

ETHIOPE JOURNAL OF ENGLISH, LITERARY AND  
CULTURAL STUDIES: JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT  
OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES

Volume 1, No. 1, December 2023  
ISSN: 0795-5413

Published by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta  
State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria

© Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria, 2023

All rights reserved except as permitted under the Nigerian Copyright Act of 1999, no part of this publication should be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission the publisher.

**ISSN: 0795-5413**

Designed and printed by DEBBICHUKS Printing and Computer Services, Kwale, Delta State, Nigeria. Tel: +2348039580583

## EDITORIAL NOTE

The *Ethiopia Journal of English, Literary, and Cultural Studies* (ISSN: 0795-5413) is an interdisciplinary journal that explores topical and generative issues in English linguistics and in literary and cultural studies. We recognise that African humanities research is both problem-based and knowledge oriented, and our aim is to provide a platform for scholars to analyse and theorise Africa in a way that is generative, conversational and decolonial. Specifically, the journal focuses on both the analytical and theoretical approaches to knowledge production in the context of Africa and the Global South. We want to curate papers that are hinged on African indigenous paradigms and approaches or that seek to extend, reimagine, or contextualise current theoretical or analytical approaches in English language studies and in literary and cultural studies.

We invite papers that dwell on all aspects of English language studies, including phonetics/phonology, semantics, syntax, discourse analysis, pragmatics, stylistics, ESL, ESP etc. We also welcome papers that theorise literary and cultural texts, including film, still and moving images, music and dance, photographs, cultural objects, spaces and places, society and social formations, and other relevant corpora. While we accept purely analytical essays, we encourage authors to focus on theorising the texts or data they engage with. In particular, we welcome theoretical conversations that implicate postcolonial subjecthood, ecocritical approaches (especially postcolonial ecocriticism), feminism and gender studies, new trends in linguistics, object-oriented criticism and approaches, and other generative approaches to knowledge production. Authors are encouraged to do original theorisation rather than adopt extant theoretical frameworks. They may also extend the scope of extant theories and approaches based on the material they present and discuss.

Furthermore, papers with interdisciplinary approaches are also welcomed. We recognise that knowledge production is an elastic phenomenon, and that bright ideas might implicate various fields. Interesting multi-modal, eclectic, or collaborative research is encouraged in this journal.

## JOURNAL POLICY

The *Ethiopia Journal of English, Literary and Cultural Studies* is published biennially by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria. All papers submitted to this maiden edition of the journal had undergone double-blind peer review and published papers are well researched, original and data-driven.

Contributors are to submit an e-copy of their manuscript for assessment and publication to [ethiopejournal@delsu.edu.ng](mailto:ethiopejournal@delsu.edu.ng) or [ethiopejournal@gmail.com](mailto:ethiopejournal@gmail.com). Such manuscripts should be original and not under consideration for publication elsewhere and should not have been published in any other journal.

Submitted manuscript which should not exceed 7000 words should be typeset in MS Word Times New Roman Font 12, with double line spacing. The first page should include the title of the manuscript, name(s), and institutional affiliation/address, abstract (not more than 250 words and with not more than six keywords). Manuscripts should conform to the current APA or MLA style sheet. Author(s) of published papers will derive the benefits from peer-review of contributions by seasoned scholars, global visibility and receipt of hard copies as well as soft copies of their papers.

The twelve papers in this maiden edition of the journal cut across disciplines in cultural, media studies and sub-disciplines in English and literary studies. The contributors include seasoned and renowned scholars of international repute and young astute scholars with burning desire to excel in academics. The first article titled: “Folklore and African Poetry in the Age of Globalization” by Prof Ojaide is on cultural studies. Prof. Ojaide is a renowned poet and professor of international repute from the University of North Carolina, USA. It is pertinent to note that the contributors are from universities across the globe. We believe that the twelve articles will be of immense interest to researchers and students.

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

### **Editors-In-Chief**

**Prof. Macaulay Mowarin**

Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

**Prof. Sunny Awhefeada**

Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

### **Editorial Board Advisers**

**Prof. G. G. Darah**

Denis Osadebey University, Asaba, Nigeria

**Prof. Tanure Ojaide**

African Studies Department, University of North Carolina  
at Charlotte, USA

**Prof. Nduka Otiono,**

Institute of African Studies, Carleton University, Canada

**Prof. Francis Egbokhare**

University of Ibadan, Nigeria

**Prof. Moses O. Ayeomoni**

Obafemi Awolówo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

**Prof. Enajite E. Ojaruega**

Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

**Prof. Akinmade T. Akande**

Obafemi Awolówo University Ile-Ife, Nigeria

### **Editorial Secretary**

**Dr. Emmanuel O. Emama**

Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

**Tel: +234 815 954 3393**

### **Managing Editor**

**Dr. Richard Oliseyenum Maledo**

Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

**Tel: +234 803 645 1234**

## LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Tanure Ojaide, Ph.D.**, Africana Studies Department University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA
2. **Charles Terseer Akwen, Ph.D.**, Department of English, University of Lagos, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos, Nigeria
3. **Olivia Elakeche Idoko, Ph.D.**, Department of English and Literary Studies, Theatre and Film Studies unit, Taraba State University, Jalingo
4. **Omorovie Ikeke, Ph.D.**, Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy, Delta State University, Abraka
5. **Toma Brume**, International Association for the Study of Intercultural Values and Indigenous Ecoethics, Effurun, Warri, Delta State
6. **Victor Onibere**, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria
7. **Olubunmi I. Bukola**, Department of English, Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State
8. **Macaulay Mowarin Ph.D.** Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria
9. **Emmanuel Avwarosuoghon Mede Ph.D.**, Department of English, Delta State College of Education, Mosogar, Delta State, Nigeria
10. **Uzezi Joyce Edhere**, Department of Journalism and Media Studies, Delta State University of Science and Technology, Ozoro
11. **Martha Omotetobore Egbedi Ph.D.**, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka
12. **Prince Oghenetega Ohwaworhwa**, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka
13. **Richard Oliseyenum Maledo Ph.D.**, English and Literary Studies Department, Delta State University, Abraka
14. **Ogheneovo Priscilla Akalusi**, Postgraduate Student, Department of English and Literary Studies, Delta State University, Abraka.
15. **Uche Enu**, Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, Benin City
16. **Francis Olabisi Jegede Ph.D.** Department of English, College of Languages and Communication Arts Education, Lagos State University of Education, (LASUED), Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos, Nigeria
17. **Olusegun Jegede Ph.D.** English Department, School of Languages, Federal College of Education, Osiele, Abeokuta, Nigeria

## CONTENTS

Folklore and African Poetry in the Age of Globalization - <b>Tanure Ojaide</b>	<b>1</b>
By Choice or by Force: Yang Mu's Poetry of Home - <b>Charles Terseer Akwen</b>	<b>21</b>
The Challenges of Impact Evaluation in the Theatre for Development Methodology- <b>Olivia Elakeche Idoko</b>	<b>42</b>
Peace as an Eco-Humanistic Value in Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i> - <b>Omorovie Ikeke &amp; Toma Brume</b>	<b>60</b>
Reimagining African Identity and Space: Decolonizing Visual Representations- <b>Victor Onibere</b>	<b>85</b>
Depictions of the Power of Women and Betrayal in Kunle Afolayan's <i>Anikulapo</i> - <b>Olubunmi I. Bukola</b>	<b>103</b>
A Minimalist Investigation of Ambiguity in English and Urhobo Negative Sentences- <b>Macaulay Mowarin &amp; Emmanuel Avwarosuoghon Mede</b>	<b>116</b>
An Error Analysis of <i>Young Moms</i> Discourse on Facebook- <b>Uzezi Joyce Edhere &amp; Richard Oliseyenum Maledo</b>	<b>131</b>
Revolutionary Fervour in Selected Niger Delta Drama - <b>Ogheneovo Priscilla Akalusi</b>	<b>150</b>
Ideological Leaning and Social Meaning in The Selected Poems of Tanure Ojaide: A Critical Stylistic Analysis- <b>Uche Enu</b>	<b>177</b>

Conflict Resolution and Social Re-engineering in Femi Osofisan's <i>Morountodun</i> - <b>Francis Olabisi Jegede &amp; Olusegun Jegede</b>	<b>202</b>
Father-Absenteeism and Displacement in Kaine Agary's <i>Yellow-Yellow</i> and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's <i>Zikora</i> - <b>Egbedi, Martha Omotetobore &amp; Ohwavworhua, Prince Oghenetega</b>	<b>218</b>



## THE CHALLENGES OF IMPACT EVALUATION IN THE THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

Olivia Elakeche Idoko

Department of English and Literary Studies, Theatre and Film Studies  
Unit, Taraba State University, Jalingo  
Email: idokoolivia@gmail.com

### Abstract

Theatre for Development (TFD) is increasingly canvassed and patronized as a methodology for development communication. Through its interactive and collective performance strategies, TFD is potent for conscientization, education, propagation of culture, communication of ethical and moral values, and mobilization for community development initiatives. Beyond initiating the development process, it is pertinent to consider the modalities for realizing the set TFD goals. In this regard, this paper investigates impact evaluation as a roadmap for implementing TFD objectives. The paper projects that the lack of or inadequacy of documentation, baseline records, indicators, and funding are frontline challenges of impact evaluation of TFD processes. This is so, because of the ephemeral nature of the performance stage and the brevity of the entire TFD exercise. Consequently, monitoring the degree of impact of TFD projects is a persisting problem, and the sustainability of the TFD methodology is, threatened. The paper concludes that despite the challenges outlined, TFD has proven to be an effective participatory development tool over the years. The paper recommends that TFD experts and practitioners should emphasize and adopt responsive documentation and as deliberately as possible, collaborate with Community-Based Organizations, government at all tiers, and public and private partners, to institutionalize an effective monitoring and evaluation plan if TFD must retain its validity.

**Keywords:** Impact, Evaluation, Monitoring, Theatre, Development

### Introduction

The concept of Theatre For Development is grounded in

empowerment, conscientization, mobilization, and participation for the purpose of effecting conceivable change in those who use it. TFD uses indigenous resources and allows programme recipients to use its platform to speak to their situation and the need to create positive outcomes. Indigenous resources in this context are the non-material aspects of the life of the people that generate rallying points for collective and communal living or encounters. These include songs, dances, proverbs, poetry, music, masquerades, drumming, storytelling and all other immediate media that people use to speak to their daily realities. The TFD methodology is designed in a way to disseminate information helpful in raising consciousness and influencing rural communities to change their perceptions of themselves and their world.

Onogu and Menegbe enthuse that, “the TFD approach provides a forum for discussion where community members through their language and idioms are given a voice to create new channels of finding meaningful and sustainable answers to their problems” This, according to Illah, stems from the fact that “TFD by its very nature has the potential to transmit along attitudes and values which are harmless on the surface but maybe structurally defective”. Ngugi wa Thiong'o attests to this view when he states that, “all arts aim to evoke: to awaken in the observer, listener or reader emotions and impulse, to action or opposition”. This implies the subtle essence of the theatre at persuasion. It is also within this matrix that Fuglesang lends his voice, stating that new information should be presented in forms familiar and appropriate to people's way of expression. He feels that proverbs, riddles, tales or whatever form is customary to be adopted and adapted as means of communicating development messages to the people.

Experience has shown that new ideas and behaviour that will bring about sustainable development cannot be imported unmodified to the community's or group's socio-political framework. Moreover, development involves changes in awareness, motivations and behaviours of individuals as well as relations between groups within a community. This is a pointer to the common parlance that 'information is power' and the poor as captioned by Burkey, “if not

oppressed by the more powerful, are oppressed by their own limited knowledge". This indicates that lack of knowledge and information prevents the poor from competing successfully for their fair share of resources and keeps them from utilizing the few resources that are within their reach. The result is that the socio-economic gap continues to broaden at the expense of the poor.

It is certain that inner development provides the basis for outer development. The TFD strategy approaches development from the inside – out and in Illah's words, "makes the history and development of the people available to them as drama" (in Osofisan. In this instance, performances are carefully put together to focus on particular aspects of under-development and bring the people together to interrogate and explore alternative options and solutions via their art forms. It is in a similar frame of mind that Wa' Thiongo extrapolates that: Literature (theatre) results from conscious acts of men in society--- it is a reflection on the aesthetic and imaginative planes of a community wrestling with its total environment to produce the basic means of life, food, clothing, shelter and in the process creating and recreating itself in history.

This position was earlier advanced by Marx and Engels in their theory of Historical and Dialectical Materialism. Marxism has articulated that there is a correlation between literature and class consciousness. The theatre has the capacity to raise consciousness: it is a mode of communication that has a life of its own. It is thus a means of expression that enables those at the grassroots to reflect on their needs and fashion their priorities in contrast to the people being led from the outside. This crucial perspective frames the use of TFD as an alternative strategy. The potentials of this theatre to create an immediate and lasting impact has made it a viable development model. Abah expresses this fact stating that:

The participatory method has several features which are quite significant for integrated community development. The method removes emphasis from the experts and invest it in the collective... This horizontal approach which involves both the villagers and the outside animateur enriches the process.

The crux of this type of Theatre lies in its drive to take theatre back to the people, rather than the people coming back to the theatre. Instead of approaching the people's problem through an idealistic aesthetics, TFD engages what already exists (matter) and asks us to think and act using the people's art. Courtney giving form to this view says that, "drama is an experiment with life here and now". Humans, however, in time past according to Ayegba, have engaged in negotiating with the unknown through mediation by the known. So, in man's primitive rituals, theatre is seen as one of the conveyors of information through which man came to understand aspects of the unknown. The theatre has thus, functioned within traditional aesthetics to reconcile nature and culture. For, "we are born into a community, and are intimately dependent on the community for life" (Petra 213). In the same view, Boal corroborates that, "the theatre in particular, is determined by the society much more stringently than the other arts, because of its immediate contact with the public and its greater power to convince"

This and many more are some of the reasons why our forebears relied on songs, dances, drums and masks to educate, inform and to preserve their legends. They also realized that by preserving ideas through their folk media, one is able to capture the imagination of the people. Theatre for development, however, transcends the realm of theatre as the basis of instruction and recorder of history to intervene in the relation between consciousness, reality and participation. More than this, Ross Kidd believes that TFD:

Makes people question the deeper structure which shapes their situation and the possible outcomes of various courses of action. At the best, it is built into a process of organization and struggle which leads to structural transformation.

The perspective above underscores Bertolt Brecht's dictum that, "it is not enough to understand the world, it is necessary to change it" (cited in Petra 79). As well as Marx's perspective that, though man is a product of his environment, he is alterable. Implying that humanity's condition is not engraved in stone: as long as they can think and initiate action, they are able to confront and overcome the forces of oppression, poverty and underdevelopment.

Ever since, theatre has been used all over the world most especially in Africa for conscientization and other purposes. In Africa in recent times, this theatre has been at the forefront of development communication, development advocacy and research. Attempts in Zambia in 1969 produced what is popularly called the *Chikwakwa Theatre*, where theatre was used as a tool for empowering the rural folks. In Botswana, the *Laedze Batanani* experience focused on the participation of rural dwellers applying “the Frerian objective of motivating people to improve their lives through improving the life of the community” (Etherton 22). In all, the Kenyan popular theatre project stands out conspicuously. What emerged out of Ngugi wa Thiongo's workshop with the Kamirithu community was captioned, *Ngaahika Ndenda -I will Marry When I Want*. There were various other TFD attempts in other African countries such as Tanzania, Malawi, Swaziland and Nigeria. The Nigerian early experience yielded results in the Wasan Manoma, Wasan Maska and Wasan Bomo projects.

One of the key advantages the TFD medium has over other media is that it encourages full participation of the people in development and other issues that have direct relevance to their daily lives. In spite of this, Rebecca Harrington fears that:

Social and behaviour change activities have always presented challenges for development practitioners as it can be difficult to assess whether a change has taken place, how the change has been produced, whether the change is influenced in the most effective way, and what the unintended consequences of their actions around behaviour might be.

She further stated that, Participatory Communication and Arts-Based approaches designed to influence individual and collective behaviour and social change present specific challenges for evidence-building. This of course stresses the fact that we must continue to find effective ways to assess the impacts and sustainability of results of the TFD processes. The inquiry here rests on the challenges of evaluating the impact of the TFD development strategy considering its tract records in development intervention and praxis.

## Impact Evaluation

Evaluation is an aspect of monitoring done to track programme implementation and out-puts systematically to measure the effectiveness or otherwise of developmental programmes. That is, to determine if a programme is on track and when changes may be needed. In other words, evaluation can be used to demonstrate that programme efforts have had a measurable impact on expected outcome and have been implemented effectively. It is important to note that all evaluations according to Baker (11), are partly social (because they involve human beings), partly political (because knowledge is power), and only partly technical. Experts have also stressed that there are many types and classifications associated with evaluation.

Broadly speaking, three major categories of evaluation have evolved and are commonly used in the development cycle in recent years. They are process evaluation, impact evaluation and outcome evaluation. The impact evaluation type is particularly relevant to this discourse. This is because, TFD is a development activity as well as a qualitative evaluation tool that has been utilized for impact evaluation purposes. This discourse is however, an enquiry on the challenges of impact evaluation of the TFD strategy in the development process. Impact evaluation has been defined differently over the past decades. Impact evaluation is an evaluation which looks at the effect of an intervention on the final welfare outcomes rather than only at project outputs or process evaluation which focuses on implementation. It looks beyond the immediate results of policies, instructions or services to identify longer-term and unintended programme effects. This is because programmes targeted at the grassroots will be successful to the extent that people are incentivized to change their behaviour favourably.

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation in 2010, defines impact evaluation as the:

Analysis that measures the net change in outcome for a particular group of people that can be attributed to a specific program using the methodology available,

feasible and appropriate to the evaluative question that is being investigated and to the specific context.

Invariably, impact evaluation draws conclusions about the degree of success or failure of an intervention by providing credible evidence on the programme in order to distinguish between implementation failure and theory failure. Explaining further, the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group elucidates that, impact evaluation:

Compares the outcomes of a programme against a counterfactual that shows what would have happened to beneficiaries without the programme. Unlike other forms of evaluation, they permit the attribution of observed changes in outcomes to the program being evaluated by following experimental and quasi-experimental designs.

Echoing a similar view, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in 2011, defines the concept and practice of impact evaluation to be, "measuring the change in development outcome that is attributable to a defined intervention. Impact evaluations are based models of cause and effect and require a credible and rigorously defined counterfactual control for factors other than the intervention that might account for the observed change" (5). In essence, determining the counterfactual is at the core of impact evaluation.

Substantively, therefore, an impact evaluation answers questions about what works or does not work, how, for whom and why so that lessons can be learnt. There are of course, diverse views about how activities are understood to produce a series of results that contribute to achieving the final impact and how they should be conducted. These views are, in fact, affected by different theories about how development change occurs and debates about what constitutes rigorous standards of evidence. In spite of this, impact occurs at different levels and time frames. That is, short-term, intermediate and long-term changes resulting from interventions. However, how and when impact occurs, will depend on the type of intervention and the context of the evaluation. Project evaluation tools and approaches also vary according to the project design. Selecting appropriate tools

to be used in generating and analyzing data depends on the type of project. For example, the approach and tools for measuring physical and capital projects will definitely differ from that assessing projects with social values that are geared towards effecting attitudes and behaviour. Participatory development strategies such as TFD that is fixated on social and behaviour change activities have always presented challenges for development practitioners because their processes are not easily replicable, predictable or easily controlled and thus, its evaluation is difficult.

### **The Need to Evaluate TFD Programmes**

TFD among other things has “been used by communication development actors in its conventional role to create awareness, for social mobilization, out of classroom education, and other community development purposes” (Moshood 11). Beyond this, it is equally important to state that TFD has also been used as a qualitative evaluation tool to assess the impacts of development programmes. As a qualitative evaluation tool, “TFD is a process of collecting and analyzing qualitative information about an intervention for live performances that will aid the assessment of the overall impact of development programmes” (Moshood 12). The TFD process, however, does not only revolve around the performance but also, all the other related events that lead to the final performance and beyond. Abah affirming this view in his work *Performing Life*, states that:

The role of TFD is not terminal. It is used to assess and critique development work (*evaluation*). It is also used to encourage and sustain confidence among grassroots organizations. Theatre is also used at this stage to celebrate success (*impact*) and boost morale. (31)

Howbeit, among all the evaluation approaches, TFD has a very special and unique nature. It is characterized by live performance which gives it immediacy –“the sense of the now and the spontaneity that comes with human actions presented with convincing truthfulness, reality and believability” (33). Nonetheless, as a communication for development strategy, this advantage is yet the theatre's undoing, especially in the face of lack of



proper documentation of the process. Due to the temporal and ephemeral nature of the act, it vanishes almost immediately and lives on in the consciousness. Yet Mat Dadze insists that:

Every TFD activity must be seen first and foremost as a communication activity, such activity should be monitored to track the way they are implemented. We should be able to assess how messages and other inputs are being received and understood. (qtd. in Illah 54)

This is to be done carefully to determine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. However, the deficiency in documentation and evaluation continues to trail the practice of TFD. Accentuating this gap, Abah corroborates that:

Documentation has been the missing link in our practice...this is even more the case in TFD with the ephemerality of theatre taking place in the dusty arenas of villages in remote locations which officialdom has written out of focus. (xiv)

This brings to focus the question: How can one evaluate the impact indicators of the TFD strategy without a baseline record of what has transpired? Figuratively, how does one go beyond assessing the size of the effects (average impact) to identify for whom and in what ways TFD has been successful? That is, what constitutes success and how will data be analyzed and synthesized to answer specific Key Evaluation Questions (KEQ)? The problem here lies in how to document and monitor the degree of impact of TFD as a development communication strategy so that lessons can be learnt “to make our theatre as a weapon potent and effective, with great fire power” (Hagher 45).

### **Aesthetical issues and flaws of the TFD Methodology**

Evaluating the efficacy of the TFD strategy brings to the fore the question about its ultimate value. In cross examining to understand the true nature of identities resulting from its processes, we begin with Nelhaus and Haedicke's perspective. They argue that “art is not neutral: its socially committed intentions do not shield the work from possible ambiguities” (14). This is because whether intended or not, it

becomes an instrument with which people are persuaded to accept their situation or change it. This also implies that the TFD methods can be used or misused for selfish ends and interests. In essence, the TFD process may be affected by local relations of power. This Chinyowa fears, may “obscure its positive intentions and have a far-reaching consequence for the identity of participants” (3).

A matter arising from the interrogation also relates to the question of the dependency of target communities on their benefactor. This negates the tenets of the TFD strategy that is meant to liberate and empower the people to look inward instead of the continuous wait for the handout from external bodies. Of course, the gesture of external help is noble and laudable, but will not last forever. Helen Nicholson (161) expresses the same view when she states that the modes of applied theatre can be viewed as both a gift and a poison. She contends that the ambiguous meanings that may be attached to the metaphor of a gift are dependency, patronage and surveillance. She argues further that the TFD experience can be seen simultaneously as both a:

Present and a poison, it is sometimes worth remembering the unpalatable truth that a present, however well intentioned, may be thought to be poisonous by those who live in a different context, and whose version of a good life differs from our own. (162)

Chinyowa explains further that the TFD animateurs and the donor agencies put themselves in the position of caregivers. The desire to identify with the lives of the target communities through the TFD process can be said to constitute the experience of the gift, while the act of continuous expectancy on the part of the communities constitutes the poison (4). Nothing lasts forever. Besides, the priorities of donor agencies or policy makers may bear little resemblance to the needs of the target community, or even change over time.

The time factor in the TFD process brings to the fore the question of whether the strategy of travelling to communities to spend one or two weeks is enough to engage the people in a lasting and sustained

programme. Abah expressing his worries on this, queries, “What is the validity of entering into a very intense relationship - which is very much an unequal one anyway - and inevitably pulling out after two weeks for example?” (29). Time is one of the factors that affect the indication of success in the TFD strategy. Just as priorities for intervention can be externally conceived and imposed on beneficiaries, so also can criteria by which the success of interventions are judged. For TFD to effect sustainable development, the time spent working with communities must be considered because, in the bid to meet up with the time scheduled for communities, some programmes and activities are usually hurried. (Even though, in mainstream TFD now, attempts are made to establish and nurture Community Based Organizations, this challenge continues to lag). For instance, it is obvious that most interventions (mediated by TFD) in the area of girls' education and health in Nigeria are completely funded by grants from external multilateral development agencies. This affects not only the way projects in the areas are implemented but also the procedures and processes by which monitoring and evaluations are done, as well as what structures are put in place for continuity. The final analysis, in Blackburn's words is that, “who counts reality may be as significant as whose reality counts” (2).

The TFD technique also has its flaws, especially where aesthetics is concerned. There is not enough time and thought given to the format of presentation and style of acting. Aspects such as costumes and make-up, set, props, lighting and other theatrical metaphors are de-emphasized. The idea in most projects is to minimize theatricality as much as possible to ensure everyone participates in the process without feeling inferior. The overall aim as explained by Kidd and Byran, is to “increase participation of community members in development projects by involving them in the planning, and running of the theatre programme” (19). Chinyowa, reiterating Pradip Thomas' position made reference to a “crisis of form in African Theatre For Development arising from practitioners tendency to depart from the objective of making popular theatre a truly people-based counter culture” (213). While Kerr points to the “guru-isation

of Theatre For Development arising from its limited capacity to radically challenge the prevailing ...structures” (72). Etherton (2), on the other hand alludes that the central problem of popular theatre is traced to the nature of social change. That is, theatre by whom and for whom should it be? Iorapuu at the other end, questions the sustainability of TFD projects when he observes that “A critical weakness in the practice of TFD is the inability of the practitioners to empower community based groups to take over from the cultural amateurs who as a matter of fact are guests of the community” (64).

### **The Challenges of Evaluating the Impact of the TFD Methodology**

In spite of the above submissions, the TFD method in Abah's opinion has, “several features which are quite significant for integrated rural development. This theatre has through consistent practice developed processes and systems that are unique and distinct to it while at other times, it has borrowed tools from other development strategies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), Participatory Learning Action (PLA) and Participatory Action Research (PAR) to enhance its messages and make them more effective and vivid to the target beneficiaries.

Notwithstanding, the TFD strategy like other development models is not free from challenges but open to critical strategic questions that manifest in its practical application and evaluation. These questions border on validity, trustworthiness and the consistency of TFD as a research and development tool. The effects of Drama and Theatre happen in the consciousness. They are not physical structures that can be seen, felt and so are difficult to measure or quantify. A physical structure can be assessed based on what is visible: one can measure statistically how well a town hall structure built for village use has been utilized and maintained. But not so with Theatre: only the individual can explain whether or not she or he can trace the change of attitude and behaviour to drama and not other factors or the percentage of input of drama in the result being experienced. For instance, in the case of girl-child education in Nigeria, is it the removal of tuition fees or the creation of a more girl-child friendly

school environment or the drama component that influenced the change of attitude of parents towards girls' education?

Similarly, development approaches today emphasize a cocktail of development strategies such as the fusion of Participatory Rural Assessment (PRA), Participatory Learning Appraisal (PLA), Participatory Action Research (PAR) and drama approaches to development interventions. How can the impact of the drama component be measured and with what percentage? This makes evaluating the impact of theatre for development an inexact science.

Drama trades in feelings and emotions which are not constant and thus liable to change with time. A beneficiary might conclude after a TFD intervention that he/she has been influenced by the performance, but will this feeling remain constant or withstand the test of time? Will she/he feel the same way ten years later? This transient nature of drama and theatre makes it “impossible for any two performances to be the same, either as a product of venue, the nature of audience, or the exigencies of period, time and context” (Ayegba 217). According to him, once the curtain is drawn, the performance is over. The rest is left to memories and what the audience can recall; the impact, the provocation, the stirred emotions and agitations will deplete or diminish as the days go by. Implying that, the evanescent nature of drama creates the atmosphere or space for the impact to diffuse easily. Again, if the impact of the TFD process is ephemeral, how then can one justify the enormous time and resources put into doing it or prove the issue of sustainability and reliability of the method?

In the same breath, the view that in TFD participation is achieved through the process is contestable. In as much as one can affirm the involvement of participants, there is always the other side of the coin that community participation may be mythical and misleading. From Ayegba's opinion, “there is no community that is completely homogenous. Even within communities that are cohesive, there is the existence of individual or group interest” (218). The assumption, therefore, that rural communities are closely knitted and have clearly outlined operations, (with everyone participating in the process), and the emphasis on communities being traditional units is a

misconception. This is given that at no one event can the views and interests of everyone be represented. This suggests to a large extent the over-generalization of the concept of participation in the TFD process. Guijt and Shah corroborating this further, opine that “This mythical notion of community cohesion continues to permeate much participatory work, hiding the bias that favours the opinions and priorities of those with more power and the ability to voice themselves publicly” (58)

In essence, no matter the level of participation by all levels of beneficiaries in the TFD process, there will always be an audience component to every theatrical activity. In most cases, the voices heard, and the opinions expressed are usually those of the visible and assertive component of the community. The voiceless remain at the background and the views and opinions of the powerful is most likely to dominate. This, however, does not cancel the fact that there is no perfect concept of participation. It is an ideal that we constantly work towards and its tools and techniques are been improved upon continuously. The question that, however, one is tempted to ask is, in the TFD process, who benefits more, the audience or the participants? Would the TFD strategy become more participatory if the drama component is de-emphasized to create room for other oral forms?

Impact evaluation needs to ask relevant questions and have valid measures, indicators, quality data and appropriate criteria and standards. Besides, impacts are understood to occur later and as a result of immediate out-comes. This demands that impact evaluation should be built into the design of an intervention throughout its life span. The area of funding, monitoring and evaluation of TFD has continued to pose as a challenge. Most TFD projects being “carried out in parts of the African continent tend to be one-off events with minimal follow-up in terms of building the capacity of target communities and organizing them for action” (Chinyowa 11). Such projects pass by with little impact. While the not too many that have been given attention as Chinyowa enthused, are “trapped within a modernizing paradigm that seeks to create external blueprints for monitoring and evaluation” (12). Abah expressing a similar view, contends that:

In spite of the growth of TFD---it still has the problem of sustainability and of being a coherent practice with appropriate funding. For example, after the second Benue International Workshops, there was a lull--so TFD was continuing to look outside to see if it would find an anchor. (2)

In the same breath, Ayegba (217) also articulates that, in TFD as in other methods, funding is not easy to come by and even when it comes, it is tied to some criteria which must be followed. This means that much of the TFD participatory development work up to date has been undertaken with donor support which has both positive and negative effects in the area of implementation, documentation, monitoring and evaluation. Abah conversely, advises that the TFD practice should always be conceived as a continuum: workshop plus follow-up (evaluation). This according to him will help revitalize structures for effective sustainability.

## **Conclusion**

The issues raised here are germane and critical in the evaluation of the impact of the TFD methodology. Along with the transient nature of the Theatre, this study also identifies funding, lack of documentation, and monitoring among others as key albatrosses in the evaluation of the impact of the Theatre for Development methodology. Despite these limitations, it is evident that the approach has been used in many instances and has been an effective participatory development tool. Although, the issue of validity, trustworthiness and consistency, continue to pose serious challenges to the impact of the process.

## **Recommendations**

1. For the impact of the TFD strategy to be rooted and sustainable, there is a need to make the skills and techniques more readily available. The training is also important to strengthen the capacity of Community Based Organization (CBOs) working along similar campaigns. This will raise consciousness and help them gain more external support to tackle their problems internally.
2. For the impact of the TFD methodology to be measurable

and properly critique the success or otherwise of the medium, the gap in the area of documentation and monitoring should be filled. The culture of documentation, monitoring and evaluation must be built gradually but fast to ensure best practices in the domain of TFD and beyond. This is also expedient if TFD practitioners must continue to assess, critique and theorize about the practice to allow for a more rewarding experience in the social and development circles.

3. TFD practitioners should find a deliberate and effective way to access and collaborate with government and other constituted authorities through advocacy. This will draw attention to the potency of TFD in rural development. This will also help institutionalize TFD as a communication strategy by the government and its agencies in rural development programmes in Nigeria. With this attention, it will be easier to mainstream and infuse monitoring and evaluation of TFD into project design and implementation right from programme inception.

## Works Cited

- Abah, S. Oga. *Performing life: Case Studies in the Practice of Theatre For Development*. Zaria: Bright Publishing Press, 1997.
- Ayegba, Adegbe Martins. "Theatre For Development as Research method, the example of the DRC citizenship Research in Nigeria". A PhD Thesis Submitted to the Department of Theatre Arts, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria 2008.
- Baker, M. Anita and Bruner, Beth. *Participatory Evaluation Essentials: An Updated Guide for Non-Profit Organizations and their Evaluation Partners*. The Burner Foundation Publication, 2010.
- Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Methuen, 1965. Print.
- Blackburn, James. "Conclusion" in Blackburn, James and Holland, Jeremy (Eds). *Who Changes? Institutionalizing*



- Participation in Development*. London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1998.
- Burkey, Stan. *People First: A Guide to Self-Reliant, Participatory Rural Development*. London: Zed Books, 1993.
- Chinyowa, Kennedy “Revisiting Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies for Applied Drama and Theatre in Africa” In *Research in Drama in Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*. Vol. 16, issue 3 pp. 15-28, 2011.
- Chinyowa, Kennedy. “Manifestation of Play as Aesthetics in African Theatre for Development” a Ph.D Thesis Submitted to the Centre for Public Culture and Ideas School of Vocational Technology and Arts Education, University of Griffiths, 2005.
- Dale, Byam. *Community in Motion: Theatre for Development in Africa*. West Port: Bergin and Harvey, 1999.
- Dadze, Mat. “How to Monitor and Evaluate TFD for Children's and Women's Rights Activities” in Illah, J.S. Egwugwu and Batilloi Warritay (Eds). *Child Rights Theatre for Development Training Manual*. Abuja: UNICEF, 2004.
- David Kerr and Chifunyise S. “Popular Theatre in Zambia: Chikwakwa Theatre Reassessed” in *Theatre International* Vol. 11/12 No. 3/4 pp 54–80, 1994.
- Etherton, Michael. *The Development of African Drama*. London: Hutchinson, 1988.
- Fradkin, L. “On the Artistic Originality of Bertolt Brecht's Drama” in Demeiz Peter Brecht: *A Collection of Critical Essay*. London: Prentice Hall Inc. 1962.
- Gujt, I. and Shah, M.K. (Eds). *The Myth of the Community: Gender Issues in Participatory Development*. London: ITDG Publishers, 1998.
- Haedicke, Susan and Tobin Nelhaus (Eds). *Performing Democracy: International Perspectives on Urban Community-Based Performances*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- Illah, J. S.Egwugwu. “Theatre For Development for Children's Right” in Illah, J.S. Egwugwu, and Battiloi Waritto. (Eds) *Child Rights Theatre for Development Training Manual*. Abuja: UNICEF, 2004.
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation Manual, 2010.
- Iorapuu, Tor. “Expanding the Pedagogy of TFD in Nigeria: Lessons for Transformative Theatre Experience” In Abdulrasheed A. *The*

- Transformer: Ilorin Journal of the Performing Arts. Vol. 10*, 2008.
- Irobi, Esiaba. "African Youth, Performance and the HIV/AIDs Epidemic: The Theatre of Necessity" in *African Youth Theatre*. Martin Banham, James Gibbs and Femi Osofisan (Eds) Oxford: African Academic Press, 2006.
- Kidd, Ross and Byran.(Eds) "Folk Media, Popular Theatre and Conflicting Strategies for Social Change in the Third World" in *Tradition for Development: Indigenous Structures and Folk Media in Non-Formal Education*. Berlin: German Foundation for International Development and International Council for Adult Education, 1980.
- Kuppers Petra and Roberson, Gwen. *The Community Performance Reader*. London & New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Moshood, A. Folorunsho. "Methodological Innovations in Community Project Evaluation: Theatre For Development (TFD) as a Qualitative Evaluation Tool". A paper presented at the 7<sup>th</sup> African Evaluation Association (AFREA) Conference, 2014.
- Nicholson, Helen. *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Prendergast, M. and Saxton, J. *Applied Theatre International: Case Studies and Challenges for Practice*. Bristol: Intellect Ltd, 2009.
- Rogers, Patricia. "Overview of Impact Evaluation" *Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 1* 2014
- USAID Impact Evaluation Manual, 2011.
- Wa' Ngugi.,Thiongo, *Writers in Politics*. New Hampshire: Heineman Books Inc. 1981.
- White, Howard. "Impact Evaluation: The Experience of the Independent Evaluation Group of the World Bank." 2006.  
<<https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/1111/>>.
- World Bank Independent Evaluation Group Manual, 2010