
THE MANAGEMENT OF THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SELECTED RIVERINE AREAS IN OJO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

I am sure most of us working in the development sector know about “funders”, “consultant”, “client”, high anxiety and obsession with “deadlines” and “deliverable” ! So much that the “beneficiary” takes the backseat and the “process”, gets buried in the backyard! So when some whistle –blower shouts, where has all the money gone, we run helter-skelter, come up with magic wand, called EVOLUTION. (Emphasis mine) so we embark on a time bond, limited to 50 A4 pages, Time New Roman font size, 10 single lines spacing “deliverable” called Evolution Report! In which we disrobe the project deliverables layer by layer in order to put our finger on either that physical deformity, or muscular contour that we feel was solely responsible for winning or losing the race! Better, if we can gets hold of some community members (numbers) reinforcing our view point (Sharma, 2006:5). The problem militating the practice of theatre for development (TfD) both in the West and Africa, Nigeria specifically, dwell within the TfD paradigms adopted. The practitioners and scholars have said TfD needs no manage skills to take place. This position has severally presented TfD workshops as an ad-hoc thing. The submission by Sharma above vividly summarizes the methodology and objective of the practice. Which runs counter to development? It is the application of the effective management skills and its applicability that it can affect the people’s lives. The intention of this paper is to look at the various problems affecting the practice and proffering a management model that we have applied on three Riverine TfD workshops. The under this review are: Itegbesa, Irewe and Ojota. Our methodology shall be to selectively appraise TfD workshops and submissions by practitioners and scholars after itemizing some of the problems faced by the practice, present our own management model in relation to its application (success and failure) in the Riverine community identified. Part of the observations we made was that good application of management skills will positively impact on the people.

INTRODUCTION

The term Theatre for Development (TfD) reflects its definition. It simply means that theatre in the service of the community (Komolafe 2011). TfD communicates the aesthetics and world views of the community in the most efficient and effective manner. Such aesthetics from thus contain within them, the optimum potentials and possibilities for both entertainment and education. Odhiambo (2008:17) submitted that: *Theatre for development (TfD) is a process oriented and is best defined through its functions. It sets our to make people aware of the forces which determine their living condition and to make them achieve participation in the development process expanding the expression of their own view point,*

perception and achieves to improve their conditions. This community oriented process needs human and physical organization for or to positively impact on the people. If this is achieved then practitioners or TFD believe it has management inbuilt mechanizing.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Several scholars and practitioners of theatre have declared that the use of theatre for development needs no management to thrive. But our experiments through workshops have shown that it is not totally true. TFD needs effective management skills to communicate properly and achieve its goal. In other words, this paper is designed to investigate management skills issues in theatre for development in Nigeria. Theatre management is a discipline that has emerged but has not received rigorous, extensive and exhaustive study in the field of theatre in Nigeria. Theatre management seeks to examine the theatre and its management dynamics; it seeks to know the nexus between theatre and management. Although management has been part of the process of theatrical production ever since the origin of the theatre, even its study as an academic discipline is still on the finger in the country. Theatre scholars and researchers such as Langley (1974), Boal (1979), Nwamo (1980), Adedeji (1981), Clifford (1982), Obafemi (1999), Akinwale (2000), Sosu (2001), Dandurara (2002), Abah (2003), Okwori (2004), Plaistow (2005), Sharma (2006), Edet (2006), Odhiambo (2008) Komolafe (2011) just to mention a few, have extensively discussed the dynamics and organic linkage between management and theatre in order to attain the desired goals in performance. Nonetheless, the submissions of these researchers and theatre scholars reveal that much work has been done in the area of conventional theatre management and the organizational stages of theatre for development, while there is a little work done on managing theatre for development effectively. It is the light of this gap that this paper is proposing an effective management model for the

Theatre is an activity that completes the process of art through the -entertainment and education of an audience. What then is the purpose and nature of the arts of the theatre that should necessitate management? Theatre is a social process as well as a management process. This is so because theatre events are principally concerned with relations between people. So, the purpose and nature of management is not different from the purpose of art and nature of art, which is to comment on nature, life, man, the world, creation, human actions, to see into the world and to share that vision with the world in the form of entertainment (Clifford, 1982:8). Theatre contributes ideological, social, moral, and recreational needs. Since it reflects nature and human behaviour, theatre, at times has led the way into promoting new and revolutionary philosophies, economic theories, social reforms and ideological positions. Clifford (1982:9) submitted that:

Theatre has shown man, in its totality, exposing more moral evils in human attitudes and behaviour. It has chastised human conduct, moral degeneration, religious hypocrisy, and political injustice and has helped in isolating personal mental disorders and in teaching psychological theories. It has interpreted historical trends and attempted to clarify future trends and conditions. Theatre has functioned as catalyst, served as tools for analysis and

discourse especially for the under developed. Further, Clifford (1982: 9) stated that: It has served as a means for political agitation, raising the level of consciousness while generally empowering the people it was meant for. It has appeared as teacher, communicator, philosopher, developer, historian, social worker, literary critic, moralist and a genuine source of pedagogy.

The above declaration by Clifford summarizes the nature and function of the theatre generally and especially Theatre for Development. But TfD will only do the above if the practitioners of the practice effectively apply management skills to the practice.

Some theatre artistes and theatre enthusiasts (non-professionals) who have found themselves in the theatre practice by accident or as a last resort, often think that successful theatre practice is only in the area of artistic performance on stage, which encompasses play writing, directing, acting and so on. However, no matter how successful these could be, theatre management is what brings the essence to limelight. It means while theatre management seems obscure and thrown to the background by its practitioners and scholars, it stays there to ensure that the performances succeed. Such areas that dwell on the business and financial aspects of theatre-planning, organization, leading, motivation, up to audience development (Nwamuo, 1986:2) often get regarded as "non-artistic", so less importance is attached to it by the artist and theatre scholars. Yet, this " " is what theatre management entails. What Nwamuo is saying above is that scholars and practitioners of theatre have relegated theatre management to the background which should not be. When a theatre manager who is also known as animator in TfD practice manages theatre for development, he does so for the purpose of crafting the practice with the performance influencing the community people to think of developing through a performance. The thought could be that the audience is made to see the need to develop or the need to accomplish an on-going developmental process and or to consolidate a developed situation. The onus is on the manager to apply management skills into bringing the manpower in the theatre to the full realization of this set goal.

Often times when we talk about development, we associate development with structures, houses, schools, dams, tarred roads, office complexes and other physical attributes of development. This is just the external features of development, but when you are talking of human society, you cannot talk of a fully developed person unless you think also of the internal features of development. Osofisan (2001:189) submits that: Man is not just a stomach or just a brain, he is also a mind, a soul and society is composed of human beings. When we talk therefore of the external development you must also think of the internal development. Intact the internal development is the cultural development and this is the one that refers to things like moral development, spiritual development, intellectual development and psychological development.

TfD practitioners understand development to mean: The ability of the members of a community to relate creatively to themselves, their neighbors, their environment and the world at large, so that each one might express his maximum potential. Such

development, then, has a lot to do with the distribution of power and of resources.-who gets what, how and why? It is basically, a process of empowerment. (Pradervand, 1989: xvii). The notion is in tandem with Osofisan's submission because if the rural people are to benefit from development, a more appropriate communication system must evolve. In terms of effective communication paradigm, the rural people must be removed from the periphery of the communication process and placed in the centre. (Mda, 1993:1) insists that the exiting top-down communication system, which is authoritarian in nature, is non-conducive to and dysfunctional for development. He sees the need for decentralization and democratization of the existing order to give the rural population access to messages produced by other and the means to produce and distribute their own messages too.

Theatre for Development represents the desires of the people, it is a medium manifestation of the fusion of traditions as it taps on what is indigenous in the communities and then fine-tunes it with contemporary ideological concept, communal and bureaucratic forms of discourse and development practices to evoke of what is native and a sense of identity with the process as both indigenous and `modern'. This identification yields a higher level of patronage and participation. It is this involvement by the masses in communal concerns that eventually leads to the solution of such communal problems. Mlana (2008:8) posited that TfD focuses on the involvement of the people in every aspect of the development process. Development is also categorically defined as a continual process through which human beings themselves evolve in order to affect positive change in the social and physical environment. In view of this, theatre becomes a fertile ground on which development thrives. The models of practice as seen are focused on the popular theatre of the community, participation, rural appraisal, and Augusto Boal's "Forum Theatre". Theatre, especially Theatre for Development can be really effective as a medium for development communication, concretizing the rural people and awakening communal participation in developmental objects. Thus, through the theatre, an effective two-way communication process is attained on the basis of genuine involvement on the part of programme initiators and the community at large. In TfD, awareness is created, people are made conscious of their rights and problems, people are incited to take action but what is the role of TfD practitioners in dealing practically, with the actual problems of the community? Should the villagers be left worse-off than they were met? What then is the essence, significance and place of Theatre for Development? Ross Kidd (1984:264) provides an insight thus:

Popular theatre (TfD) is used as a means of bringing people together, building confidence and solidarity, stimulating discussion, exploring alternative options for action, and building a collective commitment to change; starting with people's urgent concerns and issues; it encourages reflections on those issues and possible strategies for change.

The experience in Lesotho and that of Nigeria gives support to Kidd's submission. Both Gantar and Obafemi are of the opinion that theatre should remain a powerful expressive tool even as practitioners engage in a rethink and reappraisal. Accordingly, Gantar and Edkins (1988:5) submit that: TfD is used as a method for non-formal adult education in

rural and marginalized areas... it fosters community participation and encourages artistic expression and analysis. The content of the artistic material places particular emphasis on the representation of local situations and problems. These are artistically coded in a manner as to make theatre a powerful expressive tool for education.

Obafemi (2008:54) recognizing all these submission, gives an advice thus: ...I would like to submit that all the theatres which we today categories as literary theatre but which address urgently, consciously and topically from a materialist perspective our social, historical and material conditions in Africa are popular-based. We may wish to examine their dramaturgy, their language, their aesthetic, and propose ways of making them more people-oriented and more reachable to the popular masses. We may examine ways of making this theatre provide the majority of marginalized people of Africa with the creative and theatrical means of expressing their hegemony.

The problems militating against the practice of Theatre for Development in Nigeria dwell within the TfD paradigms adopted. The practitioners and scholars have said TfD needs no management skills to take place. This position has severally presented TfD workshops as an ad-hoc thing. Abah in assessing Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance (NPTA) in relation to the numerous TfD workshops organized reflects on the need for effective management skills. According to him: ...there are so many workshops in which we have not lived up to expectation... for both national and international workshops. Quite a number of things are missing. NPTA has over the years come to the understanding that basic management skills should not be compromised for anything... (2005:13). Plaistow's examination of some Western Countries such as America, Canada and how they have adopted Theatre for Development strategies confirm the danger in the application of TfD methodology without proper application of management skills. The problem of possible miscarriage if the TfD process was not adequately and effectively managed is also raised by Plaistow (2005:23). Sometimes, groups may research for a play without taking local condition sufficiently into account, at best this means that the play may be irrelevant whilst at worst, it may encourage lines of thinking, or action which are counter productive.

Most human endeavour requires some level of funding to thrive. TfD is not an exception. A critical examination of previous TfD projects carried out in the country would show a very minimal involvement of the government by way of funding. Most of these projects are funded by foreign agencies. The government does not seem to believe in the efficacy or capacity or the use of TfD in solving developmental problems. Apart from the moribund MAMSER Community theatre project attempt, none other in that line has government initiated. Esseien, (2006:134) while explaining TfD in Nigeria is of the view that government is not getting its priorities right. He stated that: Government rather believes in contracts. The negative consequences associated with contracts are all familiar to us. So, the only solace seems to be in oversea funding agencies, who also have to cater for other countries in similar circumstances. This makes funding very difficult to secure.

Due to the wrong notion held by many people of the theatre and its practitioners, very few actually venture into it or allow their wards to do so. Even those who one way or the other finds themselves in it, soon veer into other fields at the end of their study. The consequence is that there are very few who are schooled in the arts of the theatre including TfD. Expressing the same opinion, Essien (2006) stated that: ... many personnel now in the field are those who for one reason or the other dabbled into it and are forced to learn on the job. So skilled man power remains a problem... Dandaura (2006:110) observed the activities of technocrats who claim to be interested in the plight of the suffering masses, and so take funds which belong to the tax - payers pretending to solve the peoples' problems. He revealed more on this when he said: Often technocrats resident in far away capital cities arrogate to themselves the responsibility of deciding what constitutes "development" in communities... lots of tax payers' money and donor funds are wasted on projects that meet the dictates of the development planners rather than those of the partnering communities. This is because most of the development initiatives lack genuine involvement of the people whose lives the project affects

Another obvious problem in the design and execution of most TfD projects in Nigeria today is the inability of the organizers to include in the monitoring and evaluation process an instrument to gauge the impact of TfD process on the facilitators themselves. Sharma (2006:5) is of the view that monitoring and evaluation should be made participatory so that it can draw extensive inputs from members of the host community, the facilitators, and any other stakeholder in the development initiative. He stated that: I am sure most of us working in the development sector know about "funders", "consultants", "clients" high anxiety and obsession with `deadliness' and `deliverables'! So much so that the `beneficiary' takes the backseat and the `process', gets buried in the backyard! So when some whistle - blower shouts, where has all the money gone, we run helter-skelter, come up with magic wand called EVALUATION. (Emphasis mine) So we embark on a time bound, limited to 50 A4 pages, Times New Roman font size 10, single line spacing `deliverable' called Evaluation report! In which we disrobe the project deliverables layer by layer in order to put our fingers on either that physical deformity, or muscular contour that we feel was solely responsible for winning or loosing the race! Better, if we can gets hold of some community members (numbers) reinforcing our viewpoint.

The operational language of Theatre for Development appears imported not indigenous. As such, intermediaries and translators or liaison persons are employed to help realize projects. The processing language in our case is English. How many of our people can actually read, write and understand the English language? Few! In translation into the local indigenous languages, it seems to loose its flavour and efficacy as it is opened to levels of distortions. What this breeds is expressed by Edet (2006:135) as relaying a different message from what was intended. The way out of this is to domesticate and use predominantly indigenous languages in projects. Gbilekaa, (1997:212) had supported this notion when he stated that the use of indigenous languages bridges communication gaps. Many of the TfD projects already executed within the country seem to crumble and people

return to status quo due to lack of follow up. This often emanates from the fact that the funds for the project have been exhausted or that the executors failed to adopt this as part of their plan for the project. Follow up is a necessary aspect of TfD projects and should not be neglected for whatever reason. An ideal TfD project should provide solutions with backup/follow up. Yerimah and Okwori (1990:40) writing on the Zaria experiments lamented this problem of lack of follow up thus: There is hardly follow-up work, which is crucial to the success of popular theatre because the students have to move on to another class; each year fresh students make fresh plays that lack organic and structural linkages with previous works. From a project experience Akinwale (2001:265) berates the position follow-up has been subjected to in TfD workshops: ...leaving follow-up exercise until after the whole project is grossly inadequate and will not work ... henceforth follow up should be incorporated into the body of the projects. Whatever is left after the follow up done within the project will be minimal.

The problem affecting the practice of Theatre for Development is not peculiar to Nigeria alone. Other countries in Africa especially and the Western world also live with these problems. For examples, Kweku (2008:1) doing an account of his Ghana TfD experience complained of lack of funds to execute an effectively managed Theatre for Development programme. He submits that: The lack of funding that the project suffered was partly due to the nature of the research and partly because the bureaucracy that this exercise demanded required me to be out of the communities on follow-up to procure the funds. I secured sponsorship from personal, family and friends and thus keep the faith with the communities. The journey required good medical and physical conditioning. Logistically I had to master the art of photography. The inadequate funds denied the project the opportunity of shooting a video documentary. The use of an interpreter, guide and cultural adviser was equally expensive.

Other problems facing the effective practice of Theatre for Development are; how to measure the impact (especially attitudinal changes) of the TfD project on development partners, the unfortunate and uncomfortable association of TfD with the academic calendar which creates a world of difference between concept and practice. Assessing the practice of TfD in some African countries, Mloma (2008:16), gives a good summary of the Botswana experience and problems plaguing the practice by submitting that the problems in Botswana just as in many other developing countries, rural people often become passive observers of change. Capital development projects rarely require their participation. Education programmes through the mass media and extension workers are normally conceived as services and information for them rather than as tools by which they can take action for development themselves. As a result, adult educators and extension workers were confronted with a form of inadequacy in dealing with the problems of the rural community. Their work and efforts made very little impact on community issues such as fanning, poor health, unemployment, community and family disintegration. Despite the emergence of the Laedza Batanam popular theatre programme which sought to provide lasting solutions to the above problems with extension workers,

the programme could not help but run into such problems as; the region of operation having scattered settlement pattern, high population mobility, and government neglect. This made and added to the difficulty experienced by extension workers because they found it really hard to work in the region as people were reluctant to attend community meetings and to participate in communal work. There was a heavy reliance on government to provide self improvements and new services to the areas.

It is the position of this paper that for theatre (especially VD) to serve the country as an industry, it must attempt to solve and indeed solve these problems inherent in the practice. This is bearing the fact that theatre as an industry requires managers that are adequately skilled and knowledgeable so that they are equipped with the capacity to build the theatre industry. This paper is therefore proposing a management model, such as: management skills during preparation, managing the resource persons, managing the community, management skills and data gathering, management skills and data analysis. Management skills and scenario building, management skills and play preparation, management skills during rehearsals, management skills during performance, management skills during discussion and evaluation and management skills during follow-up exercise. This paper shall also anchor the model of management on three riverine communities - Itogbesa, Irewe and Ojota that we have tested the application and applicability of the model and discuss the effects of management skills application on a Theatre for Development practice. Our submission can now serve as a spring board for others to build on and case study practitioners can adopt and adapt.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS MODEL AND THE RIVERINE COMMUNITIES

Theatre for Development thrives on good management, which means the application of all the skills of management to the theatre event. For instance, planning of TfD level starts very early. This comes out of love to work with communities, selling ideas to them that will enhance their lives, it begins from the concept of better life for the community. It is about improving the quality of human life, which manifests right from community identification, working successfully with these communities with its chain reaction leading to other successes in other communities. Manifesting a careful thrust within the communities, carefully applying management principles, such as not meeting the communities with the ego of an elite who carries a tape - recorder about, endeavour to stay with the community for proper integrations. It also involves enmeshing one-self with the community members, eating and sharing with the community, getting totally committed to the community by accepting the community members even if it takes a longer time for the community to accept you. The success of this will no doubt provoke the community to say for example; "Are we going to see you again"? The answer to this should naturally be "Do you think from the workshop, there are things you as a community want to do?" If the community says Yes then you give them the go ahead and add that if need be we shall come to see you again in the community. The remaining part of the paper will examine how the management skills were applied in the three riverine communities.

MANAGEMENT SKILLS AND PRELIMINARY VISITS (RAKING)

The idea of a TfD workshop with effective application of management skills was discussed with Mr Tunji Azeez of the Department of Theatre Arts and Music, Lagos State University, Ojo. Tunji teaches a semester course titled Theatre for Development (THA 309) in the Department with this writer. Tunji is vast and experienced in both theory and praxis of TfD and has attended several workshops on TfD even under the organization of Chuck Mike of the Performance Studio Workshop in Lagos. At this point, several questions such as which communities do we use? What do we give to the communities? The answers to these questions solidified the conceptual, stage and arrangements.

The project at hand has three issues under it. The first issue was the choice of the communities. Before deciding, this writer informed him that each workshop will span just seven days and people to be invited must be TfD complaint. The communities should be small because of the duration of the workshops and easy accessibility of these areas. After several considerations and where to get out contact man, we settled for the creek communities of `Itogbesa', `Irewe' and `Ojota' in Ojo Local Government Area. One Yomi Arubiewe of the Sociology Department in Lagos State University was contacted and briefed. Luckily for us, he hails from Itogbesa and knows the other two communities very well. He assured us that we have made the right choice if we are sincere with our objectives. He agreed to lead us to these communities and a date was fixed for the trip. On staffing, we agreed to use our graduate students because they have TfD experience and those green-horns in TfD practice who will come in as participants. Since our aim was to test the model on management, the workshop theme will be determined when we get the each community.

Other issues such as accommodation, welfare, security, health, movement, transport were also considered and arrangements made to be pursued. Responsibilities were shared between us, while most of the job was done by this writer because he doubles as the fonder, Tunji Azeez doubled as the team leader so handled the rest. We also agreed to hold an in-house training of two days with all the facilitators and resource persons. A date was fixed and the venue was Bellisimo hotel at Lekki, Lagos. Raking team was empowered to facilitate the three communities and get approval for the workshops; they were also to determine dates for each community. The team comprised of this writer, Tunji Azeez, Shola Robert with our liaison person, we set out for our first workshop community Itogbesa. As part of the plan, because we were going to reach these communities and also double as our contact person, our boatman had gone ahead of us to inform the elders of these communities of our coming. So, our first visit covered the three communities because they were not far apart from each other. At Itogbesa, we met some of the elders such as Teslim Apama, Segun Arubiewe and Olatunji Apama. They welcomed us and also embraced on idea of a workshop in their village after we had explained our mission to them. To boost their morale and as tradition demanded, we presented them a bottle of Schnapps and Kolanuts as gifts. They accepted this, prayed for a successful outing and promised they were going to inform others about our programme.

The workshop date was fixed for June 8-14 2007. With this, sensitization had started. Before departing the community for Irewe our second workshop base, our liaison person promised to lodge the workshop team in his family house in the community.

At Irewe, we went straight to the house of an elder called Pa Samson Sosan. We asked if he was related to the deputy governor of Lagos State (Mrs Serah Sosan) and he said yes. He welcomed us into his living room that was large to accommodate all of us, he told us a lot about the town and the problems they had lived with for a long time. Some of the problems are electricity, youth-urban migration, - education, healthcare, water, building of the community hall among others. He took us to meet other elders in the community where we repeated the gift we gave out at Itogbesa. After much question and answer because the elders wanted to know if we had been sponsored we told them we were not sponsored by anybody that we are teachers and students of Lagos State University and since we are interested in rural/community development, we felt we should visit them and seek permission to come and discuss their problems with them and let them see the channels of resolving these problems. They afterwards gave us their consent and approval but informed us that their Oba was getting ready for his coronation after several years but gave us a date to come back to see him and get his consent. A tentative date for the workshop was fixed for 16th of June to 22nd of June 2007. But we were to come back for the Kabiyesi' approval on the 14th of June (the day of rounding up the workshop at Itogbesa). At exactly loam on that day, our boatman took us from Itogbesa to Irewe where the Kabiyesi was already waiting for us with his council of elders and chiefs. We did not waste time as he had already been briefed. He gave his consent and informed us of our accommodation. He also confirmed the date pointing out that it fell on his coronation week activities. This will afford us the opportunity to meet illustrious sons and daughters of Irewe. At Ojota, the baale was there to receive us and his council of elders. We used the baale's living room as our discussion room, he briefly introduced his chiefs and we did the same, adding that he would know us better when we arrive for the workshop proper. We told him our mission and the spokesman thanked us that our liaison person had visited them before our arrival to explain into details what we were coming to do. They expressed their consent and approval and assured us we were not going to regret our visit. We presented the traditional gift items as we did for the other two communities and left after the date was fixed for 24th of June 30th of June 2007.

MANAGING THE FACILITATORS AND RESOURCE PERSONS

At the Bellissimo hotel, the resource persons and some facilitators met with the writer to discuss strategies, expectations and concerns during the workshops. This session was held to effectively manage the facilitators and rehearse their experience on the job at hand. Here, the vision and mission of the project was discussed. The training session considered the application and applicability of management techniques as contained in the experimental model. Also, the need to always groundtruth - validating and reconfirming every technique used was stressed. This will allow us to successfully gauge and modify the model if need be. Besides the management model, some parameters were identified, considered as necessary

for the success of the workshops. These include: control, adaptability, faithfulness, selflessness, and others. The session also gave debriefs on the task at hand and the challenges the team was likely to have. We were also to identify improvisation as a fundamental way forward out of such tight corners. It was also at this stage that the facilitators distributed scope of activities that would pervade the whole workshop. Also, the team was broken down into sub-teams which were intended to function independently yet interdependently towards the same goal, giving out responsibilities is to ensure near total control (an invaluable skill in management) and ensure that the facilitators were accountable to their different areas. The training of trainers (as it was coined) ended with questions from facilitators on issues needing clarification and these questions were treated by this writer.

Managing the Communities

Itogbesa village is located some thirty minutes of a speed boat drive from Ojo, the political head-quarters of Ojo Local Government. It is a quiet settlement tucked away from the traffic madness, hustle and bustle of Ojo, the town which houses the popular Alaba International Market. With one alighting from the speed boat, the only link between Itogbesa and Ojo, one is welcomed by a very cool breeze from the river. The settlement is one long-strech of about thirty houses. In the community, the topography looks like a street until one begins to walk the length and breadth of the community. The striking thing about Itogbesa is the people. In all, the area has a wide expanse of land dominated by coconut trees. Another interesting feature is that this community is one of the thirty-two communities under the ruler ship of the Irewe Osolu Local Government of Lagos State Nigeria.

However, one major cause of division among these people are (1), the community is divided geographical between themselves as two communities in one and (2), the Baale of the settlement must come from one part of the section of the community. The area is thus divided as to which section should produce the next Baale after the death of the last one who died some ten (10) years ago! Irewe is the second riverine settlement in Ojo Local Government area where this writer held a workshop to test the workability of management model proposed. The settlement is an Island that inhabits about 6,000 people, a fairly large community of over a hundred houses. The community has over thirty-two villages and communities under it. The community can boast of many highly placed people in government. Presently, the Lagos State Deputy Governor is from this community under review in person of Mrs Serah Durosimi Sosan. Politically, the town for a long time never had an Oba due to lack of unity among the ruling houses. The quiet environment gives an impression of a desolate settlement but getting to the town uncovers the landscape and seascape of the town.

Also, Ojota Elete is a structural combination of about fourteen houses with two of the houses dedicated as a church and a mosque. Ojota is the third workshop community carried out by this writer. The houses are linearly arranged to form two rows facing the creek waters while the second backs the creek waters. The settlement is located along the creek axis of Ojo Local Government area of Lagos State. Between the row of houses is a

straight path that allow for' community navigation on foot to the extreme left and right of the community. The population is between 200 people to 350 including children. From Itogbesa to Ojota during the workshops, the journey was smooth but some of the participants who were traveling by water (inspite of the provision of lifejackets) for the first time were apprehensive including a solder! Before we ever moved to the communities' logistic plans such as: feeding, accommodation and other welfare related issues such as first aid box, health and safety kits among others were prepared for. Regarding feeding, Tunji Azeez (The team leader for the workshops) informed us that he came with a pot of soup so as to reduce the risk of cooking with unhygienic water. Using past experiences as a backdrop, the team decided to always travel with bags of pure-water for cooking purposes while this writer had already prepared two Ghana Must Go' bags filled with bottled water for each workshop. From a management point of view, this showed how prepared the team was. To ensure that nothing was taken from granted, a checklist was designed to see to the adequate preparation for all the items that would be needed for the project. The checklist and other preparations were parameters used to allow us monitor the state of adequacy of each item needed for the project so that there wouldn't be a stop work order due to inadequate provisions at a crucial moment.

No community is devoid of its own tide, rhythm and cohesion. At the point of arrival at the three workshop communities, something happened and in common. Almost all the personalities had gone into the town at Ojo, Iyana-Iba and Agbara; some even went to Lagos. Characteristically of previous workshops, we thought the opening ceremony was going to be in the morning or latest at noon so that we can commence the workshop programme properly. This tradition did not work with the creek communities. So, recalling that flexibility, adaptability, faithfulness, and truthfulness were part of our identified elements that will guide the workshop, we decided to shift the opening ceremonies to the time the communities would be ready for us. After proper in-house consultation, we were able to hold the opening ceremonies in the evenings. By 6pm day of our arrival at Itogbega, all the elders (both men and women) had gathered in front of Aare's house to receive us formally. He put his small generator to our use because the ceremony took us into late night. At Irewe, by Spm all had gathered in front of the Kabiyesi's house for the opening ceremony. This also took us into the night. For Ojota, the Baale's sitting room was used which has an extending view into his frontage. The ceremony also started from 6pm and took us into the night. The community generating plant was used. The opening ceremony sessions served as a good rallying point where we were formally introduced to all by the team leader while our liaison person also introduced the elders. In an informed style, we sourced all the information that we needed

Management Skills and Data Gathering

Given the number of facilitators and other materials and resources, *such as time and even the* aftermath effect of the activity on the people's livelihoods, at Itogbesa, we resolved to use a qualitative information gathering mechanism. To ease data collection and put some management elements on course, we re-divided the team into three groups viz: Group A

(Bankole, Florence and Shola) Group B (Sowole, Jennifer and Lawal) Group C (Azeez and Komolafe). We gave each group specific job description to do and shared the three cameras one to each, group for proper documentation. Another research method used at Itogbesa was action research method. Here, facilitators would ask questions and at the same time give information that were vital to the community members in the area of social development, self help, education and self-empowerment. This enabled the community members become more informed than they were even before the performance. Aside this, it should be noted that `communication' both vertically and horizontally became a vital technique here.

At Irewe, the research gave a powerful foreground for the performance in the community. Basically, three research mechanisms were employed. The team used analytical, interview and observer - participant methods. Again, the team here was divided into two small units. They were given specific issues to look at such as:

- i. Population and rural-urban migration
- ii. Did the people participate in the last election?
- iii. Feelings about their daughter being deputy governor of Lagos State.
- iv. Other questions relating to basic amenities

At Ojota, our major concern was how to manage the little time at our disposal and be ready to perform our play in four days. This is because on arrival we had been told the community will not be open for us for seven days except we opted for another date or make do with four days. After an emergency meeting (plenary) we decided it was better to accept the four days offer and that, that was part of management and we should be able to apply the principle of control. After our dinner, we held a long plenary session to re-arrange, merge and modify our^s programme which we presented to the Baale and his council of chiefs that same night. They accepted it with *joy* and promised they will put on the community generator to our service as long as possible to allow us work into late night. This we thanked them and returned to our base to continue our work. That same night, team was broken into a sub unit of four to look at issues like: history of the community, culture, education, livelihood, politics, economic, social and other aspect they consider necessary. Group one consisted of Tumi Azeez and Jennifer, Group two, Dayo and Shola, Group Three, Allibay and Kikelomo while this writer was in group four with Joshua. The instruction to the units was clear. Finished with information gathering management implication meant that we were group to use rigorously elements like; implementation, coordinator, leadership, flexibility, adaptability, communication and control.

Management Skills in Data Analysis and Scenario Building

The plenary session held at Itogbesa to hear the findings of the units started very early in the morning. From the reports, questions on issues and fine-tuning the community problems includes; lack of good water, electricity, primary school too far from the community, teachers not interested in teaching in this school because of its situation of dilapidation, lack of access road to the school, no medical facilities among others. The need to ground-truth and validate these problems arose and that was done by this writer

and team leader with chief Aaro who confirmed all the problems we discovered. Behind Aaro's house, we saw some abandoned pipes, pumping machine and uncompleted taps to supply the community with potable water. When asked the cost implication for the completion of forty thousand naira (N40,000) only. Based on this, our analysis concluded that the problem of the community was because there was no Baale to champion the course and problems of the community, consequently, there was no unity, leading to lack of community cohesiveness and development. It was discovered during one of our plenaries that under the seeming calm and friendliness of the two sections of the village was lurked serious acrimony over disagreement as to which side should present the next Baale. With the revelation therefore, in our analysis, we concluded that without resolving the problem of leadership that had divided the village, the team would not achieve anything in the areas identified for resolution.

During the plenary at Irewe on data analysis and scenario building, several issues were raised ranging from the bad structural condition of the schools, of the town-hall project. Looking at the issues carefully and compared to other communities outside the workshop series, the team came to a conclusion that though government seemed interested in Irewe because of its strategic locations, the major problem in Irewe because of its strategic location, the major problem was lack of community unity and cohesion. Playlets were devised based on lack of unity to kickstart and scenario building and rehearsals. At Ojota Ilete, issues identified ranged from community borehole to lack of hospitals, nurses and school facilities. Our deductions revealed that the community people at Ojota see themselves as visitors. They hold this view because they conditioned one of their political leaders to get them the power generating set and he did. But they forgot all other needs they have and how best they could reach them. Rather they, believed they can get whatever they wanted, without looking inwards. Again, the people forgot that it is much more difficult to manage success which has been a part of their story. They also became short sighted on the fact that it was imperative. For them to take up a self help mechanism to enhance their situation. As a result of these facts, our play was building around all these issues.

Management Skills during Rehearsals

The rehearsals were deeply entrenched into management skills. As expected, the team came together at Itogbesa with a single scenario after trying out several stories. The most used element of management at this point was time management as all the facilitators did all they could to ensure they were not too stressed or tired before performance. At Irewe, the community youth took over our rehearsals as they collectively showed interest and participated in our work. They acted out their own woes and gave the story local embellishments through the provision of all the condiments that was needed. Ojota youths were not as involved as the Irewe youths. However, the play rehearsed by our team was tagged "Education to the rescue". The rehearsal here was intensive and faster than the community expected, by the third day of our arrival, the play was ready for performance.

Management Skills during Performance

The performance did not begin in time due to the fact that as the preparations were on, there suddenly appeared in the community an "Igunu" masquerade. The masquerade had come to celebrate the installation of a king around our workshop base, so felt it should visit the community as well. The surprising thing was that as the masquerade was leaving, a large crowd from the venue of our performance followed suit. Seeing this, we immediately went into a session of songs and gyrations singing the villagers songs creating an unresisted festive mood that made who went with the masquerade and more to run to us. The play was titled "ASOJU". It was well attended. Two issues came out: (1) the issue of water and buying pipes for the borehole project. A total of N57,500 was collected on the spot to complete the abandoned project (2) The issue of unity. A window was created during the performance where members of the community were asked to comment on the issue. They all agreed that if they had a Baale to present their problems at the local government secretariat, things would not be as they were. Therefore, the community should come together to install a Baale and take advantage of this new dispensation in the state and the country at large.

At Irewe, the performance fell in line with part of the programme lined up for the coronation exercise of the Kabiyesi, it also falls on the resting day of the community. The play was titled "ESERE" (BE GOOD). At Ojota, the play was titled "Education to the Rescue". At the start, not everybody wanted to watch the performance as they were getting set to depart for their engagement at the other side of the creek but when the play gathered pace, mood and momentum, they were forced to leave whatever they were doing to watch our presentation. The team cashed in on this to go extra mile in holding and sustaining the interest and attention of all to the end of the play. This was achieved by making the improvisations comic. The response to the play was electrifying with everybody rolling with laughter but again remaining pensive when serious issues are raised and thrown back to the community to answer or resolve. The people saw their lives in the skits so they could not help but join hands with us to discuss those issues that concerned them.

Management Skills during Discussions and Evaluation

The performance of Itogbesa had a very strong impact on the audience to such an extent that during the election scene in the play, some members of the community (audience) broke into the scene to protest that they were not going to be part of any election. Though this was unexpected by the actors/actresses, the team-leader (Tunji Azeez) came in as a player to resolve the crises by tactically asking the audience if it was not better to allow the election go on so that we can see whether the next crop of leaders will perform or not. Majority of the audience especially men and women supported him while the youths were pacified with several pleas before the play could continue. All these took about five minutes. During the scene of the women who had gone to fetch water and fell down, the team-leader again cashed in on the situation to ask the audience if they preferred to lose their wives, children to this kind of casualty.

They chorused NO! Immediately, a donation to complete the borehole project was launched. The money needed was forty - thousand naira. The team gave N10,000, others gave what they could and a total of N57,500 (Fifty seven thousand, five hundred naira) was collected cash on the spot. To sustain this momentum, a meeting was held after the performance with all stakeholders and the money handed over to the Community Development Association (CDA) in the glare of all and sundry present.

For Irewe, the response to the workshop, the participation and enthusiasm exhibited during the discussions/evaluation in the course of the performance had been raised. The project was not only a performance for them, it also opened their eyes to some realities around them needing their urgent attention. For Ojota, our presentation though entertained them but shocked them as well as at the reality of education. If their children were well educated, they would have been able to participate in governance and other aspects of endeavour thereby giving development to the community for all to enjoy. It was clear and obvious they never believed educating themselves to a higher level was a problem or would pose a problem at any point of their lives

Management Skills during Follow-up Exercise

The follow-up exercise was carried out in two forms. The first form was during the period of the workshops. While the team was at Irewe, we visited Itogbesa to see how they fared after our workshop and discovered that all was well. Before the Irewe workshop days ran out, we again visited Itogbesa to witness the commencement of job on this borehole pipes as agreed. The second form our follow-up exercise took us two weeks after the Itogbesa workshop, we went to deliver the photographs of the workshop and a managise we created for their keeps, we were told that the community had one back to its initial acrimony over the Baaleship tussle. The reason this time was that one of the sections believed that contrary to that one of the sections believed that contrary to our claim of being humanitarians, who wanted to jointly discuss community members and manage effectively the theatrical processes, we were indeed sponsored by Aare, our host, to preach to them to drop their ambition of producing the next Baale! When we asked to be allowed to speak with them, the elders advised that we steer clear of their politics and allow them resolve it their way. Though our earlier elation was dampened but at least the youth made sure the borehole project was concluded and we had set in motion the process of solving the problem once and for all. They can now confront it head long.

Irewe and Ojota also followed the same management pattern. Even during the workshops, on ground-truthing, validating and a re-assessing of facts and the situation on ground was a follow-up exercise. For Irewe, the king enthronement solved almost all their problems as discussed during the workshop while at Itogbesa, some weeks later, we met with the Baale because we had sent words and was expecting us. After receiving us and thanked us for a good job we did some weeks ago, he informed us that the community met at various level to see how they can battle the lives of their children by sending them to school and also monitor their progress in school. The pastor in the community advised

us to speak with the parents again because the solution to these problems lies with them. This we did and explained that since there was someone who will champion this course, all we needed from them was cooperation so that the scheme on education will succeed. The pastor and the resident Aafa volunteered to supervise the project on education free of charge. The parents were divided in their views on this but the team concluded that for the community to be at peace (the way we saw it) with the realities move forward, there must be relentless persuasion and mind set changes through consistent capacity building. The team immediately constituted a committee to actualize this with the home front got two teachers and space. This writer and Tunji Azeez made two different visits to the people to see the level of progress made. Though we met the teachers but the enrollment of pupils was still very low. We assured the teachers that steadfastness, believe in the project and commitment will help achieve what they had set down to do. We did not leave the community without again meeting the parents to appeal to them not to lose the golden opportunity at their door step. As at the time of writing this paper (July 2009), the community school had commenced and the pupils have increased at an encouraging rate.

CONCLUSION

For the practice of Theatre for Development to be removed from being an ad-hoc event, it needs effective management skills application because it will also allow the practitioners to be more patient with the villagers, understand them, it allows practitioners manage community crises successfully, it requires a lot of ingenuity from the practitioners which they must exhibit without stress. The uncomfortable association of TfD with the academic calendar enhances a world of difference between concept and praxis. This can be solved (I think) if communities side by side an effective follow-up group's practice is worthwhile and result oriented. This will make the practice worthwhile and result oriented. Another way, looking at it from students' involvement is that teaching can end quickly so that the student researchers can proceed into these communities using a homestead method to carryout the TfD practice. The time frame and duration of TfD project need a re-consideration. A suggested maximum of between two to four to six months might not be too bad to spend in these communities to get a good result. To achieve this might be predicated on funds - this is where selflessness comes in.

The issue of feedback is very important in any TfD project. It is by this that the masses are constantly updated on developments. The absence of this mechanism disassociates the project from its effect. In view of this, it is suggested that this feedback mechanism to be easily appreciated and understood, it must be packaged in a language (theatre) the masses have already shown deep understanding of.

Effective management skills if well planned and applied in TfD will give a good result. Management will account for the success of the project. It will have a bearing on how we achieve the objectives of the workshops. Management is important for the smooth operation of the project. Application of effective management skills will also allow for evaluation in two stages. The first is evaluation during performance: it will allow for

assessment of the performance as it was planned and organized so that immediate changes can be effected. During plenaries and post-performance discussions each day, changes suggested are included in the follow-up programmes. The second is the post-performance evaluation: this assesses the extent to which the objectives are being met. For example, if the existence of a people is on lack of unity and community cohesion, does the workshop bring it to the notice of the villagers, opinion leaders, people that matter in that community or event at the local government and state levels? Did the workshop make them see the inherent danger in what they are doing? Did the villagers change attitude and drop this enmity? What alternative was provided to the acrimony? If well managed, the success of the exercise can be assessed in terms of both the interest the audience have in changing their lives as well as the action that they embarked upon after the workshop.

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