbovu si ivunjwe* (This law I saw it written, what kind of law is this? If it has become redundant, why can't it be discarded?). The facilitator asks the audience whether Pademba has a right to uproot the cash crop and the debate ensues. They in response to Pademba's predicament vow to do away with the oppressive law that curtails their freedom to use land the way they want.

Girikasha (elected leader) organizes another meeting with the community members to express the disappointments of Mfukeri that farmers were planning to uproot the cash crops. He warns them and even intimidates them saying that he is here to keep the law. He is bossy, a bragger and egoistic. For instance, threatening to beat somebody with the keys of his car – an attempt to show that he is an important person and therefore what they are engaging him on are not very important. This behavior is annoying and it invites reactions that are participatory. This kind of provocation is ideal for participation because: one, it brings members out of their comfort zones, two, catch the vision of what their social reality is, and three, champion the required change.

The drama through its engagement with the community members is able to give a dichotomy between the ways of operation of the colonialist/Mfukeri and the fictional live performance that invites them to make contributions of how life should be – that of dialogue. This disparity in itself is an impetus for participation. It makes members to understand that their sorry-state-of-affairs is not a result of their own making but other forces are and that they are supposed to do something to regain their dignity.

The boldness of Pademba who is the epitome of the “poor” of putting up a spirited argument with Girikasha encourages the other locals that they can also do the same and should never adore those in power without questioning their actions. Secondly, it paints a picture that leaders are also just ordinary human beings and should not be worshipped. This in effect points to what Freire (1970) warned against creating myths out of situations as a cover up to ills so as to perpetuate the culture of oppression. For instance, that it is sin to question a leader. What the leader says is right. In effect this bolsters confidence in the life of all creating an awakening in the feeble minded that they can actually overcome the culture of silence and oppression.

Also, quite catching in terms of attracting participation in the “dialogue” is at the point when the soldier’s rod is up, ready to be unleashed on Pademba. Members of the audience are asked whether the soldier should beat her up or not. This in itself is the catalytic effect of the facilitator to stimulate community members to engage in the ongoing dialogue. Community members are invited to bring in their contributions interrogating the situation at hand. This opens room for the farmers to interrogate the law further investigating the benefits that comes from cash crop vis-à-vis food crop and from the discussion, food crops appears to be not only necessary, but also imperative. There is heated debate and it is as if everyone wants to talk. The facilitator at one point had to intervene requesting them to speak in turns. A look at the excerpt below (with an English translation) suffices this explanation.

**Member:** *Wewe tulikuchagua kama mwakilishi wetu, si ndio? Na Yule mkulima pale amekasirika sana hajapata faida kwa mumea wake,..... pesa ya wakulima inaenda wapi?*(We elected you as our representative, not so? That farmer is

unhappy because he has not had profit for his crops, where does the money for farmers go?)

**Girikasha:** *Pesa ya wakulima ni ya kuwaletea maneno mzuri mzuri kama mashule barabara, mahosipitali, kwa ufupi pesa ni ya maendeleo...* (Farmers money is to bring you good things like schools, roads, hospital, in short, the money is for development) (*Anonymous person interjects asking maendeleo gani na....?(which development?)*)

**Another Member:** *Na hiyo ushuru mnakata ni ya nini?* (Why then do you tax?)

**Girikasha:** *Hiyo ushuru ndio sasa maendeleo* (that tax is now development)

**Anonymous Member:** *Na hiyo maendeleo mbona haifikii wakulima?* (And why doesn't that development reach the farmers)

This excerpt depicts a conscientised people who have owned the “dialogue” process – critically interrogating the issues at hand. Girikasha, though a fictional character, serves as a shock-absorber who meets the wrath of the community members.

Also codifications such as *Shamba la Mfukeri* (play) and story board were such that they were open-ended. This helped interrogate issues raised in those codifications and in effect generated more debate. It was never the transfer of information but the discussants resolved their contradictions as they dialogued. For instance, the people interpreted the story board together; they collectively dialogued over the repressive laws and resolved to amend it. The practice practically breaks from the vertical relationships (top-down) in learning and embraces a more horizontal relationship (bottom-up) in learning.

### **2.7.2 Aesthetics in Shamba la Mfukeri**

We said earlier that a peoples’ aesthetics is in their cultural life. It is part of what constitutes culture. Looking at the cultural aesthetics of the Kenyan communities (where *Shamba la Mfukeri* was taken around), the common denominator is that they all enjoy a number of similar aesthetic elements which include: story-telling, proverbs, sayings, dances, poetry among others {Bardhan (Eds) 2011}. It was therefore critical that these



aesthetic elements be utilized to actively facilitate participation and conscientisation. For instance, members of the cast (animateurs acting) celebrate the visitor who has come by singing, drumming, ululating, and dancing; re-enacting the people's way of cultural expression. This is quite inviting to the target community. The drawings on the story board; a woman about to be beaten by a soldier when she is digging that resembled the newspaper cartoon was thrilling to behold. Cartoons have the artistic touch and given that a number of people love cartoons and identify with them because of their artistic nature and also creates curiosity for interrogation, this may have been a way of attracting participation and conscientisation. Also costuming greatly enhanced the aesthetic appeal. For instance, you could tell the policeman from his dressing, Pademba (farmer) in the apron, and the 'visitor' (Whiteman) in wigs characterizing the European hairstyle.

There is also a beauty that comes with the revelations that a community member gains and asks a question that point at the systemic ills within the society. For instance, Girikasha (an elected leader) saying that the citizens have no right to own and use land the way they find it fit. They therefore must always plant cash crops as the law requires. The debate that ensues is one of whether to plant cash crops or food crops listing the advantages of each. Here, members of the audience exercise their brain muscles to debate and unearth the truth. This stands out as beautiful. Indirectly, the discussion had been handed over to the people and the beauty is that the animateurs had technically withdrawn so that it becomes a people interrogating their own problems and finding solutions to them (Freire 1970). But at the same time, they were also in a way rehearsing for the change they want to see (Boal 1979)

Also, when the drawings on the storyboard invited questions such as why the policeman was beating the woman or why the boss was instructing the policeman to beat the woman. Serious exchanges between Pademba and Wanjiku over Pademba's decision to uproot cash crop elicited various reactions. These included: laughter, attitude formation, frowning, questions that sought to find out why things are being done the way they are being done. And therefore the debate ensued between the audience and the facilitators interrogating the issues raised in the performance that carried its aesthetical power.

### **2.8 A Critique of Shamba la Mfukeri**

The Legal Resource Foundation, through their performance *Shamba la Mfukeri* was concerned with sensitizing communities on their rights as stipulated in the law and therefore should demand justice whenever rights are violated. The performance addressed the gaps in the law that ought to be filled and this filling be done democratically hence the need for dialogue by the stake holders who are the communities.

Such diversionary tactics from the issue at hand like the bringing in of the issue of Majimbo (Federal government system) though also important, could be retrogressive because it does not give room for a rigorous and comprehensive interrogation of one issue at a time. The frequent shifting of focus leads to shoddy interrogation of a subject. And perhaps this is a caution to the organizers of Tfd that they should beware of the evil machination that is bound to come up and put the whole dialogue process at stake. Kerr (1998) confirms this when he says that this is bound to be hijacked by political despots or developmental gurus. Or depending on the nature of the topic, people may just fear to speak as it was the case with the Bagamoyo Popular Theatre Workshop in Tanzania (Mlama 1991:154). In the Bagamoyo project, people refused to talk simply because the

landlords who were dreaded by the locals were present. And so with such Kerr (1998:245) says, “People may participate only in their own mystification” And coincidentally, this is confirmed by one member of the audience when he observes that the proposal for Majimbo is a divide and rule strategy.

## **2.9 Imara Players Society**

### **2.9.1 Background Information**

Imara players is a registered Community Based Organization (CBO) formed in 1998 found in the present Siaya county of the wider Nyanza region of western Kenya, by Lwanda Keya as the artistic director and the chairman. The philosophical drive of the group was to take theatre to the people. The establishment of the group was motivated by the need for employment among the school leavers in Siaya town. The primary objective of the group was “to offer the youth a forum and space to share ideas and experiences about social problems facing them, and at the same time to tap and develop latent talents of the youths through participating in theatre” (Odhiambo 2008:131).

The artistic repertoire of the group is skits, narratives, plays, dramatized poetry and dances. Among the messages that they disseminate include teenage pregnancy, social reproductive health, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, among others. The group also networks with various organizations within the country and even beyond. For instance, from the submission of Onyango Rajula (a committee member), they have performed in Uganda during the anti-corruption week. Among the workshops they have attended include: The Bagamoyo workshop in Tanzania, Nakuru workshop in Kenya, and the United Nations cultural day in Nairobi. They say they create forums that brings together youths from all parts of the country to share challenges and experiences. They are a self-motivated group

that though not employed, has resolved to stick together to make sure that their impact is felt by the community. And to demonstrate their resolve to remain united, they say they sometimes use Bicycles to travel long distances to spread the HIV/AIDS messages.

## **2.10 Framing of Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty' for conscientisation**

### **2.10.1 The Back Drop as a Codification**

The background had a wall painted TRUST; a condom brand, and a coffin on the other end. The painting of TRUST is actually a codification that members of the audience can engage with in interrogating the HIV subject. Such a codification (TRUST) has a way of subtly introducing the subject. This is similar to what many put on banners and posters for advertisements. Such paintings and write-ups are never collectively interrogated but are left to the interpretation of the viewer. But their framing is such that the viewer at most will not have difficulties interpreting correctly. They are not enigmatic codifications but explicit codifications and in this case therefore, members are encouraged to use condoms.

Death is represented by another codification; the coffin. Strictly speaking, the framers of *Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty'* indirectly were trying to equate life with condom use and death with lack of the use of the same. In effect therefore, the juxtaposition of the coffin and the TRUST condom are in themselves comparisons and therefore options from which members should choose. Choose condom choose life. On the other hand, if you don't choose condom, you are opting for death.

### **2.10.2 Introduction and the performance**

Members of Imara Players began by introducing themselves variously. The introduction majorly comprised reasons for joining Imara Players and sometimes a brief description of

what Imara Players do. For instance, Chrispin Muluga (Asst. Treasurer) in his introduction says, theatre is a source of employment. Johnstone Kisyeo says he joined Imara Players so as to pass information on HIV to the rest of the young people in the community by use of theatre, deal with unemployment problem because theatre is a potential employer, among others. This in itself was passing on the information on sensitive issues of HIV/AIDS and other related issues. Some could say they are strong members of Imara Players creating a strong sense of communal pride and association.

The introduction was also characterized by brief chants that served as energizers. Every member who came to introduce himself came with a slogan that begged response from the rest of the members. For instance,

**Leader:** Ahuh! Xn

**Chorus:** Ahuh!

This in effect stirred-up team spirit, exercised their vocal cords and relaxed members; enhancing their expressive abilities.

Quite appealing was the constant presence of other people on stage other than just the narrator. In fact at some point, the narrator used them as props enhancing the illusion of reality. They could also at times help in the narration especially in the singing. This creative improvisation is aesthetically appealing. For instance, at one point the narrator in implying the unselective sexual lifestyle of Beauty (the promiscuous woman in the village and also the title of the narrative), he variously uses the many people on stage as watch man, soldiers, doctors, hunter, teachers, and school boys, among others. The dressing code of all these people corresponded with the nature of the occupation assigned to them by the narrator. This perhaps helped to create an illusion of reality for the credibility of the actions and also enhance the stability of the narrator; bolstering his

confidence. It enhances the aesthetic appeal that in effect recruits many to engage with the subject at hand cognitively.

### **2.10.3 The Verse – Mshale Nyama**

This was done in the same scene with the same background of TRUST condom and a coffin. It was performed immediately after the narrative and was titled *Mshale Nyama*.

The verse began with a song rendered in a somber arresting mood implying the misfortunes that begets the victims of the HIV virus. *Luwele khulanga papa luwele.... Xn.*

The song is a mourning one drawn from the Luhya community literary translated as *it is finished to the one who has gone*. It instills a sense of loss in the listeners and reminds people that that's where they are headed for. The song then had a Swahili version whose lyrics read as: *Utaacha mali yako utaenda,...utaenda utaenda mbinguni kwa baba... Xn.* (You will leave your wealth you will go...you will go, you will go to the father in heaven). Siaya is predominantly inhabited by the Luo people. But *Luwele* as a song has transcended the Language of its origin (Luhya) and in the public imaginary; it's the signature tune for loss and death meaning that more listeners could now engage with it.

The leader then begins the introduction of the verse in such a heavy intonation projected with energy, stressing the vowels as; *Imaa...rrra* players! This was with a stern face; drawing the attention and indicating that there's something so important about to be delivered. The verse was repeatedly rendered with the dramatization of the implied acts of sex; *Mshale Nyama*. Often time giggles and loud laughter could be heard from the periphery especially from children's corner. The verse generally espoused the dangers of having unprotected sex by enumerating such effects that are characteristic of one who has contracted HIV or other Sexually Transmitted Diseases as: having pus flow in the penis,

growing slim, loosing appetite, changed hair color, shivering, among others. Therefore moralistic messages as corrective and protective measures against these illnesses espoused during the rendering of the verse cautioning young people against engaging in indiscriminate sexual behavior, excessive alcohol consumption, and advocating for the use of condoms. But they should look for treatment when infected and taking good care of those infected with the virus. This did not employ participatory approach to members of the target community by having them up on stage to dramatize the solutions or have them voice what they think is the right corrective and protective measure against these illnesses.

#### **2.10.4 Aesthetics in Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty'**

A number of aesthetic elements in *Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty'* of Imara Players which resonated with the cultural life of the local people were employed. For instance, they reflected the people's aesthetic through their singing that was dramatic. The singing and dramatization is part of the wider western Kenya (which comprises of the Luo people) aesthetic repertoire. For example, (*Soloist: Tie tie; Chorus: Ooh! Soloist: Tie tie; Chorus: Give me tie and let me tie my intestine*)xn. This is accompanied by the gesturing and the singing energy that is captivating. For example: (*Soloist: Echita echitaya echita!; Chorus: Echitaya!*)xn. Precisely, this was a tune from the neighboring Luhya people. As they sing, they all move from one side of the stage to the other with energy. The song kept on changing the tempo and at times shortening the chorus lyrics. This meant that the clapping tempo also went up and by doing so; the level of captivation for the viewers went high. They could sing in a circle then cave in to the centre and then spread out again to the circle. While at the centre they could lower their voices and while on the circle they

could amplify their voices. At another point instead of caving in to the centre of the circle, they could go round the circle and then following the lyrics in the song that implies they move backward, they could dance backward while at the same time singing.

Imara Players also employed metaphor (a theatrical element). For instance, the verse “*Mshale Nyama*”, a Swahili word loosely translated as *arrow of meat* is metaphorically used to mean men’s genitalia. The metaphor, *Mshale Nyama*, depicts creativity and is aesthetic in the sense that it refers to a taboo subject in a rather euphemistic way. This is especially important in the Luo culture (African) where sex is a taboo subject (Atanga (Eds) 2013). Such metaphors therefore were attempts to tame “indecent language” and comfortably reach them with the message of HIV. However, a digression from this is immediately witnessed. This line *Mshale Nyama*, is uniformly and repetitively acted by the dramatic gesturing of the sexual act rhythmically by stressing the vowels of the words *Mshale Nyama* as: *Msha...le nyaa...ma msha...le nya...ma!* It is debatable depending on the moral standing of individuals. It can enhance participation or repulse some people. For instance, a puritan may see this as sin and therefore refuse to pay attention.

Imara Players also employed costuming as part of the aesthetic. Without introduction of the animateurs, one could tell the occupational character each individual on stage was playing just by looking at their dressing code. These included: the Cook, the watchman, the teacher, among others. Costuming, an element of aesthetics, is what Okong’o (2010) points out while exploring the embodiments in the Luo Ohangla Music implying that the expressive power does not just stop at the lyrics but also at costuming:

There are also cases where the costume embodies the subject of the song as in Onyango Ja Suba’s orange shirt matched by shorts of the same color in the number *Raila ODM*. Since the song is in praise of Raila’s Orange Democratic Movement party, whose emblem color is orange, the musician’s attire aesthetically aligns him to the subject of his song (Okong’o 2010:90)



The narrator also uses description as an aesthetic element. He describes 'Beauty' (the girl) as brown with round figure whose skin was smooth. He says this made the men of Kafira to do everything it takes to win her attention. Those on bicycles, those in vehicles and even pedestrians kept on turning their necks to have a second glance at 'Beauty'. This description carries the aesthetic quality in the sense that it paints pictures in the mind of the listeners of who Beauty is. The art of description, especially in story-telling is part of the cultures of African people. It shades more light over what is being talked about and therefore facilitating understanding which is a requisite for conscientisation.

### **2.11 A Critique of Mshale Nyama and 'Beauty'**

*Mshale Nyama* & 'Beauty' of Imara Players sought to conscientise the communities in Siaya town on the dangers of the HIV. However, in their attempt to do that, they registered a number of successes but also had some setbacks. The performance of these two items (the verse and the narrative) greatly made use of games to enhance the expressive abilities of the bodies of the participants as contemplated by Boal (1979). The games embraced simple songs and free style dances that went on repeatedly for about eight minutes. The singing began with a lot of vigor and was appealing and captivating. But the rendering of the narrative was more of a sermon with melodramatic expressions. Moreover, the voice rendered in was hoarse that I doubt the audience wanted to identify with it though this may sound subjective. An inviting seductive voice would have been more appealing and would have endeared the narrator more to members of his audience. The two productions also did not have in-built mechanisms of inviting members of the audience to come to the performance space and voice or dramatize the solutions and therefore in terms of attracting participation, much more should have been done.

## 2.12 Moi University Tfd Class Project 2014

### 2.12.1 An Overview

The project was conducted by final year students of Tfd on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014 within Moi University – main campus to sensitize students on security after a number of students complained that their properties were getting lost and that they were being harassed by security personnel. It was also alleged that the security system within the university had become corrupt. For instance, the security was accused of: demanding bribes to go through the gates with electronic items which is against University rules and regulations, colluding with thieves from outside to steal student's properties like clothes, phones, laptops, electric cables among others. It's against this backdrop that this Tfd enterprise was conceived.

## 2.13 Framing Moi University Tfd project for conscientisation

### 2.13.1 Codifications

Codifications were used to lay the ground for dialogue. Such codifications used in this project included; songs, plays, and placards. The students moved on campus singing songs that raised complaint about security. For instance, the song would go:

**Soloist:** *Wametuibia*, (They have stolen from us)  
**Chorus:** *Wametuibia, security wametuibia* (They have stolen from us) } **xn**

This song carried the message about the increasing incidents of theft on campus to the extent that those who did not see this in the first place as an issue began to see it as an issue. It generally raised the eyebrows on the whole question of security – alerting members to beware of the corrupt security men. The songs also got security men by

surprise. Perhaps if there were those engaged in the dubious practice, they could now be keener or even quit the practice given that the issue was now of serious security concern.

The songs also had common lyrics familiar to the student community and therefore inviting them to sing along. Some were popular church praise tunes that had just adopted new lyrics. For instance: **Soloist:** *Kitu gani kitanitenga na security wa Moi* (What shall separate me from security men of Moi) **Chorus:** *Kitu gani kitanitenga na security wa Moi* (What shall separate me from security men of Moi). Those just arriving would be hit by the placards reading: **WHAT IS SECURITY IF WE ARE NOT SAFE?** And yet another one read: **HATUTAKI CORRUPTION** (*We don't want corruption*). In effect this hinted to them what the subject matter was. One member of the audience moved close to me and asked; “*Kwani security wamefanya nini?*” (What have the security people done?) I had no particular answer but as a way of mobilizing people to attend, I told him to continue staying around for the full story. So the placards and the songs invited and introduced students to the subject matter creating the ground for dialogue. They created curiosity/suspense which is good bait for a participatory dialogue. At the end of it all, one of the facilitators asks a question: why are you making all this noise? And from that point, members of the cast begin to engage in dialogue over the whole question of security. Others say they steal clothes when they hang them outside.

Shortly, another participant comes in with a musical phrase in form of a question. She sings aesthetically.

**Leader:** *Niseme nisiseme?* (Should I say it or not?)

**Chorus:** *Sema!* (Say it!)

**Leader:** Security patrols everyday in our hostels, why do our things get lost?

**Chorus:** (Jeers and cheers from members implying they are in agreement)

Another member (Michelle) comes in saying that they are comrades and that she feels for them. The tone is more intimate and appealing. It is inviting and calming and in effect involving. She declares her ambition for the security docket in the students governing council to take care of security matters for the students. The rest of the students clap expressing their support for her ambition. It is a moment of registering disappointments about the security sector on campus and every member speaks with aggression as though they were appealing to the observers to take them serious. The response is also with vigor; communicating the seriousness of the matter. This melodramatic expression reinforces the point they are making and in effect pulls the passersby to pay attention and by so doing, they participate and that is exactly what this performance yielded.

Coded language was also employed and to a large extent enhanced communication. For instance, Bob (the facilitators) asks; *“Weeh kijana, mbona unashikashika huyu msichana in a manner suggesting that unataka kumpatia banana akule?”* (You young man, why do you touch this girl in a manner suggesting that you want to give her banana to eat?) The act of sex is implied by the eating of the banana. This demonstrates creativity (aesthetic).

The drama reveals the dubious deals security personnel engage in while on duty on campus. For instance, the security man strikes a deal with a student to be in partnership in the business of selling stolen laptops from campus. At the point when they agree that they share the profits on a 50-50 basis, the facilitator steps in and ask a question, “what do you think is going on there?” Members respond by saying corruption. Another member offers to replace the security person and acts the correct solution - refuses to take bribes but decides to take stern action against the rapist. The audience is asked to give the difference between the two security persons. The second security person is complimented. But this

opens up discussion on a range of issues. For instance, one member says that the security men are poorly paid. But another member says that if the security personnel are not paid well, it does not mean they be corrupt.

Also as a strategy not to lose the line of thought, the post-performance discussion was conducted immediately. After the volunteered security man acted the solution agreeable by the audience, Michele (one of the facilitator) steps in and asks; “*Mnaonaje?*” (How do you see or what should be the solution?). The other facilitator moves to the audience and pulls one of the members to give his opinion. The audience member (a man) suggests that the problem is that the security people are poorly paid and so they are normally tempted to take bribes. This receives applause from the audience. Many other proposals are made by the audience and they included: the security men to be given name tags for easy identification; should not be overworked, and that security men be well paid to avoid the temptation of asking for bribes. The demonstration of the rape case provokes reactions from members of the audience especially ladies who most of the times are victims of rape. No wonder a number of ladies quickly came forward to give their contributions.

### **2.13.2 Aesthetics in Moi University 2014 Tfd Project**

Moi University final year Tfd students’ in pursuit of framing a conscientising Tfd drama strove to incorporate popular aesthetic elements within campus to reach out to the target audience. For instance, the entry point was made aesthetic by posing questions whose responses directly speak into the subject matter of insecurity; opening the floor for discussion. The facilitator asked, why are you making all this noise? The response is in a chorus, loud, and clear; Security!! The facilitator again asks; “What is wrong with security?” They begin enumerating the many ills that have been committed by the

security men. Each member stepped forward dramatically with his/her unique style before presenting the challenge. The punch lines were specific (which were part of the university aesthetic repertoire) and well known. They included: *Insecurity, Sema, Toboa, and Comrades Power*. For instance, one would begin; **Leader:** *Niseme ama nisiseme?* (Should I say it or not?) **Chorus:** *Sema!* (Say it!) And she goes on to list the ills committed by security men. **Leader:** *Ni tobaoe ama nisitoboe?* (Should I reveal it or not?) **Chorus** (with energy): *Toboa!* (Reveal it!)

Some other member would step forward; “*Nyi ni comrades. Na mimi nawafeel.*” (You are comrades and I feel for you). This was followed by a powerful response from the crowd saying; ‘Comrades Power!’ She had just used the university’s comrade’s slogan of mobilization (Comrades Power!). Then as part of the remedy to the challenges they have enumerated, she finishes by declaring her ambition for the security docket in the upcoming election. In short, the entry points were aesthetically framed by each participant who stepped forward in an alternating manner. The aesthetics in the language (sheng’), gestures, slogans, were also drawn from the campus aesthetic repertoire. Their complaints were specific and presented in no uncertain terms; that security was the problem.

Other aesthetic tools used were songs that accused security men for harassing male students, demanding bribes from them. An example of the song could go: **Soloist:** *Wameshindwa kazi!* (They are unable to work) **Chorus:** *Wameshindwa kazi.., security wameshindwa kazi.* (They are unable to work, security, they are unable to work) **Soloist:** *wametunyanyasa!* (They have stolen from us) **Chorus:** *Wametunyanyasa.., security wametunyanyasa!* (They have oppressed us, security have stolen from us). The songs

borrow tunes from popular church choruses and given that a majority of the students within Moi University are Christians, it was easy for them to identify with that and sing. This aesthetic power was enhanced when they put in their emotions, some 'crying'. This implied the seriousness of the subject matter and therefore warranting their attention.

At Students Centre (venue for the project), they organized themselves on a circle while singing and dancing *binale binale* (not intelligible words but dramatic). Suddenly the soloist brings in intelligible words that explode the humor translated as: "I went to Moi and gave them soda and they drunk the bottle and poured the soda." This signified the opposite way issues are handled in Moi University for instance, the security problem. This is joker-like; speaking about serious matters in a light and comical way.

#### **2.14 A Critique of the Moi University Tfd Project**

The Moi University community problems were identified by facilitators (Tfd students) and the creation of the play done again by the facilitators (Tfd students). It is at the singing, mobilization, and performance level that the bringing on board of other students was witnessed. This is the level where acts of cognition were amongst all the present participants when they decided to take roles in the dramatization of the solutions. The play creation process was solely the work of the facilitators, the performance of the same play was also largely the work of the facilitators though much effort was put in to minimally involve the targets of conscientisation during its performances, and the placards (which were forms of codification) were prepared by the facilitators. All these were in a way a setback because they undermined participation of the target community which should have been the primary objective. However, the play presented situations that provoked reactions which promoted acts of cognition.

### **2.15 Conclusion**

The TfD enterprises with codifications that were more of problem posing facilitated a deeper analysis of the problems at hand than others. For instance, *Shamba la Mfukeri* enabled more participation by members of the target community than *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'* which was performed as self constituting, information packaged meant to pass across premeditated messages. The facilitator's style of inviting the audience to participate greatly enhanced effective participation by the targets of conscientisation. Quite observable in *Shamba la Mfukeri* was that situations of audience intervention were numerous and therefore many opportunities for the audience to learn. It was also observable that performances that were open-ended and participatory generated more debate that enabled the interrogation of communal problems more deeply. This further enabled the development of a higher critical consciousness.



## CHAPTER THREE

### PARTICIPATION PARADIGMS OF THE SELECTED TFD ENTERPRISES

#### 3.1 Introduction

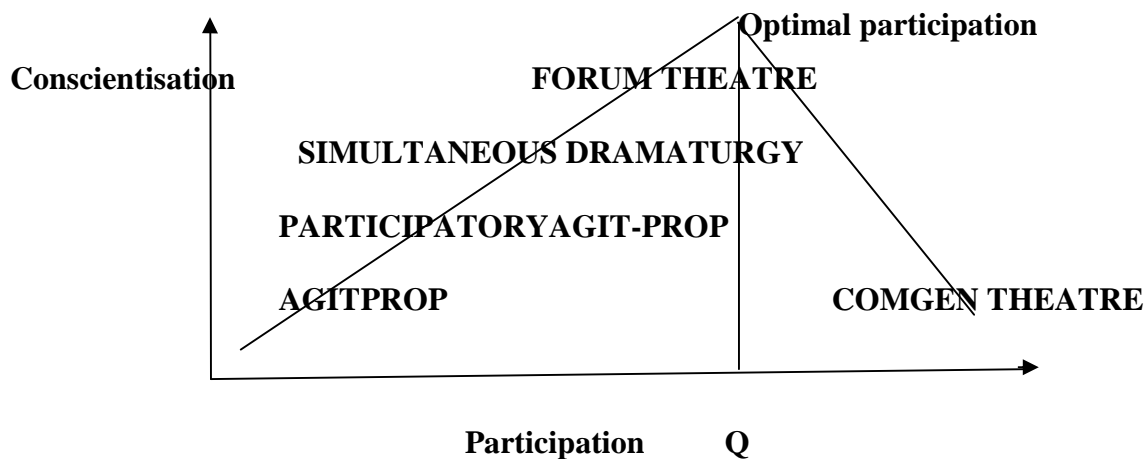
Chapter two of this study examined how dialogue is framed and the appropriateness of that framing in attracting participation that interrogates communal problems in an attempt to achieve conscientisation. But participation has paradigms and each paradigm claims some relevance to conscientisation. This chapter therefore seeks to explore the various paradigms of participation focusing on the selected Tfd projects. The chapter seeks to place various productions of the selected Tfd projects in the paradigms they fit and in effect be able to tell how participation has been achieved by the selected Tfd projects and how it leads to conscientisation.

#### 3.2 Paradigms of Participation

Paradigms of participation in this study are understood in the way that Yule (2012) outlines them, complimented by Mushangwe&Chivandikwa in Bundy etal. (Eds.) (2014:123). Yule (2012) explores paradigms of participation as: Transformative, Representative, and Instrumental Participation. These paradigms have no neat categorization because they have some characteristics that are shared across board and they all fit in broader concepts described by {Mushangwe&Chivandikwa in Bundy etal (Eds.) (2014:123) as; *Notions of Participation*. These *Notions of Participation* are two and they include: *Participation as a Means* and *Participation as a Process* although Yule (2012) regards them too as paradigms of participation. *Participation as a means* in Tfd is externally driven and therefore has little involvement of the target community whereas *Participation as a process* in Tfd is more driven by the target community meaning more

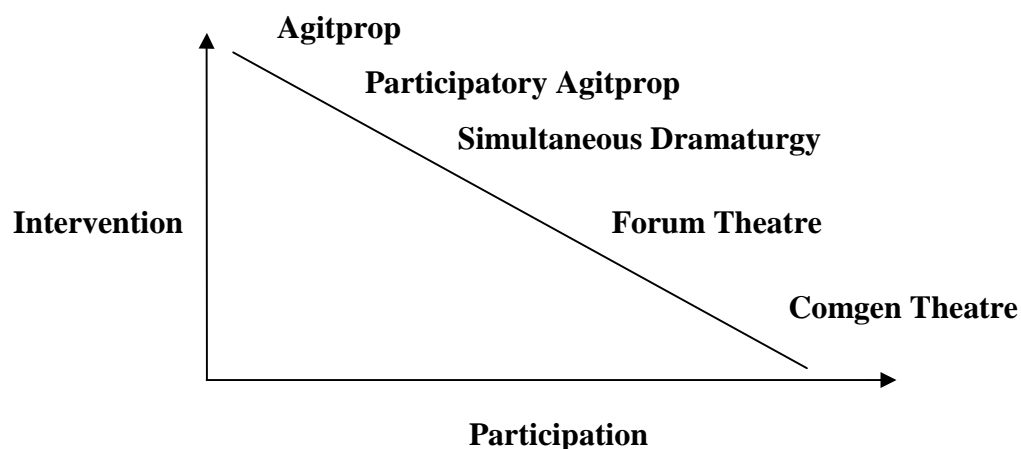
involvement by the target community. But these notions too are not mutually exclusive. The paradigm dominant in *Participation as a Process* is Transformative and the paradigm dominant in *Participation as a Means* is Instrumental. In this paradigm, the development agent only taps the local talents for their own benefit (Yule 2012:23). Representative paradigm tends to borrow from both Transformative and Instrumental paradigms. The argument given for the adoption of this paradigm (representative) is that it is costly to bring together all people and some people because of their incompetence in communication easily give up their right to participate.

But the paradigms of participation as projected by Yule (2012) are establishments founded on the degree of participation in the dialogue process. These establishments however, seem to be synonymous with what Mda (1993) has graphically illustrated, describing the relationships between various variables like: conscientisation versus participation, participation versus intervention and intervention versus conscientisation. Beginning with one that has the highest participation to the one with the least participation, he lists them as: *Comgen Theatre*, *Forum Theatre*, *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, *Participatory Agit-prop*, and *Agit-prop Theatre*. The manifestations of each of these variants of participatory theatre shall be discussed later. All these are actually paradigms of participation, their difference lying in the level of participation and perhaps the effect they have on the target audience. Mda diagrammatically illustrates relationships between a number of the above mentioned variables in Tfd as can be seen in figure 3.0.



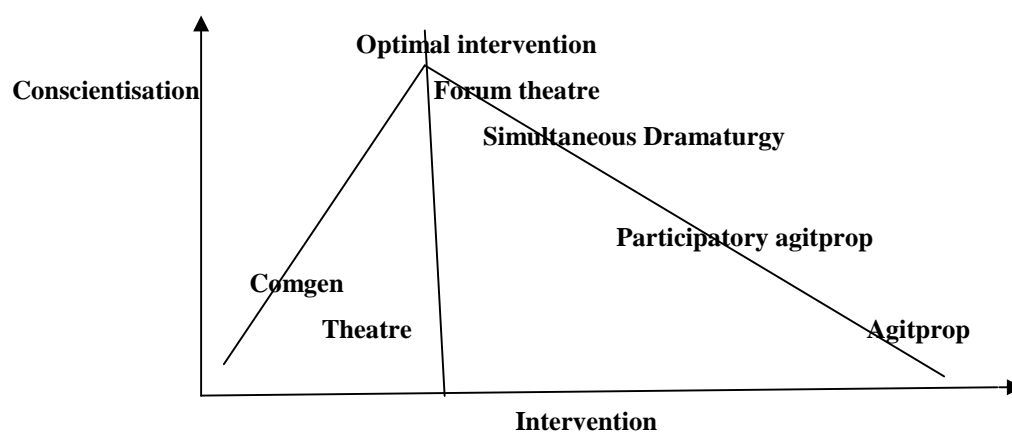
**Figure 3.0: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
 Sourced from Mda (1993:171)

The Participation versus Conscientisation curve in figure 3.0 implies the rise in conscientisation with increase in participation from Agitprop through to *Forum Theatre*. However, increase in conscientisation can only be possible to a certain point (**Q**) of participation beyond which conscientisation begins to retrogress. This point (**Q**) is called optimal participation point and is the best compromise between the opposing tendencies of participation and intervention. Critical to note here is that *Forum Theatre* is regarded by many as the most ideal theatre for conscientisation because of its methodological nature of embracing high levels of participation.



**Figure: 3.1: Participation versus Intervention**  
 Sourced from Mda (1993:170)

The participation-intervention curve in Figure: 3.1 explains how in *Comgen Theatre*, intervention tends towards zero when participation is maximal. Conversely, it presents *Agitprop Theatre* at the point when participation tends towards zero and intervention is maximal. These two extreme forms of TfD according to Mda (1993) achieves limited conscientisation. Other forms of TfD (*Participatory Agitprop*, *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, and *Forum Theatre*) that claim varying degrees of conscientisation can be traced along the curve when the two variables (participation and intervention) are regulated.



**Figure: 3.2. Intervention versus Conscientisation**  
Sourced from Mda (1993:172)

According to figure: 3.2, minimal conscientisation and minimal intervention results to *Comgen Theatre*. But as the degree of intervention consistently decreases as one goes through *Agitprop*, *Participatory Agitprop*, *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*, and *Forum Theatre*, conscientisation increases steadily. Further increase in intervention after the optimal level automatically means a decline in conscientisation. Optimal intervention therefore is the ideal balance between intervention and participation that engenders the highest level of conscientisation which is attained at the point when intervention is just sufficient to serve the three functions – naming, reflection, action – but does not elevate a

catalyst's own views on the dramatization process. Mda (1993:173) observes that this point varies from community to community, catalyst to catalyst, proficiency of the catalyst in utilizing the medium and the level of critical awareness of both catalyst and the community. In effect therefore, this confirms the claim made early in this study that a catalyst must be a man or woman of higher critical consciousness than the targets of conscientisation. In the discussion therefore, I will attempt to place the performances of the various theatre groups under study in the various paradigms to indicate the degree of participation and conscientisation.

### **3.3 Ndoto za Elibidi by SAFE Kenya**

*Ndoto za Elibidi* as earlier mentioned was a SAFE Kenya Tfd drama that sought to conscientise people on HIV/AIDS pandemic in Mathare slums of Nairobi Kenya in the year 2005. The play revealed how HIV/AIDS victims are discriminated against. Looking at how participation was embraced, Kamau Wa Ndung'u (The then Executive Director of SAFE Kenya) says they got to the slums and first of all carried out a reconnaissance study on why HIV prevalence was high these areas. With respect to devising the play he says, they had an idea of what they wanted but did not want to appear to be imposing it on people. So they engaged a few members of the community in deliberation on how they thought the play for conscientisation should be framed. This went on until the play was fully formed by work-shopping and was performed in Nairobi slums-Mathare.

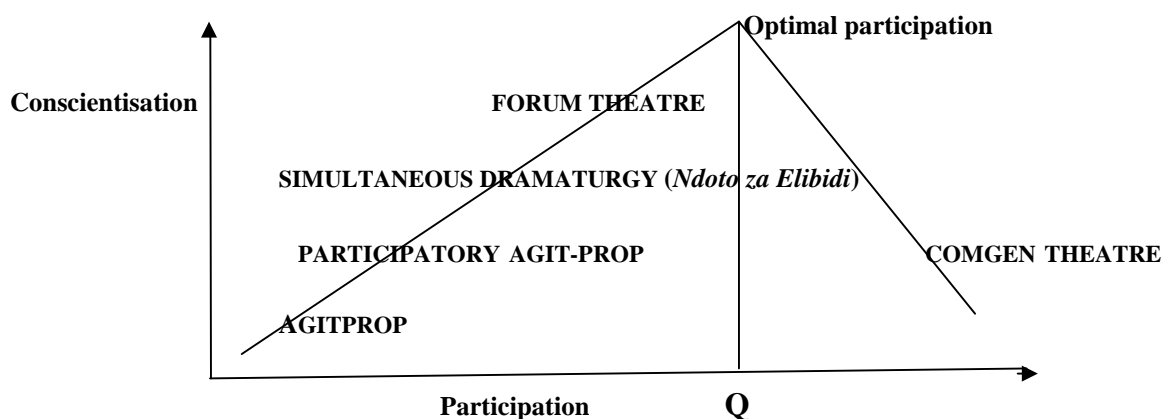
The study noted that the play creation at the beginning was through work-shopping and that there was a post-performance discussion regarding this performance that further interrogated the issues presented. The play used art forms and the language that most members of the target community were familiar with - *Kiswahili and Sheng'* in a Nairobi

city slum of Mathare. But the audience was not given the opportunity to intervene. *Ndoto za Elibidi* therefore could at best fall within the Representative paradigm of participation though with much inclination towards Instrumental paradigm. Representative paradigm according to Yule (2012:22) takes into account the cost of participation to be too high for the poor marginalized groups who may be willing to hand over their rights to be represented. The outside agent brings in a script and may also choose the cast. This means that the project is not completely surrendered to the community (a core element of instrumental paradigm). This is coupled by the fact that some people are not just interested, others are tied up with busy schedules, and others do not simply have the competency of communication. It is therefore prudent that a representation of persons minimally with a considerably fair understanding of social problems is selected to carry forward the literacy campaign for conscientisation as it occurred in *Ndoto za Elibidi* hence categorizing it in a representative paradigm of participation.

Using Mda's graphical illustrations, *Ndoto za Elibidi* fell within the margins of *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*. Important to note is that this placement does not mean that the project embraced all the aspects of *Simultaneous Dramaturgy* as stipulated by Boal but a higher degree of their observance makes the project be referred to either as *Simultaneous Dramaturgy* or not. Mda (1993) gives graphical illustrations which show variations in the adherence to these aspects. In distinguishing *Simultaneous Dramaturgy* therefore Boal (1979:132) says there is the invitation of the spectator to intervene without necessitating his physical presence on the stage, local resident proposes the scene as it was with the prospective cast in *Ndoto za Elibidi*. Actors may improvise with the aid of a script prepared before hand as they may also compose the scene directly. Boal also (referring

to *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*) notes that actors develop it (the play) to the point at which the main problem reaches a crisis and needs a solution and improvisation of all the suggested solutions immediately follows and the audience has the right to intervene.

For *Ndoto za Elibidi*, the improvisations were done with the prospective members of the cast through work shopping but during the performance, the audience did not have a chance to intervene. Boal also notes that (referring to *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*) the discussion itself need not simply take the form of words but rather should be effected through all the other elements of theatrical expressions as well. All solutions, suggestions and opinions were revealed in theatrical form as Boal observes but within a fictional self constituting plot structure of the play. Critically speaking therefore, *Ndoto za Elibidi* had more of intervention by the animateurs on the following grounds: One, the play creation process was between selected members of the target community and the animateurs; two, the performance of the same play was also largely the work of the selected members of the target community and the animateurs; three, the decors (which were forms of codification) were also prepared by the selected members of the target community and the animateurs (According to Interview carried out with Kamau Wa Ndung'u on 21 Jan. 2014 by phone). Figure 3.3 illustrates these relationships – participation and conscientisation placing *Ndoto za Elibidi* against *Simultaneous Dramaturgy*.



**Figure 3.3: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
 Sourced from Mda (1993:171)

### 3.4 Shamba la Mfukeri by Legal Resource Foundation

*Shamba la Mfukeri* was a production by Legal Resource Foundation (A Human Rights Organization in Kenya) that sought to conscientise Kenyan communities on issues of Human Rights at during the period 2001-2002 when violations of Human Rights were so high. The play handled issues of democracy and governance with the constitution as the entry point exposing the many underhand dealings of constitutional mutilations, unfair laws, corruption, and oppression. In investigating the level of participation of the target communities, the prologue submission of Wamukoya Odanyiro (projects officer) implies that they did not actually create this play with members of the community. The project officer (Wamukoya Odanyiro) says, “The play has been performed around the country more than fifty times in areas like Kisii, Kakamega, Kapsabet, and Nairobi.” This implies that *Shamba la Mfukeri* is not actually a creation of this community they are trying to conscientise but most probably a creation of the animateurs. But the play had many in-built mechanisms to invite members of the audience to air what they thought was the right thing throughout the performance. Also, the project had extra-performance materials



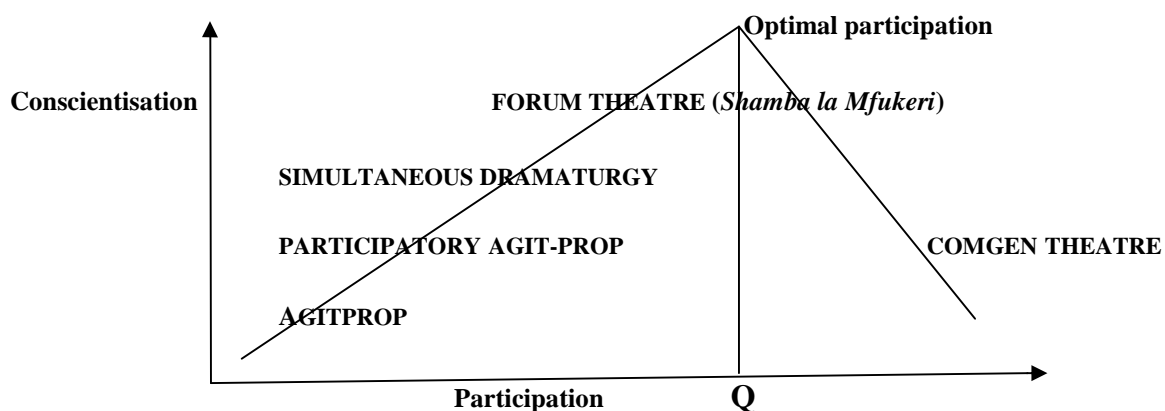
(booklets on constitutional change and gender violence with Kiswahili translation) to give to the members after the performance. This was actually an attempt to ensure that dialogue continues even after the project is over.

The facilitator was keen to build stakes and then strategically invite members of the audience to react to particular situations created on stage. For instance, the story board drawings (which are part of the codification) showing the soldier attempting to beat up Pademba and the booklets on human rights were all posing problems demanding reactions from members of the audience. But though they so much involved the community in the course of the performance, a very critical stage of procedure of the creation of this play was not observed. The facilitators may have worked under the assumption that human rights issues are a problem to all communities. But the play had an overwhelming participation with much handing over of the play to the local people by allowing the community to decode some codifications like the drawings on the story board. The members of the audience became the catalyst. Therefore this play could at best fall within the margins of Transformative Paradigm of participation.

Using Mda's graphical illustration, *Shamba la Mfukeri* falls within the margins of *Forum Theatre* – the ideal theatre for conscientisation. Again it is important to note here that the placing of *Shamba la Mfukeri* within the margins of *Forum Theatre* does mean that *Shamba la Mfukeri* embraced all elements of *Forum Theatre* as outlined by Boal but a higher manifestation of these elements are evident during the execution of the project. In *Shamba la Mfukeri*, the audience contests oppression and puts Girikasha (elected leader) to task to explain why they should not hold fresh elections, why the pay for farmers has delayed and why they should be dictated to on how to use their land. For instance, the

facilitator asks Girikasha; “*Shamba ni la nani?*” (Who is the owner of the farm?) Girikasha responds, “It is ours.” By this Girikasha meant the government. Then the facilitator turns to the audience and asks the same question, “*Shamba ni la nani?*” (Who is the owner of the farm?) “It is ours,” meaning the farmers. This sparks a war of words between the two sides with each side aggressively stating their stance. All these developments are practically done on stage. At the end of the discussion, Pademba calls for an overhaul of the entire parliament; objecting to the idea that farmers complaints be given to Girikasha to forward to the parliament and Mfukeri. In other words, Girikasha has been sacked according to Pademba because he is not fit to represent the pleas of farmers.

This resonates closely with Boal’s thinking when he says that “...the participants are asked if they agree with the solution presented and at this point some may say no. But now any participant in the audience has the right to replace the actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate” Boal also says (referring to *Forum Theatre*) “...actors have to face the newly created situation (the acted play) responding instantly to all the possibilities that it may present. ...anyone may propose any solution, but it must be done on the stage working, acting, doing things, and not from the comfort of his seat” (Boal 1979:139). According to Boal, although this process is fictional, the fact of having rehearsed a resistance to oppression will prepare the participant to resist effectively in a future reality when the occasion presents itself once more (Boal 1979:150). Figure 3.4 therefore places *Shamba la Mfukeri* against *Forum Theatre*



**Figure 3.4: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
**Sourced from Mda (1993:171)**

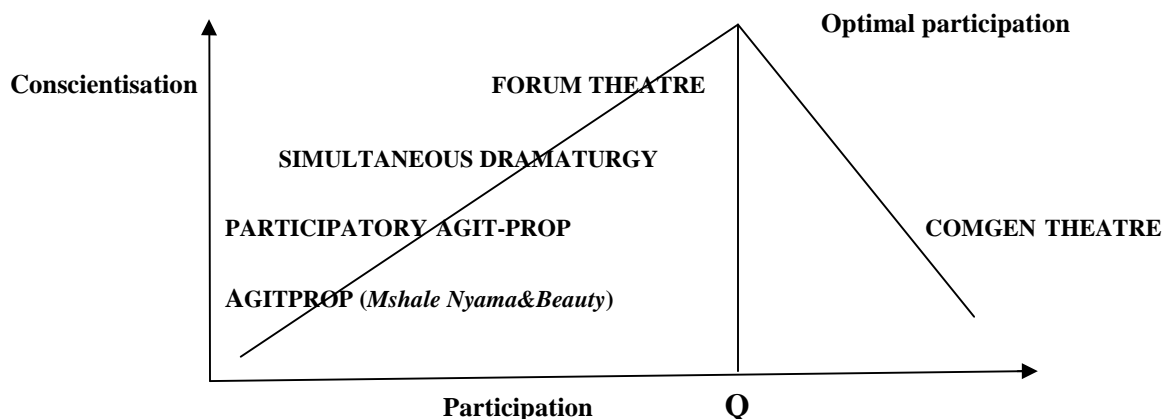
### 3.5 Paradigm(s) of Participation in Mshale Nyama and 'Beauty'

*Mshale Nyama* and *'Beauty'* were both the productions of Imara Players Society. Both the verse and the narrative espoused HIV messages to the audience; highlighting the causes and the effects of HIV and how they can therefore avoid contracting the disease. The performance of these two items (the verse and the narrative respectively) largely made use of games (that was participatory) to enhance the expressive abilities of the bodies of the participants as contemplated by Boal (1979). The games embraced simple songs and free style dances that went on repeatedly for about eight minutes setting all the participants in the mood to participate.

The animateurs perform a ready-made narrative and a verse before the target community. The making of the narrative and the verse therefore did not involve the members of the community but rather only the animateurs. The performance also did not give room for participation. Maximum benefit can only be said to be with the performers because they are narrating the experience and rehearsing the change they need (Boal 1979). One may consider possibility of a passive participation on the part of members of the audience. But

even the passive participation may not have been possible for some section of the audience given that the narrative (*Beauty*) was rendered in English. Kiswahili or Luo would have been more appropriate to reaching a majority of community members present. The actors also used costumes like apron for a farmer, skin for a hunter, and shirt and tie for businessman. This enhances the illusion of reality and therefore the credibility of the message in their performance.

From the performance, it was unlikely that the *Imara Players* performances (narrative&poem) engaged members of the target community in the narrative creation process because only the amateurs performed from the start to the end. Using Mda's graphical illustration, *Mshale Nyama&Beauty* fell within the margins of *Agitprop*. This is because the items were performed as self constituting, information packaged meant to pass across premeditated messages and the audience was never anticipated to actively participate. *Agitprop* TFD theatre according to Mda (1993:183), the community does not participate in producing and distributing the messages, the theatre is produced by an outside agent but is oriented towards a certain target community and has persuasive communication with informal post-performance discussions. But the placement of *Mshale Nyama&Beauty* within the margins of *agitprop* does not mean the project strictly complied with all the specifics of *agitprop* TFD theatre as articulated by Mda (1993:183), but that a majority of these aspects were predominantly visible as highlighted above.



**Figure 3.5: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
 Sourced from Mda (1993:171)

### 3.6 Paradigm(s) of Participation in Moi University Tfd Project

The *Moi University Tfd project* was carried out by final year Tfd students in early 2014 to sensitize their fellow students on campus over the increased cases of insecurity. There had been increased cases of rape and security men favoring girls at the gate. All electronic gadgets at the gate had to get clearance from the administration before they go through the gate to ensure that university properties do not find their way out. So whereas boys were subjected to serious scrutiny, girls were left to go scot-free in exchange for sexual favors from the security men. Boys who did not want to undergo scrutiny therefore were forced to give bribes or even be harassed. Those who protested and wanted to follow rules would face trumped-up charges. The facilitators therefore gathered, discussed the problems amongst themselves, created various codifications (songs, placards, play, questions) through work-shopping, and went ahead to mobilize their colleagues on campus to join them in the conversation/dialogue.

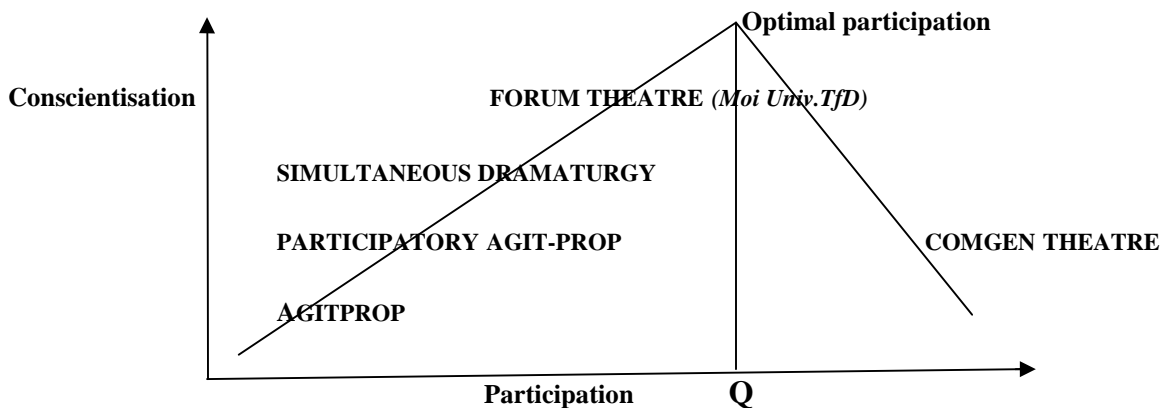
The students drummed as they sang around campus hostels in Soweto, mobilizing a sizeable number of students to follow them. On reaching at the venue (Student's Centre), they continued to sing as they danced and performed some games. The games were majorly playful characterized by individuals stepping forward to model or demonstrate how he/she can out do the other in dancing. It is at this point that they attracted the biggest crowd. Many students out of curiosity came. Then this was followed by questions that required answers from members of the audience. For instance, one of the facilitator (Bob) asked: "Why are you making all these noise?" And the audience members begin to talk. The discussion becomes so interesting that it provokes other members of the audience to participate. This project ends up with a post-performance discussion that saw members air out concrete points they saw as the solution to the insecurity problem on campus. Some of the suggestions pointed out by members as the solution to the insecurity problem on campus were: security men being paid well, all security men shave similar hair style for easy identification, and employers to avoid tribalism during employment.

The *Moi University Tfd Project* therefore fell within the margins of Transformative Paradigm of Participation. This is because the problem was conceived locally and the codifications made locally amongst the students community, and implemented by the students themselves. This paradigm according to Yule (2012) is the most ideal paradigm in the Tfd intervention. It is comprehensive and brings the entire process to the attention of the targets of conscientisation from problem investigation to play creation to performance of the same and even the post-performance discussions. As its nomenclature states (transformative participation), it seeks to transform because it brings the details of every step to the attention of the target community.

Using Mda's graphical illustrations, *Moi University Tfd Project* fell within the margins of *Forum Theatre*. This is so because it manifests key characteristics of Boal's *Forum Theatre*. For instance, the singing was by all students regardless of whether they were amateurs (Tfd students) or not, they freely invited willing members to come in and dramatize the solution(s). Though it was the initiative of amateurs (Tfd students), a number of other students demonstrated the desire of joining them in airing the concerns that affect them and they did so. For instance, after the volunteered "security" man acted the solution agreeable by members of the audience, one of the facilitators moves to the audience and pulls one of the members to give his opinion. The audience member (a man) suggests that the problem is that the security people are poorly paid and so they are normally tempted to take bribes. This receives applause from the audience. But another lady from the audience – opposing the argument that the security men are not paid well, comes forward, irritated, and she is like; "If he is not paid well, does that warrant him to solicit bribes?" Surprisingly, she also receives the same measure of applause. This means that the audience reconsiders her earlier argument in light of her perspective.

There is a paradigm shift in the direction of the events from performance to objective discussion and members begin to air their views on how to curb the insecurity menace. Some of the suggestions members give are that the security men and women be given night allowance, be properly trained, and be properly paid. All these are manifestations of democratic practices seen in Boal's *Forum Theatre* where participants intervene decisively in the dramatic action to change it. Also participants in the audience have the right to replace the actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to them most

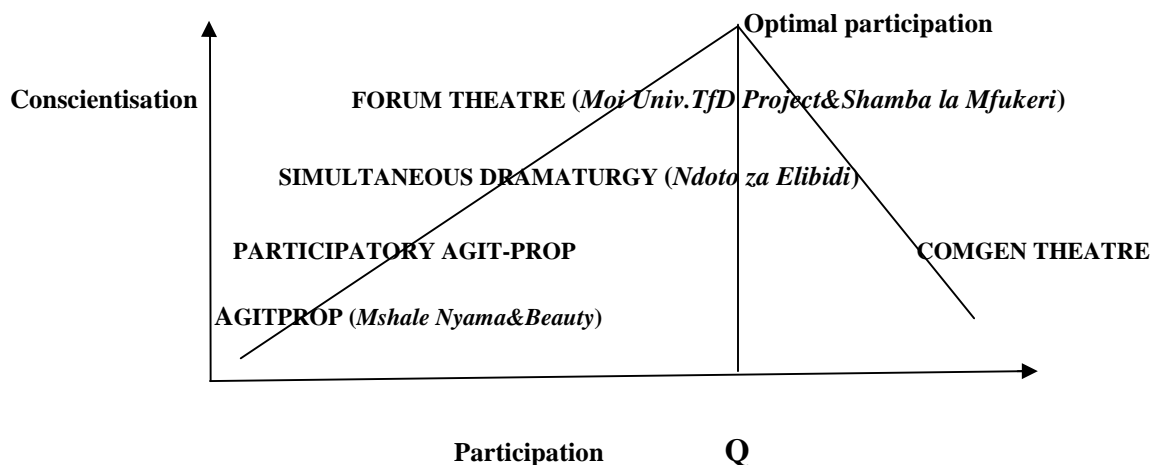
appropriate. Other actors have to face the newly created situation responding instantly to all the possibilities that it may present. Boal also notes that (referring to *Forum Theatre*), anybody proposing any solution, it must be done on stage, working, acting or doing things, and not from the comfort of his seat. The Mda's graphical illustration in Figure 3.6 therefore places *Moi University Tfd Project* against *Forum Theatre*.



**Figure 3.6: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
**Sourced from Mda (1993:171)**

All the five performances studied ranged between *Agitprop* and *Forum Theatre*. None of them crossed over to *Comgen Theatre*. Out of the five performances analyzed (*Ndoto za Elibidi*, *Shamba la Mfukeri*, *Moi Univ.Tfd Project* & *Mshale Nyama&Beauty*), only two fell within the margins of *Forum Theatre* (perceivably the most ideal theatre of conscientisation). This study also holds that even in the cases of excessive intervention, the fact that members were present, participation took place and that's why no Tfd performance touched either the Y - axis (getting zero participation) or X - axis (getting zero intervention). This is as demonstrated Figure 3.7.





**Figure 3.7: Participation versus Conscientisation**  
**Sourced from Mda (1993:171)**

Figure 3.7 is not assigned numerical values because the extent of participation and intervention cannot be quantitatively measured given the nature of the study (qualitative) but is an attempt to demonstrate what excessive participation can lead to and what excessive intervention can lead to. Critical to note also is that even with *Agitprop*, the fact that the audience was present, some learning, participation, and intervention took place and therefore it would be inaccurate to indicate zero participation or zero conscientisation or zero intervention. This explains why none of the curves touched the Y or X axis.

As can be observed again, participation of the target community is only fruitful up to point **Q** where there is optimal participation. Any participation beyond point **Q**, conscientisation curve begins to decline, meaning now conscientisation is turning negative. The result here is *Comgen Theatre* which according to Mda is unfruitful if the target community does not take the role of the catalyst.

*Participatory Agitprop* is the participatory theatre variant that did not attract any of the studied TfD performances. According to Mda (1993:183), *Participatory Agitprop* engenders a higher level of conscientisation than *Agitprop Theatre*. This is because of its interpersonal element, albeit in a pre-determined product. It embraces such aspects as the audience not seating to be entertained but participating in a debate for which theatre is only a catalyst. This form of participatory theatre he says is suitable for instances where there are constraints of time and man power and the catalysts are unable to stay with the target community for a longer period and make theatre with them.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

All paradigms of participation in TfD have some relevance to conscientisation regardless of their participation levels. But paradigms of participation with wider spectrum of participation by the target communities (provided they don't exceed optimal levels) claim more relevance to conscientisation than those that embrace limited spectrum of participation as revealed by the conscientisation curves above. This is because they did not restrict their message in the play's plot structure as finished product but had in-built mechanisms of enabling the interventions of the audience members and therefore claiming more conscientisation to the target community.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTERVENING FACTORS INFLUENCING DIALOGUE FRAMING IN TFD

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter three of this study looked at paradigms of participation which are born out of how “dialogue” is conceptualized and framed. We concluded that higher conscientisation is as a result of a framing that necessitates wider participation (but without exceeding optimal levels) of the target community. But as we grapple with the question of appropriate framing to achieve conscientisation, we should be cognizant of the intervening factors that influence the framing of “dialogue”. What are they and how did they manifest in the selected Tfd performances? Takem (2005:15) admits their existence when he says “the failure or success of Theatre for Development process cannot be attributed to the strategies of theatrical methods alone. There are other intervening factors that would have a significant impact on the outcome of the process.” Odhiambo (2008:187) too reminds us that, “Theatre alone cannot effect the social and behavioral changes as it is in itself a function of several other factors: political, cultural, and economic.” This chapter brings these intervening factors to the fore, evaluating their influence on selected Tfd enterprises in this study and how the animateurs navigated around them.

#### 4.2 Minimum Cognitive Requirement

Minimum Cognitive Requirement in Tfd arises from the fact that for any conversation to be more informing and progressive, the parties engaged in the conversation must share some good grounds in their cognitive levels. Without this, communication will be hampered because the parties engaged then cannot edify each other. While referring to

Minimum Cognitive Requirement, Marion (1995:109) points out critical questions that must be born in the mind of a Tfd script writer. Such questions include: What is the content of communication? How is the message expressed? What is its style? In what language is the play performed? This is critical if the play has to have effect on the consciousness of the target community. It means that huge disparities in the intellectual altitude of the discussants can be a setback to communication. It therefore can never be the assumption of Tfd practitioners that any people with the gift of a voice can constructively “dialogue” especially at cognitive levels. In such a situation therefore, the framing of “dialogue” can never be the same. It must be adjusted to suit the people in question. It is in this sense that Minimum Cognitive Requirement is construed as an intervening factor. Through the analysis of the following performances, I attempt to demonstrate how this variable affects the framing of a conscientising “dialogue”.

*Ndoto za Elibidi* was a production of SAFE Kenya performed in Mathare slums of Nairobi Kenya, to conscientise people on the causes and dangers of HIV. Generally, slums and Mathare slum in particular is largely characterized by people living in deplorable conditions. Though some have gone to school, this poor life has so much dehumanized them and made them look so miserable. This robs them the ability to think critically and question the happenings in their environment. This is only to add to the many that have not gone to school that equally lack the capacity to engage with social problems and search solutions to them. In fact Kamau (The then Executive Director of SAFE Kenya) says “These dehumanized slum population do not have the capacity to interrogate the problems that besets them” (Interview carried out on 21 Jan. 2014 by phone). It is against this background that SAFE Kenya in *Ndoto za Elibidi* employed a

number of strategies to raise their critical consciousness. One of the framing strategies employed by SAFE Kenya in *Ndoto za Elibidi* to raise critical awareness was that they first entertained the slum community with singing and dancing in a number of popular play songs. This is meant to mobilize the community, break ice, establish trust, and create a sense of community. It's also used to prepare the community for what is to come in terms of issues and themes.

SAFE Kenya in *Ndoto za Elibidi* also used a number of songs that were repetitive in nature with popular tunes coupled with stage movements. For instance, they begin with popular trumpet songs (*Wamunazi wamunazi*) Xn. (*Mwana wa mbeli bayaye*) Xn. Soloist: (*Muloo..oongo* Chorus: *haho*) Xn. This was presented in Sheng' and Kiswahili - languages most familiar to the Mathare slum audience. This enhanced their understanding and entertainment for the viewers, killed boredom, and sustained the vigor of the performance. The flow of the play was not just serious discussions but was punctuated with songs and dances and other artistic stage movements that killed boredom and enhanced the continuity of the learning process. For instance, questions pointing to the issues raised in the performance were directed at the audience which some members of the audience commented on.

SAFE Kenya also came with a ready-made play. This must have been a wise approach since the target community had not developed the capacity to make and use plays as pedagogical tools. This performance, enabled members of the target community to see situations identical to their very own and therefore provoke critical reflections of their own life at home. This though fictional, pricks the subconscious of the viewers and subtly influences their behavior (positively) when they go back home.

Another strategy used is representative participation which according to Yule (2012:22), brings together a sample of people from a community who apparently are the opinion leaders with a basic level of education and can objectively interrogate communal problems. Though Kamau Wa Ndung'u (The then Executive Director of SAFE Kenya) does not directly acknowledge this, but analytically, this was the case. He says they began with a few prospective members of the cast from the slum communities.

These dehumanized slum populations do not have the capacity to interrogate the problems that besets them. So going to engage them in "dialogue" directly and have them objectively "dialogue" may be unproductive. We therefore had to use the few with a basic level of understanding of the communal problems. In the process, they can now be able to question them and engage in "dialogue". (Interview carried out on 21 Jan. 2014 by phone)

It is actually beginning with a few who will then have the multiplier effect. Perhaps as an indicator that learning is taking place in *Ndoto za Elibidi*, the facial responses of people empathizing with what those on stage are going through may tell approval or disapproval of what is going on. For example, a time when Shiko is being mistreated by her father; silencing her every time she wanted to express herself.

Gitu Mburu (Executive Director of Legal Resources Foundation) in his epilogue submission decries the high level of ignorance amongst the young people on issues of Human Rights. He further observes that many people due to abject poverty cannot access justice or afford the costs of litigation. This poverty is what has dehumanized and robbed them the advantage of gaining access to information on Human Rights that would build their capacity to objectively interrogate the causes of their violation and stand against them. The reason therefore of his team going to the communities to provide edutainment

first was because they foresaw the lack of sufficient capacity on the part of the target community to objectively interrogate issues on Human Rights. It is because of this realization that Legal Resource Foundation reverted to the use of popular folk art forms such as *Shamba la Mfukeri* to raise the cognitive levels. They capitalized on the story-telling art form that is popular in most African societies and in a language that was familiar to the members of the target audience. They for instance begin with the traditional popular opening phrase that invites people to the narration. Narrator: *Hadithi hadithi*, (story story); Chorus: *Hadithi njoo*, (story come). Narrator: *Hapo zamani za kale hapa shambani kwetu mababu zetu waliishi kwa amani...* (Long time ago in our farm here, our grandfather lived in peace...). Suffice to say, it is such art forms of story-telling that have hitherto served as didactic tools in “primitive” societies world over.

The implementation of this TFD enterprise was such that they had their own cast, a play with relevant themes on Human Rights; the constitution being the entry point. They did not ask the community to make the play with them. They only rendered it in a language that was familiar (Kiswahili) to the target community which presumably enhanced their critical consciousness – a requisite for progressive “dialogue”. Indeed we see after some time members engaging in a spirited debate. One member of the audience clarifies that the reason why Pademba (the protagonist in *Shamba la Mfukeri*) is uprooting the cash crop is because even that small pay does not reach her and that is why she is complaining. Such questions as; is there a law that forbids one to use his/her land the way he/she wants are symptomatic of a humanized person (gained critical consciousness). The sarcastic laughter and sneering at Girikasha (the antagonist in *Shamba la Mfukeri*) when he says that they (farmers) do not own land but that land belongs to the government is equally an

indicator of an empowered people who can differentiate lies and the truth. In Mburu's words, they can know their rights are being violated and are demanding justice. They have assumed the role of a catalyst (Mda1993) and are now humanized (Freire 1970)

Legal Resource Foundation also used questions, body make up and costumes, and drawings on the story board to provoke the audience into reacting. The questions, drawings, and body make ups were imbued with a significant aesthetic level to further engage the audience. For instance, body make up turned a black man in to a white man to show the skin complexion of the colonialist, costumes identified some as farmers or police or honorable people, drawings of a woman on the story board with a soldier about to beat her up was clear and simple for the audience to interpret. No wonder it is the audience that interpreted images on the story board.

*Mshale Nyama* & *'Beauty'* were both the productions of Imara Players Society performed in Nyanza, the present Siaya County to conscientise people on the causes and dangers of HIV. In their introductory submissions, they (animateurs) mention in passing a number of challenges among the youths in Siaya, key among them being poverty and illiteracy. Analytically speaking, these aspects breed a fertile ground for prostitution, drug abuse and other related social problems. No doubt these social problems characterize a society that a majority of its population lacks the capacity to conceptualize and critically interrogate the problems that bedevils it.

Apparently with this in mind, Imara Players resorted to using cultural art forms popular to the target community like story-telling, chants, and poetry to mobilize the community, break the ice, and create rapport amongst the target audience in preparation for didactic



performances. For instance, the narrator of the story (Beauty) begins with the popular opening phrase of storytelling; “*Long long time ago in the land of Kafira there lived a beautiful lady...*” This invites members of the audience to participate because they can identify with this given that it is part of their cultural art forms. This is for easy facilitation and invitation for ready participation.

Imara Players also used many songs that were easy to sing, accompanied by much gesturing and stage movements. This kept the audience gazing and in effect raising their critical awareness. The stage movements had high aesthetic input that amplified the impact of the play in the mind of the viewers. Such aesthetic scenes that are dramatically rendered can rarely fade in the memories of the observers and therefore lead to conscientisation. Songs, chants, and dances were repeatedly interjected in the performance at relatively even intervals from the start to the end, coupled by gestures and stage movements. This enhanced entertainment for the viewers, killed boredom, and sustained the vigor of the performance.

Imara Players also took a ready-made play to their target audience. This was especially important for the start now that the target group did not have the competence of creating the play that interrogates problematic issues to them. This performance, enabled members of the target community to see situations identical to their very own and therefore provoke critical reflections of their own life at home. The performance mirrored their lifestyles and the consequent effects of that lifestyle that includes among other things contracting HIV. This though fictional, sinks to the subconscious of the viewers and subtly influences their behavior (positively) when they go back home.

*Moi University Tfd 2014 Project* was conducted within the university premises (Students' Centre) on 21<sup>st</sup>Jan.2014 before university students who can be said to have the competence of interrogating the challenges they go through. It may not therefore be appropriate to say that this was an audience whose cognitive levels were too low. But interestingly, the same measure of singing, dancing and play was witnessed and it appeared very necessary. Question; what did this much singing and dancing in this Tfd enterprise serve? This in the researcher's opinion helped build team spirit and enabled members to relax before they engage them in serious discussions. For example, it was after sometime that a member of the audience volunteered to contribute to the on-going debate on insecurity on campus. Moreover, the flow of the play was not just serious discussions but was punctuated with songs and dances and other artistic stage movements that killed boredom and enhanced the continuity of the learning process. For instance, questions pointing to the issues raised in the performance were directed at the audience which some members of the audience commented on.

The study discusses the nature of songs employed for they carry an element characteristic of the university artistic repertoire. They for instance used the cheering song that appeals to their fellow young people just to tickle their emotions and have them participate. The songs also had the popular church tunes given different lyrics to facilitate easy singing. It can be deduced that most of the members around are church goers or Christians and therefore are familiar with these tunes. A little lyrical change but keeping the same tune could not hinder them to sing and in effect enhanced participation. Another one would come in with the popular "strike" chant of "*We goo... we go!*" This is a popular chant

that implies urgency and that all students wherever they are should join the bandwagon. Meaning they are going for war and therefore every comrade should join them.

They would then begin to state their problems. One said that there was a day he washed in the morning and aired his clothes only to come back at noon and find his clothes missing. Another one (a lady) says she left her laptop in her room and went to the bath room only to come back and find her laptop taken yet the security man was around. These scenarios can perfectly be visualized by the audience (students) and probably some may have been victims of the same and therefore capturing their attention

Worth noting is that the framing of edutainment employed by *Ndoto za Elibidi*, *Shamba la Mfukeri* and *Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty'*, borrows heavily from the traditional African fireside performances that were entertaining yet cognitively engaging. The elderly (knowledgeable – who in this context are the animateurs) empowered the young who re-told these stories to other young people while gardening (Ngugi 1981:10). This implied that the learning process went on after the performance.

But perhaps what this study cannot authoritatively establish at this point is whether one TfD enterprise to a community as it was the case with the performances of the selected theatre groups can give the desired results of achieving a Minimum Cognitive Requirement of a sufficient threshold. Mike Owiso (The founder and former Executive Director of Amani People's Theatre) in a face to face interview on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov.2013 says that it took him a period of three months to work with people of Sigoti village (in the Current Kisumu County) and as a result, many people were mentored on the dynamics of TfD who to date (2013) still use TfD in literacy campaigns.

### **4.3 Culture**

Culture is generally defined as people's way of life. This encompasses their language, foods, arts, way of dressing, the way they perceive and interpret their world, their customs and beliefs; which identifies a group of people as distinct (Mlama 1991:10) Given that culture is the people's way of life; their language, beliefs, among others; and framing "dialogue" for conscientisation is about these very people, culture inevitably stands out as an intervening factor. As the study analyzes the selected texts, the study strives to show how various aspects of culture like gender relations, myths, and taboo subjects among the targets of conscientisation influence the framing of "dialogue".

#### **4.3.1 Gender Relations**

Gender relation entails the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the society, how they treat each other among others to co-exist. Examining Gender Relations (a cultural aspect) in *Ndoto za Elibidi* as an intervening factor, the study looks at the nature of relationships between men and women amongst the targets of conscientisation and how those relationships enhance the spread of HIV. This is to imply that there is a close relationship between Gender Relations and HIV spread. In their (SAFE Kenya) investigation about the causes of increased HIV cases in slum areas, Kamau (Executive Director of SAFE Kenya) observed a number of factors that contributed to the spread of the disease. They included: commercialization of sex, multiple sex partners among the unmarried, extra-marital affair for those who are married, male chauvinism; where men feel they are superior over women and therefore women should not question what they do or propose to do. These male chauvinistic attitudes are what subject women to the culture of silence, stripping them the power and ability to think and decide independently.

In framing *Ndoto za Elibidi* TFD drama, these aspects of Gender Relations had to be factored in order to achieve their goal of conscientisation. For instance, when Alphonse does not support Elibidi to circumcise the boys because his wife (Agnes) and her friend Joyce are opposed to the same, Elibidi says that he will go home and tell the elders that the wife he (Alphonse) married has ‘*sat on chapati*’ for him; an idiom meaning that the wife rules him. This implies that according to this culture, women are subservient to men and any objection to what a man has decided is viewed as disrespect. Agnes and Joyce saves the boys from the crude knife that has circumcised his (Elibidi) grandfather, his father, himself and now wants to use it for his brother’s sons. This is despite the likelihood of contracting HIV. This is also empowering in the sense that it emboldens women in the audience who may be timid that they too can overcome men’s oppression and suppression that perpetuates the culture of silence and therefore conscientisation.

More Gender Relations that enhance the spread of HIV and are reflected in the performance are revealed during the bitter exchange between Njoki and Joyce. In response to the accusations from Joyce that her children are prostitutes like their mother (Njoki), she says that Joyce too gets free meat from Karori’s butchery in exchange of sexual favors. Gender Relations that commercializes sex are depicted here. The point here is that women give sex to men who attend to their material needs and in effect a cause for the increased HIV prevalence in the slum.

As for *Shamba la Mfukeri*, it is important to note that it was carried out at a time when there were gross human rights violations in Kenya especially on women. The dictatorial regime in Kenya from independence to around 2001 when the agitation for multiparty democracy was rife was the time when this project was carried out. Generally, Gender

Relations are majorly characterized by oppression and suppression of women. In striving to conscientise people against the same, Legal Resource Foundation highlighted these negative Gender Relations in their TfD drama (*Shamba la Mfukeri*) to provoke critical reflections among the members of the audience. Secondly, as a strategy of presenting themes that are consistent with the social realities on the ground. Moreover, the play was taken to rural areas where these violations are more pronounced.

In framing *Shamba la Mfukeri* to conscientise people against these negative gender relations, Legal Resource Foundation points out these negative Gender Relations and in effect admonishing the target community to shun them. For instance, Girikasha insinuates that women should not take leadership roles by saying that; “*Nasikia hata akina mama pia wanataka kuongoza shambani*” (I hear that even women want to be leaders in the farm). In the drama, we see women demand to be represented in the House of Representatives (This apparently is the parliament) and they are given. This is conscientising in the sense that women in the audience who may be timid gain confidence that they too can fight for their rights and have them.

Imara Players arose out of the need for creating a platform for young people to generate income and educate them on the dangers of such unhealthy lifestyles as irresponsible sexual behavior. Their main target was the school leavers in Siaya town who were more vulnerable since they are jobless. The primary objective of the group therefore was “to offer the youth a forum and space to share ideas and experiences about social problems facing them, and at the same time to tap and develop latent talents of the youths through participating in theatre” (Odhiambo 2008:131). This therefore implies a focus on young people who are sexually active, unemployed, and have to cope up with life amidst the

HIV challenge that faces them. Nonetheless, there were young women who were involved in prostitution that put them at the risk of contracting HIV. Prostitution is a negative Gender Relation where men pay for sex or supply material needs for women. Stories of young women prostituting with men who are old enough to be their fathers were rampant and cases of HIV in Siaya were on the increase.

In conscientising the people against these negative Gender Relations which are the breeding grounds for HIV, Imara Players in *Mshale Nyama & 'Beauty'*, variously depicts these negative Gender Politics. For instance, in the narrative '*Beauty*', they single out Beauty (the main character) as the transmitter of the deadly virus in the land of *Kafira* who does so by selling her body. They present Beauty as a lady who capitalized on her beauty to woo men into prostitution. Beauty is described as having figure eight with a brown face. This is what made men to do everything to win her attention. No man could resist her. They kept turning their necks whenever she could pass them. And because to her it was business, she could go with anyone. For instance, Beauty could go with: watchmen, cooks, hunters, soldiers, and even old men. This description depicts Gender Relations that view women as objects of admiration and men run after them. Men work for the attention of women. And not just their attention but sex in return because that is how they all contracted the disease and began to die one by one.

The final year 2014 Tfd students of Moi University in their preliminary findings observed that the security men were harassing male students at the gate. Among the issues raised were that girls were not being checked at the gates by security agents whereas boys were and even trumped up charges would be instigated against them in case they fail to give bribes. It was also noted that the reason why girls were being left to go

scot-free was because of the exchange of sexual favors. This is a gender relation that elevates sex at the expense of truth and justice. It was in this sense that gender relations stood out as an intervening factor. It became imperative that while conscientising their fellow students on campus over insecurity in their drama, these gender relations be highlighted.

The framing of *Moi University Tfd Project* was such that these gender relations are depicted as well as their negative effects to conscientise members of the audience against them. For instance, the exhibition of a security man receiving a bribe from the male student to pervert justice provoked debate. Not until the member of the audience offered to re-enact the scene; a move that was applauded by many in the audience. It is again these negative gender relations that have promoted insecurity on campus.

Gender Relations therefore is a cultural aspect that according to these performances (*Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'*, *Ndoto za Elibidi* and *Moi University Tfd Project*), enhances the spread of the HIV virus and as a remedy therefore, there's need to reverse them. The framers of *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'* and *Ndoto za Elibidi* were able to pinpoint them as promoters of HIV spread and therefore enlightening their audiences.

#### **4.3.2 Taboo Subjects**

Taboo subjects are those sensitive topics/subjects that members of the community prefer not to openly talk about them. Such subjects are sex related and are more pronounced in most African cultures (Odhiambo 2008:168). These subjects enhance the culture of silence which is detrimental to critical awakening. In crafting *Ndoto za Elibidi*, SAFE Kenya sought to take into account these taboo subjects that are a hindrance to



conscientisation by highlighting them and pointing out their fault. For instance, Shiko (while in tears) blames her mother for not teaching them about sex. She says that they only tell them to be home by 6.00pm. She observes that it is not embarrassing to talk about sex. The framing of *Ndoto za Elibidi* was such that members of the audience (especially parents) are taken to a level where they are encouraged to educate their young ones on how to handle their sexuality. It can therefore be deduced that in a culture where some subjects are a taboo, the framing of “dialogue” for conscientisation should be in such a manner that this is broken because failure to openly discuss these taboo subjects undermine effective participation which is a requisite for conscientisation.

Imara Players carried out a conscientisation verse (*Mshale Nyama*) in Siaya – a Luo dominated region. The Luo people contests public discussion of sex related topics because they are a taboo. Imara Players approach was problematic in the sense that they dramatized sex in public in the verse (*Mshale Nyama*) at the trading centre where there was a mixture of people of varied ages. Unlike in *Ndoto za Elibidi* where the context was laid, *Mshale Nyama* did not observe this. It is against the African norm that matters of sex be discussed in public.

### **4.3.3 Myths**

Myths are unfounded arguments/perceptions over a particular subject but cannot be scientifically verified. These myths have been more pronounced in the “primitive” societies world over for a long period of time and they continue to be. They were more predominant before modernism. In some cases, they are outright conscious lies propagated by an individual or a group of individuals to blind the consumers of these myths from seeing the truth or questioning them as they pursue their personal interests.

This is mostly witnessed in oppressive political cultures. These myths form part of the people's cultures and they determine the way they think and handle life issues.

With these myths in our society therefore and when on a conscientisation mission, the framing of "dialogue" can never be the same. It must be adjusted taking them into account. This is especially when these myths are a hindrance to conscientisation. The study therefore analyzes the selected texts by demonstrating how these myths influenced the framing of "dialogue" in these selected texts. In pursuit for conscientisation on the causes of HIV in Nairobi slums, SAFE Kenya noted that one of the causes of increased cases of HIV was the myths surrounding sexuality. Some of these myths included: that when you have sex with a virgin you get cured of HIV; People with HIV are slim and have pale hair; and that when you look at a person who has been infected with HIV, you also contract HIV. It was therefore imperative that when SAFE Kenya was seeking to conscientise this slum population, these myths be highlighted as a cause of HIV spread. This in effect presented myths as an intervening factor in the crafting of *Ndoto za Elibidi*, a Tfd drama.

In framing *Ndoto za Elibidi* therefore, SAFE Kenya highlights myths that work against conscientisation in the "dialogue" process and at the same time unraveling the lack of truth in them before an audience to enhance conscientisation. For instance, there was a myth that when you have sex with a virgin you get cured of HIV. Pablo rapes Mshere with the hope that he will get healed of HIV. Later on, he himself discovers that it was a lie. He does not get cured. This mesmerizes the audience to sit back and watch. The truth has dawned on them that it has actually been a lie that sex with a virgin cures one of HIV. In another myth, Ken assumes that he is HIV positive just because he has been having

diarrhea, coughing, and vomiting. However, when he decides to go for an HIV test, it is proven that he is negative. This therefore dismisses the myth that diarrhea and vomiting are a proof that one is HIV positive but also mean other diseases like tuberculosis.

While the girls (Petronila, Shiko, Nite, and Mshere) are in the studio trying to find a place to record their music, Abedi (the producer) warns his wife Kadogo not to look at one of the girls directly in the face for fear that she too may get infected. This point out the myth that when you look at a person infected with HIV you also contract HIV. Another case is when Njoki tells Shiko that she doesn't have HIV because people who have HIV don't look healthy like she does. "People with HIV are slim and have pale hair", she says. Shiko tells her that the only way of determining whether someone is HIV positive is by visiting the VCT centre for testing. It is at this point that she reveals that she had been introduced to ARVs by the doctor after testing positive and that she had been secretly using them. This in effect demystifies various myths held by members of the audience. The message that is clearly sent out therefore is that the only way of one determining his or her HIV status is by visiting the VCT centre for the same.

As noted by Odhiambo (2008), the Kenyan dream of independence that envisioned equal sharing of resources was deferred and Kenyans were disillusioned. Those who took on the mantle of leadership betrayed their fellows in the fight for freedom. The betrayal was followed by constitutional mutilations that consolidated power around those in leadership to decide whatever they wanted for the country and its people. One of the constitutional changes (that was mythcized) was that land belongs to the state. This meant that the state had the right to dictate to the citizens on how to use land and that they cannot challenge that; *a myth*. Within this period, many injustices were committed by the state against its

citizens to the extent that many knew that when the state infringes on your rights, that was unchallengeable; *a myth*. This was aggravated by the fact that many Kenyans were not schooled and myths thrive in ignorance. The Kenyan political culture was one that was characterized by myths that perpetuated injustices and therefore to conscientise the people against them, such myths had to be crafted into the drama in a manner that triggers debate to interrogate them.

In *Shamba la Mfukeri*, Girikasha (the oppressor) and even some members of the audience attempt to mythicize a number of things. For instance, one member of the audience says that Mfukeri was the chosen one of God. This is to mean, if he was chosen of God, challenging him means you are against God and therefore guilty of blasphemy. This suppresses critical thinking. There is also the myth that people don't own land, the land belongs to the government. So if the government commands you on how to use it, you have no right to complain. This sends members of the audience into interrogating the law that forbids them from using land the way they find appropriate. Such like myths therefore seek to gag people's critical thinking by denying them the platform to express themselves and in effect blocking conscientisation.

It is such myths that are indispensable to the preservation of the status quo maintained by the elites that Freire (1970) warns against

...the myth that the oppressive order is a "free society."...the myth of the charity and generosity of the elites...that the dominant elites promote the advancement of the people so the people, in a gesture of gratitude, should accept the words of the elites and be conformed to them...all these myths, the internalization of which is essential to the subjugation of the oppressed, are presented to them by well organized propaganda and slogans via the mass "communications" media – as if such alienation constituted real communication! (Freire 1970:121)

#### **4.4 Cultural Invasion**

Freire (1970:144) describes Cultural Invasion as a situation where the invaders penetrate the cultural context of another group and as they do so, they impose their own view of the world upon those they invade and inhibit the creativity of the invaded by curbing their expression. But cultural invasion manifests subtly or forcefully. Subtle cultural invasion can be read from a people's lifestyle which aspires to be like the invaders lifestyle. The lifestyle of the invaded is in many aspects similar to that of the invader or there are spirited attempts by the invaded (who at this point does not know that he has been invaded), to want to mimic the invader. But forceful cultural invasion is coercive. The invaded are compelled to adopt the lifestyle of the invader. For example, they are forced to use the language of the invader and dress like the invader.

In forceful cultural invasion, the invader uses such tools as the law, the police, and religion to enforce them (Ngugi 1982). Critical to note is that cultural invasion is not strictly about one superior culture subtly or coercively invading an inferior culture but also a case where various cultures co-exist and impact on one another and out of them emerges a culture that bears characteristics of the various cultures. A society in such a state where one must carry on an awareness campaign using a play dictates that the play reflects these cultural elements otherwise he/she risks presenting themes that are far removed from the social realities of the target community. It is in this sense that cultural invasion becomes an intervening factor. The study therefore looks at the selected theatre performances in this study, demonstrating how Cultural Invasion influenced their framing in pursuit of conscientisation.

As stated earlier, SAFE Kenya took *Ndoto za Elibidi* TFD drama to Mathare slum that is cosmopolitan where there are people from different cultural backgrounds. And because of these diverse cultural backgrounds, the major medium of communication in terms of language can hardly be from any single community. Given their different ethnic/tribal/racial backgrounds, their predominant communication medium (within the Kenyan context) is Kiswahili and sheng'. Their Kiswahili has a lot of mother tongue interference. And again some have gone to school and can speak English. What one sees during communication therefore is a hotchpotch of languages with a humorous accent and part of that is sheng' language. Popular songs are drawn from various cultures and sometimes Kiswahili or English words are injected in to suit the occasion. The use of a hotchpotch of languages, lack of a pure ethnic language as a medium of communication, a blend of lifestyles, among others can only be said to be a product of Cultural Invasion – various cultures impacting one another. The study attempts to show how these aspects of cultural invasion are subtly 'voiced' in *Ndoto za Elibidi*.

With this in mind SAFE Kenya while crafting *Ndoto za Elibidi*, Elibidi, (though fictional), enumerates the accomplishments his children have made. For example, Petronila is a successful business woman, Nite is a prominent musician featuring on television with other prominent artists like Wainaina, Shiko though on ARVs has secured a job with Citizen television, and Mshere has secured a job with Kenya Airways; she now flies to many renown cities in the world like London and New York. These aspirations are psychologically acquired by ones' exposure to a culture that is seemingly more aesthetic and powerful; branded by the invader as developmental and advancement. The target community is motivated to aspire to be like Nite, Mshere, and Petronila. However

this cannot entirely be viewed in the negative light because the living conditions of these girls (Petronila, Shiko, Nite, and Mshere) have dramatically improved and the temptation of engaging in lifestyles that increase the risk of contracting HIV are now minimal. However, this encourages the audience to aspire to be like them.

SAFE Kenya chose to reflect these aspects in *Ndoto za Elibidi* as a way of speaking about the experiences of the target community. For instance, through their various characters, they used a hotchpotch of languages which is a common practice among the slum dwellers. Elibidi (the main character and while courting Njoki) says “*Kwani Martha wewe haukuwangi mu observative?*” (Martha, aren’t you always observant?) This is a blend of English and Swahili with a Luhya accent. Again Agnes asks Njoki (upon discovering that she is just from the women’s merry-go round): “*Wewe alikula mandazi, makate, chai, chapati?*” (Did you eat ndazi, bread, tea and chapati?). There is no tribe in Kenya that expresses itself in the manner the two were expressing themselves. This may have been for the reasons of suiting their audience. Not that these people (animateurs) cannot competently express themselves in English or Swahili, but are actually trying to identify with the “mistakes” people in this slum areas make while communicating; which is the effect of various cultures marrying into each other so that they can woo them.

Odanyiro Wamukoya in his prologue submission says that *Shamba la Mfukeri* is a fictitious play that is very close to the story of Kenya as a country looking at the social-political issues that are going on in the country. At the time of implementing the *Shamba la Mfukeri* project (around 2001 - 2002), the Kenyan society was realizing that colonization had not been completely dealt with. It had left its seeds right in their midst and they were maturing very fast. The Kenyan dreams of independence were deferred

and many freedom fighters were shortchanged by their fellow African leaders who had adopted the old culture of their colonial masters and wielding it over their fellow Kenyans (Odhiambo 2008). Freire (1970) while referring to cultural invasion describes this as - mimicking the invader. Freire (1970:135) observes that “Thus cultural action of a dominating character, in addition to being deliberate and planned, is in another sense simply a product of oppressive reality.... Within the structures of domination, they function largely as agencies which prepare the invaders of the future.”

To imply that the issues being raised in *Shamba la Mfukeri* are actually national issues, Odanyiro (project officer – Legal Resource Foundation) notes that the play had been performed around the country for about fifty times in different places like Kakamega, Kapsabet, Kisii, and Nairobi. The same play repeated in various parts of the country implied the same problem in these regions and that’s where they draw their relevance. With this, agitations for constitutional change were rife hence the timeliness of the Tfd play. This agitation for constitutional change in the play implies revolting against a system that permitted invasion on their rights hence cultural invasion.

It is these aspects of Cultural Invasion that this study attempts to show how they are subtly ‘voiced’ in *Shamba la Mfukeri* because of their usefulness in relating with the social realities. The performance begins with the ‘visitor’ whom the owners of the farm are celebrating yet he has the agenda of invading their cultural way of life. For instance, they were to turn and begin the cultivation of cash crops instead of food crops by force and not by choice. Those who defied these orders were to face the wrath of the law and the police were to enforce that by administering corporal punishment. This was a re-enactment of colonialist coercively imposing his culture on them. It was therefore a



portrayal of the root cause of Human Rights violation. We are told that before the coming of the ‘visitor’, the people of the farm lived in peace without oppression. Mfukeri’s leadership and perpetuation of the culture of the ‘visitor’ – the foreign culture; the culture of oppression, describes the way in which African leaders continued with the old practice of their colonial masters. This meant that the audience could not just see that they are oppressed but could also see the source of their oppression as cultural invasion because this is not how they lived initially.

Girikasha’s actions are a reflection of a feudal society which Mlama (1991:10) identifies as giving rise to a feudalist culture where a few perceive themselves and act in a manner suggesting they are the Landlords. No wonder Girikasha says citizens do not have land and the farm is tagged as Mfukeri’s farm. Interestingly, even the subjects on many occasions view themselves as inferior before the landlords. Wanjiku’s act of stopping Pademba from uprooting unprofitable crops in the name of observing the oppressive law, dictatorial and corrupt governance is a clear testimony of an acculturated people. They are to be taxed and the sale from the crops was to bring “development” (roads, schools, hospitals, among others) which is never seen. The policeman (Mr. Opiss) may be what is described by Mlama (1991:10) as the ideological tools that enforces a capitalistic culture – a culture that is foreign and self imposing. The unfortunate outcome is that this culture, if not tamed replicates itself in successive regimes. This is what Freire (1970) refers to as mimicking the invader and that is exactly what Mfukeri is doing. The drama signifies the Kenyan situation where leaders were continuing with the colonial practices of land grabbing, stealing public funds, among others. Corruption was rife. This is a new political culture. Remember, Mfukeri was the right hand man of the colonialist alias “visitor” and

he carried his gun. He takes over and perpetuates the very old oppressive ways of his colonial master because he is a product of that very oppressive system. Such acts in the performance mirror what is going on in the society and their dramatization therefore is didactic in the sense that the audience now can question them.

The refusal to hold elections in the pretext of “people still love us so much” was actually a reflection of the African political state of affairs. A majority of African leaders had and indeed have had the tendency of sticking on power even when their constitutional terms have expired. Just like Mfukeri mutilated the constitution, the Kenyan leaders too did the same to promote their agenda of wanting to retain power. And because the reason for their sticking on power was not ‘service to the people centered’, such practices like farmers not receiving their returns in good time, poor roads, lack of schools, heavy taxes, among others were often times witnessed. Such a governance system was also characterized by the violations of women’s rights and suppression of the poor. There is lack of political will to initiate any change. These sentiments are shared with Mike Owiso (the founding executive director of Amani People’s Theatre). In an interview with Mike Owiso on 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2013, he says: “Also people feared the system (meaning the government). They could be willing to be part of us but the system could not allow them.” He narrates his ordeal when at the helm of Amani People’s Theatre (APT) that they could not go directly to the community and declare that they were coming because they carried political messages that sought to create a critical mass. They therefore used churches as a strategy. But as for the local authorities, they only informed the likeminded. The language used in *Shamba la Mfukeri* cannot be said to have been acculturated. They were consistent on using plain Kiswahili. The re-enactment of the colonialist alias

“visitor” at the advent of colonization in *Shamba la Mfukeri* employed a translator (from English to Swahili) to facilitate understanding since the supposedly European man was talking in English with a British accent which the audience would strain hearing or totally fail to understand. Translation was important to facilitate understanding for the audience and therefore conscientisation. The rest of the play is discussed mainly in Kiswahili and Kiswahili being a national language in Kenya; it facilitated communication between the facilitators and the audience. No wonder, the audience at one point takes over and owns the discussion aggressively contributing towards the subject matter. At one point we see the audience putting Girikasha (the protagonist in *Shamba la Mfukeri*) to task to explain where the farmer’s money goes.

The introduction of formal education in Africa, in an emerging capitalistic culture privileged some people to acquire this education hence their competence in the language. But we all know that language is a carrier of culture (Ngugi 1981). Ngugi (1981) observes that while at school in the colonial times, those who spoke mother tongue were punished. English became the standard measure of intelligence. Those who had the competence in the English language were rewarded. And so this is the case with Siaya community that comprises of men and women who are schooled and unschooled. There are those who can competently speak English whereas there are those who cannot competently speak English; not forgetting those caught in between. Psychologically, there are superiority attachments to the English language. Those who speak English feel superior over those who can’t speak – a manifestation of cultural invasion. And those who can’t speak competently aspire to be like those who can speak competently though they may not have this ability.

Not forgetting that it is this capitalistic environment that excludes some from earning a decent living that breeds and hatches such lifestyles as prostitution as a way of seeking for a source of livelihood. At this instance, young girls become more vulnerable as was the case in Siaya town. They will go in with men who promise to meet their material needs and in the process increase the chances of contracting HIV and other related social problems like divorce and family breakups. It is against this back drop that cultural invasion is construed as an intervening factor while framing *Mshale Nyama* & 'Beauty' but in the negative sense. For instance, all the facilitators in their introductory remarks express themselves in English. But the people of Siaya are mainly Luos who mainly speak Luo language. One would ask; why do they labor to speak in English in a Luo community and yet it is clear that some (facilitators) do not even have the competence of the English language? Perhaps Kiswahili language in which the verse (*Mshale Nyama*) was rendered in was a more appropriate medium of communication to a rural audience. But with the narrative rendered in English, one would doubt if that indeed was an appropriate medium of communication in such a rural setting. The message may have reached but then to a few educated members of the community.

In another case, "Beauty" (the character girl in the narrative) is used symbolically to refer to many other girls who are prostituting in Siaya. But Beauty's lifestyle of prostitution is dictated by external forces beyond her control that have to do with cultural invasion; the capitalistic culture of her world that cannot free her from this lifestyle.

The Moi University community comprises of students from all walks of life. This springs from the education policy in Kenya of universities drawing the membership of their students from nearly (if not all) all the communities in Kenya. The university also has

international students from all over Africa and beyond. These students, drawn from diverse cultures in the country and beyond have a way of borrowing from each other (culturally) and therefore the likelihood of one culture overriding the other or a blend of various cultures to have one. Such manifestations of cultural invasions include the sheng language that borrows a lot from many Kenyan languages. Kiswahili is a national language but though communities understand it, they have a problem of proficiency. Sheng', which is a mishmash of various ethnic languages, Kiswahili, and English, becomes more ideal. Sheng' therefore is a product of subtle cultural invasion; many languages impacting on each other and eventually coming up with a language which is the best compromise between them. It is in this sense that cultural invasion became an intervening factor in the framing of *Moi University Tfd* project. For instance, *Moi University Tfd Project* was predominantly facilitated in Kiswahili and sheng'. It can therefore be deduced that in terms of choosing language, the choice of sheng' and Kiswahili was relevant and this worked to facilitate learning.

#### **4.5 Funding**

Funding for a majority of development projects for most African countries since independence has majorly been sourced from overseas and this has been tagged as donor funding. This is because most African countries and especially those in the Sub-Saharan Africa are poor (Marion 1995). Poverty was aggravated by high levels of illiteracy and lack of innovation. Odhiambo (2008:101) explains the springing up of many theatre groups in Kenya to solicit funds from donors. These theatre groups engaged in Theatre for Development activities apparently as a means of survival. The increased levels of unemployment at this point in time in Kenya were as a result of aid cut off from

International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). This funding insisted on particular methodologies to development (top-down) that for a long time did not take into consideration the cultural way of the local populace. This disenfranchised the local communities in the process of development only to be discovered later that little development had been realized. As a result of this, a people's cultural approach was emphasized as the way forward and that's when theatre was brought at the fore as an instrument for literacy campaign (Marion 1995:9)

As if that is not enough, most African countries have been riddled with corruption and negative ethnicity that have stagnated development. This has made it hard for local financiers of such enterprises to emerge because a majority of the population wallows in poverty; something that has led to perpetual dependence on donor funding which has 'strings' attached. These foreign funders on many occasions do not know the realities on the ground but impose what they think is right according to their experience at home (Marion 1995:9)

But Tfd is a venture that requires money for its successful execution; other factors remaining constant. The facilitators ought to be paid, materials for props, reconnaissance tours, workshops, communications, among others require money. Failure to secure sufficient funds therefore means that part of the Tfd enterprise will be avoided or haphazardly done and in effect therefore, negatively affecting the outcome of the entire project. It is in this sense that funding is construed as an intervening factor in Tfd as discussed in the selected Tfd enterprises below.

*Ndoto za Elibidi* was a SAFE Kenya sponsored TfD enterprise that was taken around in many parts of Nairobi slum areas. These included: Mukuru kwa Njenga, Karioko, and even in Eldoret region. But this particular one (under analysis) took place in Mathare slums of Nairobi- Kenya in the year 2005. In an interview with Kamau Wa Ndung'u (the then Executive Director of SAFE Kenya) on 21 Jan. 2014 by phone, he says, they had a challenge of securing funding to hire actors. This was aggravated by the fact that some of them were actors of renowned television programmes in Kenya like *Winniebroda* (a leading actor in *Papa Shirandula* – a television drama on Citizen TV Kenya). These people enjoy celebrity status and to have them act they needed to be paid well. This was also strategic in the sense that given their celebrity status, many people would want to just come and see them; their presence therefore greatly assisted in mobilization. But SAFE Kenya is a Non-Governmental Organization that depends on donor funding to run its programmes and it was not mandatory that they will receive funding. In fact Kamau says that by the time they were organizing this programme (*Ndoto za Elibidi*), the global north had not recovered from the economic recession that had hit Europe since 1998. And so the donor could not assure them of funding. Other requirements like décor, costume, transport, props, among others required money and local financiers could hardly come by.

Also, in terms of capacity building, only the top echelon of SAFE Kenya had had the experience of developmental communication using theatre. This meant that they had to train others on the same which had financial implications. Fresh prospective members of the cast from the community with no clue of what TfD is were an impediment on several grounds. One, in terms of maneuvering through hiccups and rectifying mistakes to

enhance credibility and sustain the audience; two, the low levels of creativity and improvisation; and three, the lack of genuine ownership of the project with the psychology of receiving payments.

As for the Legal Resources Foundation, it was first established in 1994 as an autonomous project of the Kenya Human Rights Commission which was then registered in 2000 as an independent legal entity, (Legal Resource Foundation Trust). Since then, Legal Resources Foundation has grown into a renowned fully-fledged organization which has developed innovative methods to raise legal and Human Rights awareness among the young, underprivileged, and the under-educated classes in Kenya (Legal Resource Foundation Trust). By definition, Legal Resources Foundation is a Civil Society Organizations that fund its activities through donor aid which comes with certain expectations. Therefore the leadership in working to enhance Human Rights awareness is careful to see to it that these expectations are met. This implies that as they work, there is an invisible hand of the donor that influences the way their programmes are carried out.

To show the high level of poverty amongst the target communities and therefore call for funds, Gitu Mburu (CEO - Legal Resources Foundation) observes that the population of up to 50% in Kenya lives below the poverty line. It is therefore difficult for these poor people to pay the high cost of litigation in terms of court filing fees and payment to lawyers. It is therefore a challenge when you go to them because they assume you have money and would therefore want you to pay them after talking to them. Secondly, the youths have gone to school but do not have employment and are being misused by politicians. This is a society in an unemployment crisis and may therefore pose grave challenges to the animateurs and directly or indirectly hamper conscientisation. For



instance, they may treat them with suspicion as people who have received money from donors and are out to exploit them or look so desperate in search of favors from them. This in effect hampers effective framing of “dialogue” for conscientisation.

In striving to mitigate these challenges, Gitu Mburu (the Chief Executive Officer of Legal Resources Foundation) notes that they seek to promote access to justice particularly for the poor and marginalized section of the population and enhance legal rights awareness amongst the citizens. As a strategy, they reach out to communities, schools, and also develop Human Rights material including the publication of newsletters and booklets which target specific groups. It is the reaching out to schools, citizens and the developing of these materials (newsletters and booklets) that called for funding. Without the funding they had received at this point, maybe a number of the items would have missed yet their role in communication was critical.

However such a programme ought to be continued for a period of time to mentor many other people to carry on the developmental conversation long after the animateurs have gone (interview with Mike Owiso). But with the unguaranteed funding in the next season as it has always been with many donors, it means it may be the business of touch once and go. In fact Odanyiro Wamukoya (Project Officer, Legal Resources Foundation) says that the play has been performed in many parts of the country like Kapsabet, Kisii, Kakamega and Nairobi. This implies that the change may be unsustainable because a critical mass would not have been raised among the target population yet ideally, community development is supposed to be about people negotiating their own change.

Imara players is a registered Community Based Organization (CBO) formed in 1998 found in the present Siaya county of the wider Nyanza region of western Kenya, by Lwanda Keya as the artistic director and the chairman. The establishment of the group was motivated by the need for employment among the school leavers in Siaya town. The primary objective of the group was “to offer the youth a forum and space to share ideas and experiences about social problems facing them, and at the same time to tap and develop latent talents of the youths through participating in theatre” (Odhiambo 2008:131). Among the messages that they disseminate include teenage pregnancy, social reproductive health, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS, among others. They are a self-motivated group that though not employed, has resolved to stick together to make sure that their impact is felt by the community.

It is evident that this is a group that needs financial support. Onyango Rajula (the secretary general of the group) in his introductory remarks says Imara Players is a self sponsored group and therefore request well wishers out there to support them. Its activities entirely depend on the resources mobilized both internally and externally. He further says they do a lot of sacrifices like moving for such a long distance like fifty kilometers on bicycles. This can be a challenge to any TFD enterprise and unless funding mechanisms are put in place, achieving conscientisation may be extremely hard. Such a people who ride on bicycles for more than fifty kilometers may soon give up unless they are motivated by some sustainable funding. On the other hand, there is a misunderstanding from members of the community that when you are in theatre you have a lot of money. In fact Onyango Rajula says: “Look at me. I am very poor. So there’s a misperception from most members of the public that as an actor you are rich and

therefore they expect you to give them money.” This kind of perception draws people to the group not because they have bought into the mission and vision of the group but because they expect to be paid; to their disillusionment.

The *Moi University Tfd Project* was conducted by final year students of Tfd on 21<sup>st</sup> Jan.2014 within Moi University – main campus to sensitize students on security after a number of students claimed that their properties were getting lost and that they were being harassed by security men of the university. It was alleged that the security system within the university had become corrupt. For instance, demanding bribes to go through the gates with electronic items like laptops which is against University rules and regulations, colluding with thieves from outside to steal student’s properties e.g. clothes, phones, laptops, electric cables among others. It’s against this backdrop that this Tfd enterprise was conceived and plans of implementing it began. They therefore needed money to make placards, look for drum, whistles, cameras to record, time to rehearse, lunch, airtime for mobilization among others.

The final year Tfd students had the advantage of an already cohesive university community. This made mobilization easy because in like fifteen minutes of drumming and singing, the entire university had been mobilized. Curiosity began to take the better part of the entire University atmosphere. And many because of the proximity with where they stay from the Students Centre (venue for the project), it was easy for them to assemble. As for the organizers of the project, no one would expect to be paid because this was their exam and therefore they were the sponsors of the project. Also, the planners and organizers of the enterprise were all final year Tfd university students who had been taken through the theories of Tfd and therefore were conversant with the

execution of such a Tfd enterprise. They were quick to identify mistakes and swiftly rectify and therefore little directing was needed at implementation stage. They did not need to hire an expert and that saved them some money. They also made most of the props and placards from the locally available materials.

#### **4.6 Conclusion**

Precisely, the intervening factors in Tfd are about the various social-cultural and economic realities of both the target communities and animateurs determining the way planning, facilitation, and performances are organized to achieve conscientisation. They can therefore be an impediment or an enhancement to conscientisation. Since Tfd is an artistic genre that deals with human behavior, these intervening factors must be integrated to guarantee effective participation; a requisite for conscientisation. And indeed as Marion (1995:78) puts it, framing “dialogue” for conscientisation is a complex, multidimensional process whose single aspect cannot be recognized in isolation. An integrated approach which takes into account those is therefore necessary.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines conclusions drawn from the research findings in respect to the research questions that formed the basis of this study. It also includes recommendations that propose policy frameworks aimed at enhancing the discipline. Included as well are suggestions for further research. TfD in general targets a people who are residents of a particular geographical location to have them be informed of their social reality through dialogical participatory means and create a yearning in them to move from where they are to a better place. The greatest and most tricky task that has been the concern of this study has been how to frame the communication that brings a conscientising debate to the target community. One of the indicators that the “dialogue” is competently informing them of their social reality is by the intensity of their participation in the “dialogue” process, (Mda 1993). This study therefore set out to identify and articulate the manner in which the selected groups employ and deploy various artistic and non-artistic instruments to have the targets of conscientisation speaking and dramatizing the change they need. Some conclusions were made basing on the reviewed literature with particular relevance to the selected theatre groups in this study.

#### 5.2 Discussion of Findings and Conclusions

The study had a number of findings and conclusions. They are discussed as follows. First and foremost, a mastery of the dynamics of engagement in the “dialogue” process is critical. For instance, taking into cognizance the cultural art forms of the people and driving the message through their culture because it is what they understand best. They

have a perfect knowledge of the same and it is through that that they can best contribute in the “dialogue” process and own the debate. Also, well prioritized choices of the communal problems and well guided “dialogic” process is preceded by high levels of participation by members of the target community and the right attitudes formed towards the subject matter as the “dialogic” process progresses. The right attitude here means people increasingly expressing their willingness to take action against the status quo.

Participation is not simplistic but is in paradigms and some intervening factors determine the paradigm to be adopted by the development agent. For instance, while factoring *Minimum Cognitive Requirement* low level of education among the target community may not passé embrace transformative paradigm of participation which calls for popular participation from the start to the end. In effect therefore, participation paradigms in themselves reveal the weaknesses of popular theories that strictly emphasize popular participation in all stages of the “dialogue” process.

TfD being an artistic genre, aesthetics is inevitably one of its integral parts. All the TfD enterprise analyzed in this study employed a wide range of aesthetic elements that attracted the attention of the audience. For instance, the captivating dances in the *Moi University TfD Project*, the dramatic uniformity in the *Mshale Nyama* verse of Imara Players, the clowning of a “Whiteman” in *Shamba la Mfukeri*, and the intoxicating laughter in *Ndoto za Elibidi*. These aesthetic instruments helped sustain the audience without which boredom would have dominated and audiences abhor boredom. But there have been debates about the degree of aesthetics that can be involved in a performance with some arguing that too much of it may overshadow the message; presenting the actor

as a super human – typical of Stanislavskyan theatre which TfD seeks to revolt against. There's therefore need to strike a balance between the two – message and aesthetics. But both are equally important.

The use of codifications is inevitable in enhancing participatory “dialogue”. These can help in illustrating the disparities by indicating where the target community is supposed to be and where it is. However, the dichotomy should be very clear – sharply contrasting between the two statuses. This was evident in *Shamba la Mfukeri* and greatly helped contribute to conveying the message. In fact, members of the community were given an opportunity to instigate “dialogue” by interpreting the drawings on the story board. The target community is motivated to act and get to where it is supposed to be. But where it is supposed to be should be painted (which is actually the framing) in such a way that it creates urgency in the victim of the current unpleasant reality for immediate exodus (the appropriateness/suitability of frames). This breaks silence and members can then “dialogue” as observed in *Shamba la Mfukeri* and to some extent, in *Moi University TfD Project*. Jacob Rasmussen&Dan Omanga (2010) help to reinforce this argument of using codifications as impetus to “dialogue”. While exploring the street parliaments in Kenya as deliberative spaces that help enhance the understanding of political realities, they use the Eldoret example to illustrate how newspaper reading serves as codifications that help the interrogation of the realities surrounding the political culture in Kenya. “The newspaper reading forms a key ritual preceding debate and sets the agenda of the issues to be discussed, revealing the link between the media, discourse and *Kamukunji*” (Rasmussen&Omanga 2010:10). This presents newspaper headlines as codifications that catalyze the “dialogue” process underscoring the essence of using codifications in

facilitating “dialogue”. Using such codifications therefore serve as impetus for people to reflect on their current predicament and perhaps link it with certain historical injustices or certain lifestyle or certain cultural practices and deliberate on the way forward, identifying obstacles to development. For instance: illiteracy or diseases or poor governance as it was the case in *Ndoto za Elibidi* and *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'*.

It is also true that “dialogue” for conscientisation seeks to reverse the status quo. But the forces that maintain the status quo do not remain passive and will always react antagonistically. The status quo may be in terms of the situation or human. The situation will antagonize in terms of costs and human will antagonize in terms of confrontations, intimidations or even ‘war’. For instance, diseases may need drugs or change in lifestyle or both like it was the case with *Ndoto za Elibidi* and *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'*. Oppression or exploitation may need confrontation and sometimes physical war as it was the case with *Shamba la Mfukeri* when they chased Girikasha out of the meeting. All these aspects should inform the rehearsal (dramatization process). In *Shamba la Mfukeri*, Girikasha (the beneficiary of the status quo) does not take this lying down. He has the policeman who defends him and the law he himself has participated in the making and here now telling people to obey. Those who defy the law are threatened with prosecution. In *Ndoto za Elibidi* and *Mshale Nyama&'Beauty'*, the situation had to antagonize. HIV infection meant inevitably getting committed to feeding well and taking ARVs which has heavy economic implications. And that is exactly what Shiko (*Ndoto za Elibidi*) is going through. As prevention measures to HIV, individuals have to restrict themselves to one sexual partner – denying themselves the luxury of many sexual partners (situation antagonizing). Those in multiple relationships had to frequently use condoms. Those



engaged in commercial sex (prostitution) had to cut this source of livelihood. Precisely, it is not just easy to let it go. The situation was antagonizing. In *Moi University Tfd project*, the subordinate convener (I) of the project was summoned to the security office to give an account of what was going on. The security office was furious and was determined to take it head on with whoever was meddling in the affairs of its office. This was confrontational not until I labored to explain that it was just a class project.

The oppressor antagonizes the agitators of change because he is a beneficiary of the status quo. The major determinant of his (oppressor) losing the battle is in the level of organization of the agitators of change that was birthed in the rehearsal (dramatization process) as postulated by Boal (1979). But this change-enabling-organization is a function of the level of perfection of the rehearsals in the dramatization process. A breathtaking inspiration here which many Tfd practitioners have not observed is that Tfd drama therefore unlike other arts, stops being a reflection of reality but a projection of what the future should be basing on the assessment report (birthed in the “dialogue”) of the present social reality. Tfd therefore at this point prides itself in elevating art by enhancing its predictive power through logical deliberations. A projection of how the future should be is followed with action-oriented organization. At this point, Tfd transforms itself into a template upon which a binding dramaturgical agreement can be written through its dramatization of how the future should be.

Observable also is that while conducting discussions in Tfd, the facilitator should be focused on raising the stakes that will spark action and not just action but action that is collective. In *Shamba la Mfukeri* for instance, the facilitator achieved this to a big extend when he kept on raising the stakes by inviting members of the audience to intervene

giving their own opinion about what they felt was the right thing to be done. These gave them room to engage their minds and were in effect therefore cognitive actors as recommended by Freire (1970).

This study was particularly fascinated with the potential that the representative paradigm of participation carries. Given that representative participation brings about leaders and a selected number of community members to “dialogue” and act on behalf of the rest of the community members then it is the view of this research that this can further be emphasized given its cost effective nature. The cost of bringing everybody on board may be too high and time consuming. Probably this is why many of the TfD enterprise analyzed did not manage or partially managed to engage the entire population of the target community. It is also slippery that if not well handled it may fail to yield the intended results given the fact that human behavior is complex. This study has already pointed out the complexity of our society’s composition - the extremely informed minds and extremely uninformed minds may be a big challenge to the whole conscientisation process. This is to imply that perhaps as TfD practitioners, we have been too ambitious with the whole concept of all inclusive participation without carefully looking into its dynamics. Members with different opinions are swallowed up by those who are loud or who are viewed as opinion leaders and are therefore thrown into the *Spiral Culture of Silence* (Littlejohn 1996:337)

This study holds the view that for effective participatory “dialogue” to take place there should be a minimum cognitive requirement for targets of conscientisation. An interrogation of chapter one of Freire’s (1970) works on dehumanization and humanization cements this argument projecting a structure of the “dialogue” process

from the dehumanized people to being aware of the dehumanization and this very being aware is the recipe for dialogism and claim for humanization. This if not factored in can be a setback to the “dialogue” process. A minimum cognitive requirement then is key to a “dialogue” that is participatory. It is only at this point that members of the target community can assume the role of the catalyst as Mda (1993) argued out or easily rise to attaining the status of a catalyst without the intervention of the catalyst. Mda (1993) hints at this using his heterophily and homophily concepts though he does not develop his argument to affirm it. He uses the Lazerfed’s (1955) *two-step flow mass communication theory* and does emphasize on the use of opinion leaders who are to spread the message to the rest of the community members. “Generally opinion leaders are characterized by more formal education, high social status, and greater readiness to adopt new ideas, more social participation, more media exposure, and greater emphatic ability” (Mda 1993:86). This in effect supports the paradigm of representative participation as the best compromise between the opposing tendencies of total participation and agitation.

Popular theories in TfD implies transformative participation paradigm when they emphasize total participation of local communities in development projects from the time of problem investigation, problem prioritization, codification creation, performance, and post-performance discussion (Yule 2012). But again, these paradigms of participation in their individual standing are in themselves a measure of the degree of adherence to the core elements of popular theories in TfD; popular participation being chief among them. And precisely, these could be none other than Freire and Boal. Could it therefore be an act of naivety to insist on popular participation of the members of the target community in every TfD enterprise without taking into consideration the nature of the audience like

for instance, educational levels? This study has argued before that it is practically impossible to embrace popular participation where educational levels are extremely low. It is the view of this study therefore that those paradigms of participation have come to fill-in the gaps that popular theories in Tfd may not have been keen to articulate. The nature of the audience therefore dictates the participation approach in Tfd. i.e. transformative participation, representative participation, or instrumental participation, among others. The question to ask here may be; is it possible that a Tfd enterprise employs more than one paradigm of participation? An examination of the selected Tfd enterprises affirms this. Some elements are shared across board.

While framing “dialogue” in Tfd, it is also important that “dialogue” be informed by the current pathetic situation that the victims of dehumanization should get out of with urgency and are shown how to get out in a “dialogic” deliberative process. When pain is too much, people talk about what is paining them – when there is a comparative analysis and people see the disparities and they are made to understand that their sorry-state-of-affairs is not of their own making but is rather as a result of oppressive forces which must be dealt with, with urgency. Upon such revelations, stakes rise steadily and “dialogue” is inevitable. Often times this was evident in *Shamba la Mfukeri* and *Moi University Tfd* to a significant degree. Members of the community need to progressively come to such levels of ‘pain’ in the “dialogic” process when they can “dialogue” with much energy. Otherwise though the framing may be right, this if not factored can be a setback to the entire process. Issues that have not caused pain are unlikely to evoke the attention they deserve and in effect, little or no “dialogue” over them. Swanepoel and De Beer in (Mushangwe & Chivandikwa in Bundy (Eds.) 2014:123) implies this when they

comment that, "...for people to take action, a perception of need, crisis and urgency, must be identified because people will not rally together for the eradication of vaguely felt needs."

But it can also be argued that "dialogue" comes to create pain (open eyes to see the dehumanization they have gone through and create the urgency in them to act) because these people could be so dehumanized that they don't know whether their rights are being violated - that this "dialogue" increases self awareness – awakening the dialoguers to rise to action. And that the premium is so high if you apply it immediately. This discourse addresses itself to two categories of persons. Those that "dialogue" comes to awaken and see the dehumanization they have gone through and those that already see the dehumanization, are aware of it and simply want action taken.

It can also be observed that communal problems whose causes do not emanate from the community should also inform the framing of "dialogue" in Tfd. Essentially, these problems spring from global trade that is capitalistic in nature – rich nations dictating global prices and rewarding themselves with the lion's share of the economic catch. For instance, in *Shamba la Mfukeri*, the farmers are complaining of poor and delayed pay from the cash crops they plant like coffee and cotton. These cash crops have their markets outside the country. One is left to suspect that there could be problems with the international market because of the delayed and poor pay for the farmers. So even if the farmers were to go by what Girikasha is saying or revolt against the government and have new leaders, they may do little to alter the prices of these commodities whose prices are determined elsewhere by people unknown to the local community. To these problems, the projection should be that the communities do not expect immediate change. Perhaps

the “dialogue” should only go up to registering complaints to their authorities. Similar situations have been witnessed by human rights activists and environmentalists demonstrating in United Nations’ conferences whenever they are held over a range of global problems like climate change – world’s most industrialized nations to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases, more rights for women, unfair economic policies between developed and developing countries, among others.

It is true that the success of Tfd projects with politically sensitive themes within a limited democratic space should be framed in coded language with a lot of theatrical tools like allegory to avoid confrontations with the state machinery. The use of enigmatic/implicit codifications needs to be emphasized. This is because they seek to reverse the superstructure which is determined to perpetuate the status quo.

Commercialization of sex is the main cause of HIV spread and other related problems in poverty stricken communities. The cases of Beauty selling her body and spreading the virus to the entire community in the narrative ‘*Beauty*’, the case of the security agent taking bribes from men and setting girls free with the aim of attracting sexual favors in *Moi University Tfd Project*, and mama Margaryan (Joyce) taking free meat from Karori’s butchery in exchange of sexual favors in *Ndoto za Elibidi* are a perfect testimony to this thinking.

Some intervening factors are more pronounced in themes of certain nature than others. For instance, commercialization of sex is more pronounced in HIV related themes but rare in politically related themes. Moreover, no participation in the analyzed groups can be said to be purely transformative or representative or instrumental. There is an overlap in these paradigms and only a certain degree of elements of a particular paradigm can

qualify the participation paradigm to be described as either transformative or representative or instrumental.

The increasingly cosmopolitan nature of our communities (a manifestation of cultural invasion) has diluted the concept of community and cultural art form. Rarely today will you find a village or any trading centre with people of the same cultural values, speaking the same language. In post-colonial Africa, many governments have emphasized nationalism and now people settling wherever they want. Inter-marriages have taken place. Infrastructural development has facilitated trade between people from different locales and in effect encouraged resettlement in those areas. Our African villages today have people from other corners of the country and even beyond. We therefore have cosmopolitan villages. With this reality, how do we talk of a language and a cultural art form that all these people are at home with? Instead, there has been a transition like in East Africa of using the Swahili language which in effect renders the originally traditional arts partially or fully redundant and in effect inconsequential. This therefore leaves the whole agitation of using the cultural art forms as mythical and therefore a challenge. We all know that culture is not static but dynamic or cumulative for that matter. The dynamism or cumulative nature of culture has not left the purity of this cultural art form intact but has corrupted them. At this point again the definition/description of what cultural art forms are becomes elusive. This therefore presents a challenge to the framing of “dialogue” in a significant way as was witnessed in *Ndoto za Elibidi*. A myriad of songs and aesthetical cultural experiences could be witnessed from trumpets of men and women in uniform to typical luhya first born celebration song popularly known as *Mwana wa mbeli* (first born).

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This study has a number of recommendations to make based on the observations made after analyzing data from the selected theatre groups. The study went out to identify and articulate the manner in which the selected groups employ and deploy various artistic and non-artistic instruments to have the targets of conscientisation speak and dramatize (where possible) the change they need. The following are therefore the recommendations this study has to make.

#### **5.3.1 Educational policy**

The Government policy on education should focus on promoting literacy levels especially in rural and urban slum communities. This is because the educational level of any community is the basis of development and developmental communication for that matter. The same educational policy should also focus on nurturing the culture of performance. This can be enhanced through direct funding of performing arts and mainstreaming them in the educational curriculum in schools and colleges. There is also need to have in place a government policy that recognizes Tfd as a professional body and therefore receive funding directly from the government to broaden its activities.

#### **5.3.2 Training more Tfd Practitioners**

Tfd is a viable instrument of development but lacks professionals to handle the communication development agenda. There is therefore need of training more Tfd practitioners now that we have come from a history of quacks masquerading as professionals and in effect misrepresenting what Tfd is (Lenin Ogolla in Odhiambo 2008:25). These quacks have put Tfd as a discipline in an awkward position by paving way for unprofessionalism.



### **5.3.3 More research**

There is need of more research in the discipline especially on the current theories in Tfd to ascertain the degree of their relevance to the discipline. This is partly because of the high level of unwillingness by the development agent to hand over tools of theatrical production to the people to utilize them for their own liberation as suggested by leading theorists. There is therefore need to carry out a wider investigation (perhaps more sample groups) to establish their applicability; the leading questions being: Are they just smart ideas on paper that have no practical relevance? What is their applicability? Is it too expensive to apply them or it is just the negligence of the practitioners?

### **5.3.4 More time with the target community**

Tfd practitioners should also consider staying with the community long enough to mentor people who would take over. A one touch and go may not be sufficient enough for the project to replicate itself. The experience of Mike Owiso in Sigoti village in Kisumu County can be a perfect testimony to this argument.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: Interview Schedule for Directors

1. How long have you worked with this group?
2. When did you carry out this project?
3. What is the group's source of income?
4. What were the challenges of securing funding?
5. What is your profession and your educational level?
6. Was the play created by work shopping or one of you wrote the play and directed?
7. What were the major challenges of carrying this project?
8. How do communities view you? As people who have a lot of money?
9. a) What is the level of education of a majority of the members of your team?  
b) Do you think this in any way affected the carrying out of your projects?
10. What preparations did you carry out before you carried out this project?
11. Did you inform the community before you visited them to carry out this project?
12. After carrying out this project, did you manage to have a post-performance discussion to further interrogate the issues raised in the performance?
13. Did the prospective members of your cast have any experience of using TfD as an instrument of literacy campaign?

**APPENDIX 2: LIST OF MEMBERS OF GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Mr. Mike Owiso – former executive director of Amani People’s Theatre (APT)
2. Kamau Wa Ndung’u – Executive director of SAFE kenya
3. Dr. Fredrick Mbogo – Lecturer Department of Literature Theatre and Film Studies
4. Prof. Christopher Odhiambo - Lecturer Department of Literature Theatre and Film Studies
5. Bob – Facilitator of Moi University 2014 Tfd Project and 2014 final year Tfd student
6. Michelle - Facilitator Moi University 2014 Tfd Project and 2014 final year Tfd student
7. Kamau Wa Ndung’u – Chief Executive Director SAFE Kenya