

**ENCOURAGING THE ADOPTION OF IMPROVED FARMING METHODS AT
MAYERA WITH THEATRE**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work produced from research undertaken under supervision and that no part of it has been previously submitted for the award of any degree or a diploma in any University by any other person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Any errors of commission or omission in the entire work are entirely my own.

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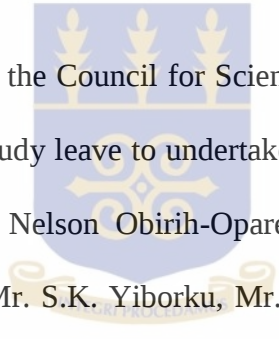
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated first to God Almighty for his immense mercies, my entire family for their encouragement and support and finally to the memory of my late uncle, Anthony Oposa Tawiah who I know would have been very proud to see this day come to pass. Rest in Peace.



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ABSTRACT

In spite of the numerous efforts being made by researchers within the agricultural sector to link farmers with improved and modern methods of farming, there are still a lot of farmers operating at subsistence levels. This research examines an additional rather than a substitutional means to assist in the effective linkage of agricultural research and processes to farmers in Ghana.

This is done by exploring how Theatre (using Theatre for Development processes) can be used as a vehicle to further advance the course of information dissemination so that farmers across the country can enhance their operations by adopting cheap but effective and efficient methods that have been tested over time in their areas for increased productivity.

The research methodology includes participatory processes that use improvised theatre to communicate to farmers. This process educates and encourages community members to adopt these very simple but effective methods of farming to improve upon their activities so that their production yields will be enhanced to provide them better livelihoods.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Table of Content.....	v

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1:1 Background to the Study.....	1
1:2 Problem Statement.....	3
1:3 Objectives.....	3
1:4 Scope of the Study.....	7
1:5 Significance of the Study.....	7
1:6 Methodology.....	8
1.7 Organisation of the Thesis.....	9

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2:1 Introduction.....	12
2:2 Theatre for Communication.....	12
2:3 Development and Theatre for Development (TFD).....	15
2:4 Improved Farming Methods.....	23
2:5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework.....	27
2:5:1 Brecht on Challenging the Audience.....	27
2:5:2 Freire and Boal on Engaging /Involving the Audience	32

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY (APPROACH AND PROCESSES)

3:1 Introduction.....	41
3:2 The Laboratory Site.....	41

3:3 Research Design.....	43
3:4 Population.....	43
3:5 Study Sample & Sampling Technique.....	44
3:6 Research Instrument.....	45
3:7 Story Creation and Performance.....	47
CHAPTER FOUR: PROJECT OUTCOME AND ANALYSIS	
4:1 Introduction.....	52
4:2 Work Plan.....	52
4:2:1 Outcomes of Data Analysis.....	58
4:2:2 Focus Group Discussions.....	60
4:2:3 Rehearsals.....	66
4:2:4 Performance.....	71
4:2:5 Post-Performance Discussions.....	77
4:3 Impact of the Project on the Community.....	78
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5:1 Introduction.....	80
5:2 Summary.....	80
5:3 Conclusions.....	81
5:4 Recommendations.....	85
Works Cited.....	89
Appendices.....	92

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The problem this study addresses is that farmers do not have enough access to new research on farming methods. Too many farmers are not knowledgeable about new farming techniques, and thus are unable to maximize their potential. The study's goal is to show that theatre can help to increase the rate and types of information available to farmers for them to improve their methods. It sheds light on the background to the study and gives insight into the reasons that gave rise to the chosen topic, the set objectives as well as the justification. This chapter also touches on the methodology, limitations, delimitations, and the significance of the study. Finally, it defines and provides the outline of the various chapters as found in the thesis.

Without any controversy, agriculture is an indispensable corollary in national development. And the fact that “more than half the population of the country live in rural areas and depend either directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood and survival”¹ means efforts must be made to remedy the situation. Consequently, several innovations have been developed and deployed over the years by Research Scientists across the country in order to improve the agricultural sector.

Such innovations have been promoted over the years by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MoFA) and its collaborators to remedy this situation in the form of various extension approaches. These approaches include extension workers moving from community to community and talking to farmers about these innovations and how it could help them.

¹ Green et al., as cited in *Agricultural Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*, Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra, 2005. p. 9

According to the document *Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*, Agricultural extension services “date back to the nineteenth century and were deployed with the aim of increasing agriculture productivity and production.”² The document further states that these efforts have all been geared towards “gradually replacing the traditional subsistence agriculture with market-oriented agriculture.”³ It is also as a result of the fact that the majority of farm holdings in the country are less than 2 hectares in size and fall within the traditional system of farming where the hoe and cutlass are the main farming tools. This calls for extra efforts to help improve the situation as reiterated by the document *Agriculture in Ghana: Facts and Figures*.

Responding to this call, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Ghana has done a lot to assist farmers in adopting new and improved farming methods for enhanced productivity. They have done these through various approaches. Some of these approaches include collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) through some of its institutes like the Savannah Agricultural Research Institute, Crops Research Institute and the Soil Research Institute in order to link research findings to farmers in targeted communities. Some of the technologies that have been introduced to farmers include among others, row planting of crops, soil fertility improving methods such as the use of organic manures and cover crops. There has also been the deployment of methods aimed at controlling diseases and pests, pruning of tree crops, use of improved seeds and timely harvesting of agricultural produce. Some of the approaches used here include training and extension of technical information to farmer-based organisations and collaborators.

²Green et al., as cited in *Agricultural Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*, Directorate of Agricultural Extension Services, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra, 2005. p. 9

³ Statistics, Research and Information Directorate (SRID) *Agriculture in Ghana: Facts and Figures*, (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra, 2011, p. 5

To add to the above, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), a leading agency that conducts various scientific researches (crop, animal, soil, aquatic), on its own initiative, has also put in a lot of effort. They include the extension of several research findings on improved crop and animal varieties and simple farming methods to farmers. Gyasi et al attests to this when they asserted that in response to the call above, research scientists within the CSIR have developed and extended to farmers several crop varieties including maize (that would produce reasonably higher yields). They further state that:

Among them are the following improved varieties: Dobidi, Aburotia, Okomasa, Abeleehe, Obatanpa, Mamaba, and Dorke. The superiority of these varieties over the traditional ones in terms of grain yield was confirmed in on-farm tests before extending them to farmers together with the complementary crop and soil management practices.⁴

Some of the approaches that have been employed include training of farmer groups who in turn pass on the information to their colleagues, setting up of demonstration plots to get people's attention within targeted communities by researchers, farmer group to researcher interactions, televising of documentary videos on some of these technologies, etc.

However, in spite of these efforts, there are still a lot more farmers within the sector who are still operating at subsistence levels. Within the lab site, for example, farmers are using basic methods (the hoe and cutlass are the major implements and are involved in slash and burn for land preparation, etc.) for farming with corresponding abysmal (very low yields). As a result of the above this study believes that, it is time to explore more methods through which such bottlenecks can be remedied so that these farmers can be assisted to improve upon their livelihoods.

It must be noted, however, that this is not to say the various efforts that have been put into linking farmers with improved methods have been inadequate. The study is of the view that for

⁴ Gyasi, K. O. et al. *A study on the adoption of improved maize technologies in northern Ghana: Maize Revolution in West and Central Africa*, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Ibadan, 2003, p.365.

as long as there are farmers who still operate at subsistence levels, then a lot more effort must be put into what is already in existence so that more farmers could gain access to improved methods to improve upon their productivity. One of such methods that this research proposes is the use of Theatre because theatre has over the years been used for different purposes. It has the power and ability to prepare and conscientize the minds of people for change no matter the issue at stake. With regards to issues that have to do with community development, theatre is one of the tools and approaches for information dissemination and community engagement that has been found to be effective over the years.

In other words, this study is advocating for the use of theatre (Theatre for Development) as an additive rather than a substitutive strategy for dealing with issues that confront the agriculture sector in the country. This is due to the fact that theatre for development falls within a genre that is regarded as a very effective method or avenue for community engagement. Furthermore, it is also due to the fact that it mostly approaches issues from the perspective of the people involved, and does it by using their own language as the medium of communication. In addition to the above, it appropriates the people's culture, customs, hopes and aspirations which eventually enable them to identify with the issues.

Theatre for Development as an approach evolved in Ghana in the 1980s. The School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana is credited for starting it formally in Ghana. The pioneering works were led by Sandy Arkhurst who ensured that communities such as Kisseman, Dome, Christian Village and Madina were among the early beneficiaries of these initial experimental performances.

This research therefore set out to examine and bring to the fore the significance of theatre and how it could be effectively used as an additional tool for the dissemination of relevant information in communities with particular reference to those engaged in farming. The research believed that after the processes, the farmers would be given the wherewithal to adopt some of these improved methods for improved productivity in order for them to have a better livelihood. By so doing, Sachs reiteration that “[...] any process of growth that does not lead to the fulfilment of basic needs is a travesty of the idea of development”⁵ will hold sway.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to the *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II* document, Ghana’s economy has been largely dependent on agriculture over the years. Its growth is therefore key to the overall economic growth and development. It stated in part that:

[...] agriculture is expected to lead the growth and structural transformation of the economy and maximize the benefits of accelerated growth. GRPS II recognized that no significant progress can be made in raising the average real incomes of Ghanaians as a whole without significant improvements in the productivity of the agriculture sector [...]⁶

The Directorate of Agriculture Extension Services, in furtherance to the above assertion, also stated in the document, *Agricultural Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana* that:

[...] more than half the population of the country live in rural areas and depend either directly or indirectly on agriculture for their livelihood and survival. Agriculture to this end plays an important role in the economic growth, food security, poverty alleviation [...] of this country.⁷

These statements simply underscore the urgent need for stakeholders in the agricultural sector and in particular farmers to have access to improved methods. By so doing, these stakeholders

⁵W. Sachs, *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, (Johannesburg, Zed Books, 1997), p.14

⁶Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy II, Accra, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), 2005

⁷Green et al., as cited in *Agricultural Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*. 2005, p.4

will be assisted to change their ways of operation for the better: hopefully, they would improve upon their yields. Increased yields will radically bring about economic growth, food security, and poverty reduction, among others, in this country and will thus make the above statements a reality.

Consequently, this research proposes theatre as a method that can be used to add to the efficiency with which farmers could be assisted to improve upon their methods of production, which have a greater potential of increasing their output for increased livelihoods.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this research is to highlight the fact that theatre can be used as an effective research tool in creating awareness as well as enhance the dissemination of information. Here, the study wishes to emphasize the viability and extent to which theatre could leverage the efforts of research bodies such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) towards the dissemination of research findings to end users especially in the agricultural sector. This will enable more farmers to get to know about simple, improved and cheap farming methods available for adoption. Again, it is hoped that this research will at the end of the day contribute to existing knowledge on theatre as a tool for information delivery, thus making it possible for the significance and power of theatre in community development to be appreciated.

It is further hoped that through this research the factors that encourage or discourage people from adopting these interventions may be identified, and the extent to which they could be addressed in order to help in encouraging farmers to adopt these methods for improved livelihoods.

1.4 Scope of Study

The study focused on improving the fertility of the soil using organic biomass for mulching to enhance crop production. This is due to the fact that the fertility of the soil affects crop yield in two ways: whereas fertile soils result in good yield, infertile soils yield the contrary. Once this applies to all farming areas of the country, it is hoped that the outcome of this research can be duplicated in all areas where there is the need for improving the fertility of the soil for increased productivity.

The research was however limited by the fact that the process can only be undertaken in one location at a time involving a specified number of people with a common focus. It must be noted that there were other farmers in the lab site of study who equally needed technical support aside the project's focus of improving soil fertility. Sadly, the researcher could not attend to their issues due to time and other resource constraints.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant in the sense that it sets out to show that theatre, and for that matter drama, can be an additional method of educating farmers on the need to do away with old, conservative and unproductive methods and thus adopt improved ones that will help reduce the drudgery they have been going through in their operations. In other words, the study advocated the use of theatre as an additive rather than a substitutional strategy for the purposes of linking stakeholders (farmers) in the agricultural sector with improved methods. The idea of engaging theatre in agriculture is to leverage the concerted efforts of research scientists within the agricultural sector to boost productivity. This is because the researcher having worked in the area of linking farmers to research innovation for over a decade developed an interest in and chose to

research, discuss and devise a Theatre for Development project around the issue of improved farming methods for the fact that hardworking farmers who toil all year round just to get so very little for their efforts all because they lack access to cheap, simple but very effective methods available for adoption can be afforded the opportunity to access such information.

Finally, the researcher also believed it was important to undertake this study because the processes were expected to unearth more ideas on how to use theatre as an added effort to the dissemination of information that could help impoverished farmers increase their yields by giving them an additional means through which they can improve their ways of operation.

1.6 Methodology

The study employed the qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis with emphasis on exploratory and interpretative approaches. In other words, the set of interviews and discussions held within the community were analysed and interpreted. This body of interpretive data allowed the researcher to formulate the Theatre project. In doing these, the research undertook various processes and steps. The first step included general familiarization tour (Transect walk in the Language of Theatre for Development) of the proposed lab site. This enabled the researcher to become abreast with issues on the ground such as where to go, what to do and at what times. These were done with particular reference to issues pertaining to permissions, interviews, and who to include in the process, etc. Various people were interviewed to get insights into the existing problems and how they think solutions could be found. After the general familiarization tour, interviews were held to select participants for the project. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were then held with the identified target audience to dilate on the identified issues and through that built consensus on what was to be done. Specifically, the Focused Group Discussion

included brainstorm sessions with the selected people to first and foremost identify their problems. After this, efforts were made to find suitable solutions for these identified problems and issues. Further efforts were made during these stages to seek out details like what methods of farming were available and being used; what crops were being grown; their yield levels, water sources, and whether or not they were using fertilizers etc. Through the above processes and the data that was collected, an improvisation⁸ was fashioned out. These were done with the aim of letting the community have a sense of ownership towards the project. Concerted efforts were equally made to make sure the community was completely involved in the processes so as to encourage them to feel they were indeed part and parcel of the project as much as possible. The improvisation (play) was tested and then the performance took place. A Post-Performance Discussion was held to evaluate the project, i.e. the extent to which the information in the project was received. A follow up was done three weeks later to assess the effects of the project on the community. The researcher would like to state here that the above processes are discussed in detail in Chapter Three under the topic Methodology.

1.7 Organization of Thesis

The thesis is made up of five chapters. Chapter one looks at the background to the study and establishes the rationale behind the selected research topic, the methodology employed in carrying out the research, scope of the work and purpose of the study.

Chapter two is a discussion on literature in relation to the study. These discussions also include theories and concepts (by Brecht, Boal and Freire) that served as the framework for the study and how these theories aided the application of theatre and its ability to communicate enough to

⁸ In Theatre for Development, the play to be performed is referred to as an improvisation. This is simply due to the fact that the issues that are deduced from the various processes are improvised into the performance. It is after the performance that the plays are written out.

create social actors for development, especially in the area of agriculture. There is also a discussion on some of the available improved methods for adoption.

Chapter three captures the entire research approach and processes. The discussion is captured under the broad title Methodology and it discusses the data collection process on the field and analyses the processes by way of how the data for the research was collected and presented. It does so under sub-themes such as the research design, followed by the population, then study sample and sampling technique. This is followed by the research instrument and it must be emphasized that since the research is qualitative, it thus follows the following pattern: The first part comprises the familiarisation with the community, or what is called transect walk in Theatre for Development parlance. The second part is the interviews, the community interactions and the Focus Group Discussions. The next part is the story creation, testing, and performance of the improvisation with the last part comprising of the Post - Performance discussion, evaluation and follow up to the project.

The fourth chapter deals with the outcomes of the project and its analysis in relation the Theatre for Development process. This chapter also discusses the impact of the project on the community. The last chapter discusses the summaries, conclusions and recommendations of the researcher with the bibliography and appendices following in that order.

In concluding discussions on this chapter the researcher wishes to say that it has been a discussion of issues related to the research topic ‘Encouraging the Adoption of Improved Farming Methods at Mayera with Theatre’ in terms of the background to the study and the reasons that gave rise to the chosen topic. It has shed light on the set objectives as well as the justification for the study. The chapter also dilates on the methodology, limitations,

delimitations, and the significance of the study and finally defines and provides the outline of the various chapters as found in the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of scholarly views on the relationship between theatre and social transformation as they relate to this study. Theatre has the ability to communicate across social barriers to provide new opportunities for social actors in terms of development and other issues they might face. It also reflects on some literature on community development and how it helps the understanding of this research work. There is also a discussion of theories and concepts of theatre and social change, particularly focusing on Brecht, Boal and Freire to show the potential of theatre as an effective vehicle for information dissemination. Finally, therefore, the chapter examines how theatre can be used as a vehicle for information dissemination for agricultural development in relation to some of the improved methods and processes of farming that can help the study achieve its aims and objectives.

2.2 Theatre for Communication

According to Sporre, almost every definition of theatre has included its effectiveness as a tool for communication, that is, it transmits a message from a sender to a receiver. In other words, the very nature of theatre is such that anytime there is a performance; some form of communication takes place. To buttress this he said that “theatre is aesthetic communication through the design of time, sound and [...] space using the live performer.”⁹ This means that theatre communicates

⁹ D. J. Sporre, *Perceiving the Arts: An Introduction to the Humanities, 6th Edition*, (Prince Hall, McGraw Hill, 2000), p.56

through a performer and through this ability, causes change, thus the influencing ability of theatre makes it a very important and dynamic tool for communication. Brecht also ascribed to the ability of theatre to cause change. He believes that “theatre should educate citizens on how to bring about socially responsible change through its ability and capability of making controversial topics easier to consider.”¹⁰ This gives theatre the wherewithal and ability to effect intellectual thinking in its audience. This audience after being put through such an experience may be encouraged to make the choice that get them to eventually follow a path that the researcher strongly believes can lead to behavioural change at various levels. In this way, Brockett’s assertion also that theatre has the “[...] capacity to provoke thought or action about significant issues”¹¹ becomes relevant for the purposes of this research.

From the above assertions of both Spore and Brockett, it is clear that one of the important things about theatre which makes its influencing ability effective is the fact that it is human centered and that can make it serve as a mirror of life. This way, it can depict life in any form and depending on the focus of the one in charge of the process; it can select as well as focus at any given time on a part of the total picture. This ability of theatre, I believe is what led Cohen to assert that “theatre is also an experience shared, an indivisible event that includes both those who perform and those who observe [...]”¹²

This implies that for as long as theatre continues to be functional and contextual, any particular problem or issue that is theatricalised (contextualized into a performance) can place it as an indispensable tool for conscientization. This creates in its audience that intellectual discourse for which when properly followed up will lead to change of attitudes that can lead to development.

¹⁰ B. Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre, Ed and Trans. John Willet*, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 340.

¹¹ O. G, Brockett, *Essential Theatre, 3rd Edition*, (New York, CBS College, 1984), p. 7

¹² R. Cohen, *Theatre: Brief Version, 5th Edition*, (Mountain View, Mayfield Publishing, 2000), p. 37

In pursuant of the above, it is imperative that in order for the development dramatist to deal with social issues, s/he must bring the particular issue to the open to be examined in this context. The ensuing performance in this sense can then be used to guide people's opinions toward the information being transmitted. Through this process, the project's target audience will be communicated to and through that assisted to make informed decisions about the problem at stake. This way, Mda's statement that "the uses of drama go beyond entertainment, education and information" [...] and that, "[...] such functions as investigation, stimulation, development, coordination, expression, communication etc.,"¹³ can also be attested to and through that make theatre communicate well enough to bring about the self-awareness that will eventually lead to improvement in livelihoods within the community.

In his support to the above, Brockett argues that in spite of the fact that theatre is conceived as almost entirely as popular entertainment, it has the capacity to offer penetrating insight into humanity and the world. He then acknowledged that theatre has a great range and as such has got potential that can be developed in many ways. This can mean that theatre is cultural and therefore embraces the way of life of a people. Consequently, this research took advantage of the above and tried as much as possible to appropriate the community's culture, customs, hopes and aspirations; it took steps to guide and encourage them to participate in the processes that were presented to them. Through these the researcher believes the opportunity to eventually improve their ways of doing things (methods of farming in this case) for improved livelihoods has been created within the community.

¹³ Z. Mda, *When People Play People: Development Through Theatre*, (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand Press, 1993), p.39

The project employed the use of realism that Arnold captures as the “representation of the activities of man. It represents life as it is and dwells on the truthful treatment of materials, issues.”¹⁴ The researcher made sure that all the approaches employed during the processes were done with the people based on realities as pertains on the ground so that at the end of the day, the participants became the social actors for development that the community needs to enable it to move on. These were done to reinforce David Kerr’s belief that popular theatre is the “theatre of the people, by the people and for the people [...] and that, a true popular theatre is one in which people initiate and develop the explorations of their problems and then engage in a continuous process of self-education through theatrical enactments.”¹⁵

2.3 Development and Theatre for Development (TFD)

The way both theatre and development have been looked at and explained underscores the fact that there is probably a correlation between theatre and development. This is so due to the fact that this study believes theatre as a mirror of society always strives to bring a change in what is in existence and this when followed properly can lead to a change in the status quo and that could be related to development which is always an improvement in one’s state of well-being.

In the view of Esteva, development is most of the time looked at “in terms of economics and most often brings up ideas about how a people strive to bring about improvements in their standards by harnessing resources available to them.”¹⁶ What this means is that the word development always goes hand in hand with how a community or society makes use of resources available to them to bring about improvements in their standards of living. To this end, the study

¹⁴ S. Arnold, *Creative Spirit: An Introduction to Theatre*, Mountain View, (Mayfair Publishing, 1998), p. 123

¹⁵ D. Kerr, *African Popular Theatre: From Pre Colonial Times to the Present Day*, (London, James Currey, 1995), p.26.

¹⁶ G. Esteva, W. Sachs, *The Development Dictionary*, (London, Zed Books, 1992), p. 75

believes, for the purposes of this research, theatre in its effort to create social actors through effective communication goes hand in hand with and has a strong relationship with development.

The term development in this respect, as captured by Gustavo Esteva, evolved from the economics context into the social context and the term has been transposed from the one subject area into another. This has resulted in the term assuming several meanings which have come to be related with growth, variation, economic well-being, positive way of life, etc. over the years. However, no matter what context one uses the term, or no matter the meaning one gives to it, Esteva posits that the term always;

“Stands for a favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better [...]. The word also indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and towards a desirable goal.”¹⁷

This enables the researcher to believe that this study can agree with Esteva on the above with regards to development and how it relates to theatre. This is so in the sense that both are talking about the stakeholders within an area seeking to make use of resources available to them to help improve upon their livelihoods.

The above therefore suggests that all efforts geared at assisting a community or society to enhance its living standards can be said to be development related. These assertions lead me to believe that if issues concerned with the chosen topic are properly dealt with and in adherence to these parameters and then communicate the processes properly; it could create the needed social actors who will then afford the target community the opportunity to also get to enjoy some better living standards.

¹⁷ G. Esteva, W. Sachs, *The Development Dictionary*, (London: Zed Books, 1992), p.10

For the purposes of development therefore, Theatre for Development has as such been used in different ways across Africa by different practitioners. But before dilating on the reasons for this, it is important that Zakes Mda helps us to make the above clearer. He thinks it is more appropriate to use theatre, rather than drama for developmental purposes. As far as he is concerned, such a clarification is needed to put theatre in its right place. Theatre in this situation for him, refers to

the production and communication of meaning in the performance itself, in other words a transaction or negotiation of meaning in a performer-spectator situation. Drama on the other hand, refers to the literature on which performances are sometimes based, the mode of fiction designed along certain dramatic conventions for stage representation.¹⁸

This assertion is an affirmation that provides the understanding that, what practitioners are looking for in order to effect change is the participatory nature of the communication aspect of theatre. Theatre in this sense communicates meaning and this it does through performer audience interactions; which then invokes a meaning that inspires the change which can affect the lives of a given people positively.

According to Aba-Ogah, it is as a consequence of this agenda that practitioners of this kind of theatre in drawing the boundaries of their work have evolved several terms that are used for theatre for development today. He reiterated further that some of such terms are “popular theatre, theatre for conscientization, development theatre, propaganda theatre, theatre for integrated development, community theatre for integrated rural development.”¹⁹ This type of theatre and its evolution is deeply embedded in its quest to help the masses in the developing world to come to terms with their environment and assume the task of improving their well-being economically,

¹⁸ Z. Mda, *When People Play People: Development Communication through Theatre*, (London, Zed Books, 1993), pp. 63-64

¹⁹ S. Abah-Ogah, *Theatre for Development As a Non-formal Method of Education in Nigeria*, Research in Drama Education, 1996, 1(2): 16

culturally, educationally, politically and socially. Kamlongera, to add to the above, also strongly believes that theatre for development evolved from and serves as continuity to the functional nature of indigenous theatre which makes itself manifest in our modern era. He emphasizes this by stressing that:

It is not a cliché to say indigenous performances in Africa contain within them some functional elements. In most cases this takes the form of a didactic statement. While performers might engage in doing spectacular movements and dances, they also carry within the performances special messages or lessons to some members of their audience. Some work in Theatre for Development is a direct result of recognizing this characteristic in indigenous Africa performances.²⁰

This means that any performance that is carried out contains some form of message that is didactic: that the actors always perform to teach something at the end of the day, i.e. send out messages that are meant to teach their audiences something that is peculiar to their circumstances. This means performances are not done for the purposes of just performing but rather are always done with the aim of making sure the audiences get educated and informed as they are entertained. Abah-Ogah goes on to identify Theatre for Development as a

People's theatre, addressing their own problems, in their own language, using their own idioms and on their own terms. The ordinary people are the subjects, and in practice, the ones in control. That is, they decide the agenda and participate in making the drama on those chosen issues.²¹

This means that Theatre for Development practitioners have over the years given priority to the ordinary people and make them the centre of the whole issue and what they see as the urgent issues to be tackled. It is in this same vein that Siks believes that theatre, when used for the purposes of communication is effective because it is a "[...] useful tool for teaching other

²⁰ Z. Mda, *Marotholi Travelling Theatre: Towards an Alternative Perspective of Development*, Journal of Southern African Studies, 1990, 16(2): 352-358.

²¹ S. Abah - Ogah, *Theatre for Development as a Non-formal Method of Education in Nigeria*, Research in Drama Education, 1996, 1(2):15

subjects [...] and that its value lies in its unique power to stir human emotions through its sensory qualities.”²²

Leis, also in his bid to buttress the above point goes on to say that “theatre is a very effective, inexpensive and yet appropriate two way interpersonal communication medium that can be used to link rural communities with issues that affect them.”²³ Going by what Leis reiterates, it can be seen that, the processes of identifying the problem and proffering solutions must be a communal effort that all the people have a claim to. What this means is that the recipients of the final product are deeply involved in all the processes of the intervention from beginning to end. However, it must be stated that the adoption of the intervention is entirely in the domain of the end user. But it must be noted that, the above notwithstanding, involving the end user of the process in a participatory manner always increases greatly the chances of them adopting it. These arguments all prove and point to the underlying principle that theatre has the ability to communicate well enough to create social actors who are the agents of change.

Theatre again is an effective medium for bringing about change due to the fact that it almost all the time communicates to the common man in his own language and that enables him to deal with the problems that directly affect him and his situation. This way it is able to awaken the latent capacity of the people to make their own decisions and to organize themselves for common action.

In addition to the above arguments therefore, theatre encompasses all aspects of human endeavour and that it comes from the culture of the people. These make it dynamic and enable it to transform the culture of the people into something more sustaining especially if the processes

²² G. B. Siks, *Drama with Children*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1977). p. 11

²³ R. A. Leis, *Popular Communication - Theory and Practice*. Panama, CECOP, 1976, p. 12

are carried out through the use of the performative and the creative arts, something which this research ascribes to.

Theatre for Development as a concept and the medium through which this research hopes to deliver its message deals with principles (just like mathematics, chemistry, physics, or for that matter any subject) that makes it effective for communication. These principles which inform the basis for the research include the role of theatre as a functional medium that is simply accepted by all. Theatre for Development is functional and popular because when it happens, it attempts to involve all those affected by the issues being addressed. It is therefore comprehensible both for the people as a whole and for the individual in particular. It enriches and expands the forms of popular expression by adopting and strengthening the points of view of the most progressive section of the people. It roots itself in tradition due to the fact that it appropriates the culture of the community within which it is happening.

It falls within that genre of theatre that is Popular, Realistic, Critical and Free. In being popular, it is meant to be seen as demonstrating the real social causes of the problems facing the whole community and the people as well as fearlessly achieving an awareness that is geared towards addressing the challenge devoid of suffering and exploitation. Popular theatre being Realistic means it is dynamic and that allows it to present the realities as they exist on the ground as well as project positive values. This enables it to offer its consumers a way out of their existing unfavourable situations by communicating to them in the right way so as to appeal to their good judgements to identify with the processes well enough to sustain them.

In addition, popular theatre is critical to the extent that it tries and thrives through dialogue to perceive the causes of society's problems and pose alternative solutions. This it does by

intentionally provoking a consciousness in the people, which, when properly marshalled, will result in creating in them social actors who will push for change of attitudes regarding the realities which are oppressed. Popular theatre is continual and appeals to the consciousness of its consumers by integrating in them new elements and forms that the processes reveal. All this, it does without fear or favour.

Popular theatre is free and that means everyone within the community who expresses an interest or feels affected by the issues at stake need not surmount any obstacles to be a part of the process. It can be an effective tool in development programmes when its communicating attributes are properly administered. Leis to buttress this goes on to say that as an entertainment form, theatre can attract and hold the interest of large numbers of people at a time. This is due to the fact that it normally operates as an oral medium and in local languages. This fact makes it appealing and when used well will involve the poorest groups and classes in all communities who are often left out of developmental activities.

Furthermore, as a dramatic experience that embodies and represents local problems, popular theatre provides a reflection of the realities which can be used by the community to critique and analyse their situation at all times and in all given situations. These, Sutherland reiterates, serve as a medium for society to “mirror [...] their behaviour, fundamental human passions, ambitions and follies as revealed in contemporary situations.”²⁴ Indeed, through careful observation of situations, the community is able to see themselves and their actions in the performances, and hence are able to critique themselves (adjust their lifestyles for the better).

²⁴ E.T. Sutherland, *Marriage of Anansewa and Edufa*, (London, Longman , 1988), p.3

Leis again states that as a collective expression and communal activity, popular theatre creates the context for cooperation rather than individual thinking and action. It creates the possibility for horizontal communication or peer learning rather than top-down one-way communication. It also is a way of using local institutions for installing new ideas, thus increasing their likelihood of acceptability.

He posits further that as a source of entertainment that communicates effectively, it has the potential of arousing the interest of a lot of members of the community who willingly participate in what is going on if properly employed. Their being interested in what goes on enables them to receive the message that is being communicated. And it is through these that they are exposed to the issues being dealt with. Leis also suggests that these processes must happen in the languages of the people within whom it happens for it to involve the poorest groups and classes who are often left out of development activities.

As a dramatic experience that embodies and represents local problems, popular theatre provides a codification of realities which can be used by the participants in analysing their situation at all times and in all given situations. This enjoins any Theatre for Development practitioner to endeavour to employ processes that will always serve as a mirror for society to critique itself. This will be in line with the stand point as given by Sutherland earlier on. Through it all, opportunity will be given for the creation of social actors within the community who will use their given abilities to push for the needed change. This will in the end bring into prominence the reiteration from Kottak that “members of the target community need to develop a critical consciousness about themselves and their circumstances.”²⁵

²⁵ C.P Kottak, *Mirror for Humanity, 4th Edition*, (New York, McGraw Hill, 2005), p.54

2.4 Improved Farming Methods

What will be the use of creating social actors who have no voice with which to push for the needed change? The researcher therefore believes that for this study to be effective, the social actors who are created as a result of the processes must have something to work with. Furthermore the researcher wants to reiterate the fact that making improved farming methods available to stakeholders cannot be over emphasized. Hence the study will discuss some of the techniques and innovations that are available for adoption by farmers.

Asuming-Brempong et al, to this effect posit that:

Given that the Government of Ghana's policy, through the GPRS II, is a strategic focus on 'accelerated growth as a means of wealth creation, poverty reduction and equitable social development', and given that agriculture is a dominant sector of the economy, the performance of the agricultural sector will play a crucial role in providing the necessary inputs for a vibrant agro-processing industrial sector in the medium to long term. This puts issues of the agricultural sector, such as research and extension linkages, and the effectiveness of decentralization in the sector at the core of any progress that can be made in the growth and development of the economy.²⁶

This means that increasing agricultural productivity and production through improved farming methods therefore is a precondition for achieving food security in Ghana. This means for as long as farmers continue to use traditional low yielding crop varieties and outdated farming methods as alluded to in Ghana's Vision 2020 document, "the vision to achieve agricultural growth rate of 4% as stipulated [...] will be a mere illusion."²⁷

Efforts have therefore been made by researchers within the agriculture sector. Leading the way is the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and agencies like the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) through its institutions such as the Savannah Agricultural Research Institute (SARI), the Crops Research

²⁶ Asuming-Brempong et al, *Institutional Bottlenecks of Agricultural Sector Development: the Case of Research and Extension Provision in Ghana*, (Paris, OECD Development Centre, 2002), p.62

²⁷ NDPC, *Ghana's Vision 2020 Document*, Accra, 1995

Institute (CRI) Soil Research Institute (SRI) Animal Research Institute(ARI) etc., in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), and other international research institutes to develop and extend several improved technologies for use by farmers. These include improved farming practices such as using organic matter to increase soil fertility, improved crop varieties (maize, cassava, cowpea groundnut, sorghum, pepper, tomatoes, garden eggs, coconut, oil palm, citrus, mango etc.) and improved animal husbandry amongst others. Maize is one of the crops that has received priority research attention possibly because it is the most important cereal grown on more than 500 000 hectares [...] and consumed nationwide as stated and collaborated by Alderman and Hingis.²⁸

Aside the various improved crop varieties; there are also in existence several farming methods that allow minimum soil management practices. These are all aimed at helping the farmer reduce the drudgery on the field thereby saving cost and time. These are cheap but effective methods that the researcher thinks can be used to save money by way of reduced inorganic fertiliser application and weedicide usage. These can be achieved by the use of organic matter such biomass as mulch in place of the inorganic fertilizers.

In pursuance of the above, Adenine, Ojeniyi and Awodun, in their joint paper on the *Relative Effect of Weed Mulch Types on Soil Properties and Yield of Yam in Southwest Nigeria*, conducted experiments in Akure and Obaile in Southwest Nigeria during 2006 to study the relative effect of Mexican sunflower (*Tithonia diversifolia*), siam weed (*Chromolaena odorata*), elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpurem*), guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*) on soil physical and chemical properties and yam tuber yield. They found out and state as follows:

²⁸ Alderman, H., P. Hingis, *Food and Nutrition Adequacy in Ghana*, Cornell Food and Nutrition Policy Paper, No. 27,(New York, Cornell Food and Nutrition Project), 1992

That the mulches were applied at 10tha-1. Mexican sunflower and Siam weed significantly influenced soil physical properties. Relative to the control, all mulches increased yam establishment and tuber weight significantly ($P>0.05$) [...] the mulches also increased tuber length significantly.²⁹

In the same vein Essien, Essien, Nwite, Eke, Anaele and Ogbu also conducted experiments at the Research and Teaching Farm of the Federal College of Agriculture, Ishiagu during the 2008 cropping season, to assess the effect of organic mulch materials (Plant and Animal) on crop performance and weed growth. They also found out that the effect of organic mulch materials on maize performance and weed growth was positive.

They capture this thus

The experiment was laid out in a Randomized Complete Block Design (RCBD) with six (6) treatments replicated three (3) times. Weeds flora, composition, growth and yield parameter of crop were collected. Results showed that Graminaea, Asteraceae and Solanaceae weeds families were predominant. Annual weed species, mostly broad leaves and grasses dominated the area. There was a significant [...] suppression of weeds in all the treatments, except on no application [...]. Amongst the treatments however, poultry dropping and a combination of soil amendments produced the highest crop growth and yield, and no application produced the lowest.³⁰

What this means to this research is that such simple but effective methods when properly utilised through their application on the field by farmers can go a long way in affecting the yield of the farmer and in turn assist in improving his/her livelihood. What is worthy and must be noted is that one such biomass as mulch material, the siam weed (*Chromolaena odorata*) as used in the above experiments and is found in most parts of the West African sub region also abounds in Ghana (and commonly known in Ghana as the *Akyeampong/Busia* weed in the Akan speaking areas). To support this fact, Braimah and Timbilla (1990) in an unpublished report on *A Survey*

²⁹ Adeniyi, B.O., Ojeniyi, S.O. and Awodun, M.A. *Relative Effect of Weed Mulch Types on Soil Properties and Yield of Yam in Southwest Nigeria*. *Journal of Soil Nature*, 2008, 2(3): 1

³⁰ B.A Essien, J.B Essien, J.C Nwite, K.A Eke, U.M Anaele, J.U Ogbu *Effects of Organic Mulch Materials on Maize Performance and Weed Growth in the derived Savannah of South Eastern Nigeria*. *Journal of Soil Nature*, 2008, 2(3):5

of the Introduction, Distribution and Spread of *Chromolaena odorata* in Ghana reiterated that “the plant is abundant in the country [...] has spread far [...], and it can be found in about two thirds of the country.”³¹

Hall et al also posit that despite its weed status, *C.odorata* is of medicinal and has several other values to many homes in Ghana. Most importantly, they reiterate that:

dehydropyrrolizidine alkaloids (PAs) represents a class of secondary plant compounds that are active in defence against herbivory are present in *Chromolaena odorata* [...] Studies have shown that pure PAs from *C. odorata* roots have nematicidal effects on the root- knot nematode *meloidogyne incognita* [...] These show that mulch or aqueous crude extracts from *c. odorata* roots reduce the infection of lettuce by *m. incognita*, thus a valuable agent for integrated nematode management.³²

For the purposes of this research, what this simply means is that *Chromolaena odorata* or Siam weed (Akyeampong/Busia) when used as biomass for mulching (organic manure) has a three pronged effect: can control nematodes, (esp. *Meloidogyne incognita*), can improve soil fertility and suppress weed growth.

In furtherance to the above, another study was conducted on the effect of poultry manure on soil Physico-Chemical Properties, Leaf Nutrient Contents and Yield of Yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) on Alfisol in Southwestern Nigeria by Adeleye, Ayeni, and Ojeniyi, all of the Department of Crop, Soil and Pest Management, Federal University of Technology, Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. They state following the experiment that:

the main effect of poultry manure on soil physico-chemical properties, leaf nutrients contents and yield of yam (*Dioscorea rotundata*) was investigated in a factorial

³¹H, Braimah, J.A., Timbilla: *A Survey of the Introduction, Distribution and Spread of Chromolaena odorata in Ghana*, Unpublished Report,(CSIR-Crops Research Institute, Kumasi,1990), p.365

³²T.C. Thodhen, M. Boppre, J. Hallman, *Parrolizidine alkaloids of C. odorata act as nematicidal agents and reduce infection of lettuce roots by M.incognita*. *Nematology*, 2007, 9 (3): 343

experiment involving tillage at five levels- ploughing, ploughing plus harrowing, manual ridging, manual heaping and zero-tillage; poultry manure at 0 t/ha and 10 t/ha laid out in a split-plot design at two locations in Ondo, Nigeria. The data obtained indicated that poultry manure application improved soil physical properties; it reduced soil bulk density, temperature and also increased total porosity and soil moisture retention capacity. It also, improved soil organic matter, total N, available P, exchangeable high Mg, Ca, K and lowered exchange acidity. It also increased nutrient uptake, growth and yield [...] significantly. The use of poultry manure in crop production is recommended as it will ensure stability of soil structure; improve soil organic matter status, nutrients availability and crop yield.³³

What the above discussions mean to this research is simply that there are very cheap and effective methods of farming that can be employed by farmers that will go a long way to increase their yields which will, by default, improve their livelihoods. What remains a challenge in this direction in the estimation of the researcher, however, is the encouragement for them to adopt them for use. This research, therefore, hopes to, as its aims and objectives, try and find out how theatre and for that matter drama can be used as a means to encourage the adoption of these improved farming methods as enumerated by the facts above by our farmers.

2.5 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

For this study to have a proper grounding in terms of theories and concepts that serve as the framework upon which the work is carried out, the researcher would like to discuss some of the theories and concepts that are relevant enough to underpin the praxis of this research.

2.5.1 Brecht on Challenging the Audience

Although epic theatre is known to have been propounded by Bertolt Brecht, the idea of epic theatre according to Styan is credited to Piscator with whom Brecht worked in the formative

³³E. Adeleye, L. Ayeni, S. Ojeniyi, *Effect of Poultry Manure on Soil Physico-Chemical Properties, Leaf Nutrient Contents and Yield of Yam (Dioscorea rotundata) on Alfisol in Southwestern Nigeria*. Journal of American Science 2010; 6 (10):871

years of his career. He captures this thus, “working in the early years with Bertolt Brecht, Piscator formulated a plan for a drama which could be used for the public discussion of political and social issues. They named their new dramatic form *Episches Theatre*.”³⁴ Though Brecht acknowledged a special debt to Piscator and his idea of epic theatre, it was Brecht who gave epic form its distinctive “broadest and most far-reaching experiment in great modern theatre.”³⁵

Brecht was concerned with the idea that theatre must capture one of the many principles and essence of Theatre for Development; that is, it is capable of bringing about social change through the communication that always happens between the performer and the audience. This goes to say that the audience at a play should be made to think rather than to become emotionally identified with the characters. This is to say they are to think about what they were presented with and come up with intellectual discourses. Brecht focuses on the interaction between the actor and the audience and as such evolved a type of theatre that challenges the audience. Sergei Tretiakov further explains that the epic is:

calculated to make the spectator observe (not become involved); to awaken him to action (not accept tragedy but to join in the Communist revolution in order to remove tragedy from the face of the earth); to argue (not state);[...] to cause the spectator not to feel but to reason; to present theatre in tableaux (montage); not as “organic” (well-made) [...]³⁶

In addition to the above assertion, Brecht himself posits thus:

the bare wish, if nothing else, to evolve an art fit for the times must drive our theatre of the scientific age straight out into the suburbs, where it can stand as it were wide open, at the disposal of those who live hard and produce much, so that they can be fruitfully entertained there with their great problems. They may find it hard to pay for our art, and immediately to grasp the new method of entertainment, and we shall have to learn in many respects what they need and how they need it; but we can be sure of their interest.

³⁴ J.L. Styan, *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice: Expressionism and Epic Theatre*, Cambridge, (Cambridge University, 1981), p.128

³⁵ H. B. Clark, *European Theories of Drama*, (New York, Crown, 1978), p.312.

³⁶ S. Tretiakov, cited by M. Seymour-Smith, Guide to Modern World Literature, Vol. 2, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975, p.317

For these men who seem so far apart from natural science are only from it because they are forcibly kept apart; and before they can get their hands on it they have first to develop and put into effect a new science of society; so that these are the true children of the scientific age, who alone can get the theatre moving if it is to move at all.³⁷

What is clear is that the new type of theatre must reflect the happenings at the time. It must deal directly with what pertains in the community. Moreover, the audience who come to see the theatre must be the people whose actions should inform what happens in the community, after they have analysed and re-examined their situation. By so doing, the theatre will reflect what happens in the community and also serve as an avenue of instruction.

The researcher advances based on the above that the audience must always be communicated to in such a way that they are challenged to use their exposure to information to always push for changes in the status quo. For this, Brecht strongly advocated that “the theatre has to become geared into reality if it is to be in a position to turn out effective representation of reality.”³⁸ Thus, one of the ways by which one can make the theatre real is by making it interactive; by getting the audience to be conscious of what they are being presented to; thus transforming them from just watching and empathizing, to watching and questioning what they see, and to analyse it. This shows that Brecht had only one focus in mind; that is to depart from the normal ways of staging theatre in his time into something new. He puts it tacitly thus:

this generation doesn't want to capture the theatre, audience and all, and perform good or merely contemporary plays in the same theatre and to the same audience; nor has it any chance of doing so; it has a duty and a chance to capture the theatre for a different audience. The works now being written are coming more and more to lead towards that great epic theatre which corresponds to the sociological situation; neither their content nor their form can be understood except by the minority that understands this. They are not going to satisfy the old aesthetics; they are going to destroy it.³⁹

³⁷ B. Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, Ed and Trans. John Willet, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1964), p.186

³⁸ ---, 1964, p.186.

³⁹ J. Willet, (Ed.) *Brecht on Theatre*, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1964), p.21.

Brecht was also concerned that the issues presented clearly served the privileged elites and that was something he sought to change. However, when the Philosopher in *The Messingkauf Dialogues* stated that “we want to demolish the fourth wall,”⁴⁰ he was making it evident that Brecht was not alone in this struggle and that there were other people whose work also sought to challenge naturalism and sought to challenge the naturalist to re-examine their work and see theatre in a different light. Their aim was to engage the audience by communicating to them to think critically about what they saw rather than be carried away with emotions: thus in a way create social actors who can push for social reforms. The above discussions, just as the theory of alienation that resulted from Brecht’s concept of *The Verfremdungseffekt* seek to create an audience, which questions what they see in the theatre and impose judgement. Stephen Heath considers this as a process and comments thus:

It is not that the spectator is held separate to the action of the play and, from there, effectively placed in a relation of identification to the hero as totalising consciousness, but rather that the spectator is himself included in the movement from ideology to real, from illusion to objective truth [...]⁴¹

Silcox contributes to the above discussion, by believing that this informs why “Brecht employed strategies that would bring about alienation in his audience. The Alienation effect was meant to infuse an historical and social dimension into the theatre by hindering the audience from empathizing with the characters in a play.”⁴²

It must be noted here also that the fact about the audience not empathizing does not mean the rejection of emotion. Brecht elaborates on this essence and postulates that:

The essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator’s reason. Instead of sharing an experience the spectator must come to grips

⁴⁰ B. Brecht, *The Messingkauf Dialogues* trans by John Willett, (London, Methuen, 1977), p.52

⁴¹ S. Heath, “*Lessons from Brecht.*” Screen 15, (1974) p.116

⁴² H. M. Silcox, What's Wrong with Alienation? *Philosophy and Literature*, 2010; 34(1) :132

with things. At the same time it would be quite wrong to try and deny emotion to this kind of theatre. It would be much the same thing as trying to deny emotion to modern science.⁴³

By obviously appealing to the spectator's reason instead of his feelings, the spectator would be critical of what s/he is watching in theatre and not be carried away emotionally. This does not constitute the total rejection of emotion. Brecht further clarifies this by not denying emotion but rather emphasizing it and suggesting that emotion should be looked at from a different perspective when it comes to the Alienation effect. It points to a more interactive theatre that does not allow the audience to have a direct intervention to the performance on stage but rather have their opinion and are not restricted to what they see.

In spite of the misunderstanding surrounding the Alienation effect, Brecht's work exposes and sets a stage for the importance of the audience in the theatre. The audience is transformed at least from being just sympathizers to people with roles in the dramatic action. It implies that they do not just watch but rather come to the performance with the aim of analysing and proposing alternative ways from the lessons learnt by being challenged to see the performance differently. These discussions are regarded as the beginnings of the thought and concept of Theatre for Development. It is this experience that the research aims to employ so that at the end of the day, the participants would have been put in a situation that would enable them to have a direct intervention in their own lives and be able to use these experiences to guide their behaviour towards change.

⁴³ J. Willet, (Ed.) *Brecht on Theatre*, (New York, Hill and Wang, 1964), p.23

2.5.2 Freire and Boal on Engaging/Involving the Audience

Paulo Freire, as an influence on Theatre for Development stems from the fact that his theory of ‘conscientization’ with particular focus on adult literary learning has been appropriated for purposes of development due to its discursive nature. His statement in the *Cultural Action for Freedom* publication that “when we consider adult literacy learning or education in general as an act of knowing, we are advocating a synthesis between the educator’s maximally systematized knowing and the learner’s minimally systematized knowing-a synthesis achieved in dialogue,”⁴⁴ attests to the above fact.

In Freire’s opinion, the role of the educator is to pose problems and allow discussion instead of posing the problem, solving it and asking the participant to absorb. This he prescribes can be done by means of codifying the existential reality of the learner in order to help him or her arrive at a more critical reality. It means that the learner should know the situation s/he finds him or herself as the reality or that the learner must be made ‘aware’ of his or her situation.

Mies buttresses this process by suggesting that once the learner is made aware of his circumstance or situation and or what is happening in his environment, he must take steps towards changing this circumstance. That is why his reality becomes the first point in the education process. In addition, this goes to confirm the fact that “the starting point for organizing the programme content [...] must be the present, existential, concrete situations, reflecting the aspirations of the people”.⁴⁵ Such is the approach this research intends to adopt to help enable the people in the community become conscious of their environment through the processes so that the ensuing communication can get them to take action to change their situation. Freire

⁴⁴ Freire, Paulo. *Cultural Action for Freedom*, (London, Sheed and Ward, 1970), p.17

⁴⁵ M. Mies, “Paulo Freire’s Method of Education: Conscientization in Latin America”, *Economic and Political Weekly*, (1973; 8(39):1767

further urges that we must never merely discuss “the present situation and must never provide the people with programmes which have little or nothing to do with their own preoccupations, doubts, hopes, and fears.”⁴⁶ He goes on to advise that facilitators must always dialogue with the people about their view and ours and not our own view on them. And that we must realize that their view of things as pertains within their environment, manifest variously in their action and reflect their situation in the world. To make this work, his prescription for the best way to educate or to have people come to terms with reality is to walk with them through a system of education that invites them to express their thoughts on the situation at hand instead of dictating to them what they should do. This is because the problem posing approach considers the student as someone with the capacity to bring his or her experience to bear on the problem posed and can contribute to the analysis of the problem instead of just being someone who is spoon-fed literary with information.

Mies again sums up this approach to getting things done as:

using a dialogue and problem-posing approach, recognize and value local knowledge and learn continuously from those people with whom we work-not only from diverse grassroots sectors but also from local officers and intellectuals, as well as from others working in external agencies; and to revise our ideas continuously in going to work with the people.⁴⁷

In all of these, Freire tries to make clear the fact that the Theatre for Development practitioner should have the ability and humility to learn from the indigenous knowledge of the people, including the official positions so that s/he can help conscientise the people and also enlighten him or herself. To stress this, he reiterates that:

⁴⁶ P. Freire, *Cultural Action for Freedom* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1970); p.17

⁴⁷ M. Mies, “*Paulo Freire's Method of Education: Conscientization in Latin America*”, Economic and Political Weekly, 1973; 8(39):1769

To achieve this praxis, however, it is necessary to trust in the oppressed and their ability to reason. Whoever lacks this trust will fail to initiate [...] dialogue, reflection, and communication, and will fall into using slogans, communiqués, monologues, and instructions. Superficial conversions to the cause of liberation carry this danger.⁴⁸

This shows that the best way to be able to educate or conscientise the people is in trusting them. By doing this, the educator comes down to their level and also entertains their ideas with the aim of learning something new. Failure to trust them and to come to their level as well as entertain their ideals means one will fall for the banking concept which rather subjugates instead of liberates. The former approach ensures the success of the conscientization process which Freire defines as a process of “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality.”⁴⁹

Freire’s approach to education is seen as a process of engaging the participants and making sure that from the onset s/he is given an opportunity to have a say. This does not only make the teacher’s work easy, but also links the education process with reality and builds the students enough for them to be able to effect change in their various communities by first understanding the real situation at hand. This can be said to be the reason why most ‘Theatre for Development’ in Africa is based upon this theory. The reason for this is because the metaphor of the ‘class room’ situation can be extended to the community level. It is upon this framework that the processes of this research was organised. Thus engaging the participants in a way that they were given opportunity to freely express themselves as to what they think could be done about the situation at hand.

In his book *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Augusto Boal, sets the stage for further experimentation in the theatre by proposing a distinct kind of theatre that gives the audience a major role in deciding

⁴⁸ P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (London, Continuum, 1972), p.66

⁴⁹ A. Boal, *Theatre for the Oppressed*, (London, Continuum, 1972), p.15.

what happens in a performance. Boal is of the view that the audience should not be made to relinquish their power which allows them to contribute their quota in the process of finding a solution to a problem. This is in line with the earlier postulations by Freire and makes the communication process more complete.

For Boal, the audience can perceive the performance differently and when granted the opportunity, might be able to bring a different perspective that the performers have not thought of, to the discussion or scenario. This could have been the reason why Boal departed from simultaneous dramaturgy to forum theatre.

This probably influenced Boal's theory as propounded in his book *Theatre for the Oppressed*, a discovery of an avenue to give the oppressed a voice. This translates into giving the audience an opportunity to bring their own understanding of the situation or their perspective to the fore. This means that one must not always go by the rules but be flexible enough to allow for divergent views on the situation. This will allow for a combination of artistic decisions and a determination to learn and that could bring out a theatre that has the capacity of questioning accepted standards. On this point, the researcher will agree with Babbage who argues that "the body of ideas and techniques that constitute *Theatre of the Oppressed* was not born from purely, or predominantly, artistic decisions and experiences, but grew out of a determined battle to make socially engaged, life-affirming theatre in a climate of extreme repression."⁵⁰

This, in the opinion of the researcher, portrays Boal as a practical person and not someone confined to abstract ideas that would not survive in practice. His practice is to reflect the real life situation and also give an alternative way of approaching it. Boal therefore involves the audience

⁵⁰ F. Babbage, *Augusto Boal*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p.45

because he understands that they are the people who are facing all the conditions that eventually become the central idea of the drama performed and as such, they have the right to be given an opportunity to contribute in the solution process.

To bring out the objective of this process, Boal does not mince words in positing that “ in order to understand this Poetics of the Oppressed one must keep in mind its main objective: to change the people [...], passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon- into subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action.”⁵¹

Thus it is to empower the audience to be able to contribute to make the process whole by adding their own views. By doing this, they are indirectly practicing the change they want to see or make manifest in their community. This, Boal attests to by saying “[...] perhaps the theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution.”⁵² For me this is a rehearsal for what the spectator believes is the best approach to solving the problem at stake and the change they expect to see in their community.

This theory comes across as that which serves the interest of Theatre for Development directly, especially when it comes to participation on the part of community members in the process of communicating development and solving developmental challenges, especially during post-performance discussions. They are able to discuss freely what they think should be in their opinion and also seek clarification for any misunderstandings. This then allows the people to own the process of change and empower them to believe that they are the people who can and should change their community. It does not agree with going to force opinions on the people, but allows the people to come up with what is most desirable to them, and what they believe is the

⁵¹ A. Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, (New York, Theatre Communication Group, 1985), p.122

⁵² Ibid, p.122

best alternative; thus, they become directly involved in the process thereby making these theories unanimous on participatory instruction.

Like Brecht, Boal believed in critical reflection-- that is to say that, with Brecht the audience is made to only understand and analyse but Boal gives them the opportunity to bring to bear what their understanding is and what they think should happen with regards to the issues at hand. The reason being that emphasis in Theatre for Development is geared towards the audience and how they react to what is before them as they participate and also discuss the situations and subjects raised after the performance. Brecht's theory of alienation does not allow the active involvement of the audience; instead, it challenges the audience to think critically about what they watch in the theatre. It is therefore reasonable to say that though Brecht's theory of alienation helps in challenging the audience to make intellectual decisions based on what they are presented with, it cannot be appropriated fully in the processes of Theatre for Development because of its limitations with regards to audience participation. It is more appropriate when dealing with how the audience react to performances, i.e., post-performance discussions.

Boal on the other hand, though shares in the idea of Brecht that the audience should not only be regarded as people who cannot inform what happens on stage, he took it further by not only making them think critically about what they see but also make them assume the lead role of showcasing how they want the situation depicted in a performance resolved. Here, the audience is empowered not only to challenge what they see but have the right to change it to what they want it to be when the time comes for them to be the forerunners. What Boal persistently demonstrates is that the audience is an integral part of the whole action. They are as important as any character or actor in the performance. This is because they are those who will serve as the agents of the change that any theatre for development process seeks to achieve in any particular

community. So their involvement and contribution through active participation means that they bring their opinions to bear on what they want to see happen in the community. This way, one is assured that whether directly or indirectly they can help in the sustenance of the process and this no doubt can lead to a change in how things are done and this can lead to development. It therefore means that the theory of Boal is most appropriate when dealing with the subject of Theatre for Development. These notwithstanding, it is important to mention that the theory of Freire also ensures participation of the audience because it requires their active participation, not just as recipients but as participants with experiences that are useful to their educational process.

Going by the way in which these theories function in Theatre for Development and how they informed the processes of this research, it is crucial to point out that the creation of change in any society might be impossible or difficult if the members of the community within which one is working do not believe in themselves. This is because theatre's ability to communicate effectively cannot be seen if the recipient of the information is not convinced that s/he can be of influence to society based on the information acquired.

However, it must be stated that the recipient's zeal to further see to the manifestation of this influence is also crucial. Here Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory becomes relevant. He states that self-efficacy is "a judgment of one's ability to execute a particular behaviour pattern."⁵³ He further suggests that perceived self-efficacy is the "belief in one's ability to be able to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments."⁵⁴ This means that the community and for that matter members of the target group's belief in themselves is pivotal in the change process. It is also worth noting that Boal's theory gives the community the impetus to

⁵³ A. Bandura, "Reflections on Self-Esteem, Advances in Behavioural Research and Therapy" (Times Books 1978), p. 237

⁵⁴ ---, *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, (New York, W. H. Freeman, 1997), p. 21.

showcase what they think is the best approach in solving the problem or issue at hand. Thus they acquire the ability to take up the challenge to deal with issues and that lead to a higher degree of self-efficacy. Using these theories as the bedrock for analysing the project aided a lot in the extent to which the project's aims were realised.

As a result of the communicative ability of theatre, it has been used for information dissemination purposes across Africa in several ways. Addul Karim attested to this in his unpublished Thesis; *Change and the Actor, Experiments with Theatre for Change (TFAC)*. He indicated that people from diverse backgrounds have used Theatre across Africa for different purposes. Specifically, he asserted that Ross Kidd and Martin Byram (adult educators), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (novelist) Nigeria's Steve Oga-Abah (university lecturer), etc. "all understood the fact that disciplines (fields of study) inform one another and engaging and using them collectively strengthens all of them. With this understanding, they were able to take a non-conventional look at the nature of theatre and seized its potential to better the lot of their communities and also enrich their respective disciplines."⁵⁵

In Kenya, Gautam (2000) found these beneficial when participatory processes were used for agricultural research extension by appropriating methods including "group discussions, seminars and in-service training courses for extension staff and farmers, on-farm demonstrations and farmer field days to increase staff training, geographical coverage, and improved linkages [...]."⁵⁶ In Ghana, Theatre for Development has been used for information dissemination in health, nutrition, literacy, environment, sanitation, etc. by various agencies including the Ghana Health Service (for various health and nutrition programs) Ghana Aids Commission (For

⁵⁵ A. Karim, *Change and the Actor, Experiments with Theatre for Change (TFAC)*, Unpublished Thesis, (University of Ghana, 2011), p.21

⁵⁶ Gautam as quoted by the Department of Agriculture Extension Services in *Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*, (MoFA., Accra, 2010), p.14

HIV/AIDS) National Malaria Control Program (For Malaria), National Road Safety Commission (for Road Safety), etc. as reiterated by Mr. Sandy Arkhurst,⁵⁷ the pioneer of Theatre for Development in Ghana.

Mumma Opiyo gives credence to this ability of theatre by stating that where:

“Theatre for Development exists; it is facilitated by a team of theatre experts who work with various types of development and extension agencies, helping them create theatre that will carry a message on such themes as nutrition, literacy, health, environment, sanitation, and agriculture around the communities.”⁵⁸

This assertion, in a tacit way capture the views of practitioners like Zakes Mda, David Kerr, Steve Obah-Agah and others on how Theatre for Development can be used as a tool for information dissemination which implies that it can be used much the same to help increase the efforts being put into linking stakeholders in the agriculture sector (farmers) to the available improved methods to help increase productivity.

Having discussed literature that is deemed relevant to this study as well as concepts, theories and methods that the study drew from to help achieve its aims, the next chapter discusses the Methodologies (approach and processes) that were adopted to gather and process the needed data. These approach and processes are a detailed version of the methodologies as expatiated on in the introduction of this study.

⁵⁷ S. Arkhurst is a renowned Theatre for Development (TFD) practitioner and Lecturer in Directing and TFD at the University of Ghana. Personal Discussions, Nov 2012.

⁵⁸ Mumma Opiyo, Levert Loukie, *Drama and Theatre, Communication in Development*, Nairobi, (Drama/Theatre and Education Association, 1997), pp. 10-11

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the approach and various processes that were employed to undertake the study; in other words, the methodologies that were employed in gathering and analysing data for the study. These include a brief description of the laboratory site where the study was conducted, the type of research design that was employed, the population that was included in the study, the study sample and the type of technique employed in the sampling. There is also a discussion of the research instrument, which describes how data was collected and how that informed the creation of the improvisation (play). Finally, there is a discussion of the various activities that shaped the improvisation for its performance.

3.2 The Laboratory Site (Lab Site)

Mayera Okuleyman was founded over a century ago. It is located about 3 kilometres east of Pokuase and about two kilometres from Amasaman, all within the Ga West Municipality. It is a predominantly Ga community with a population of about ten thousand people (This figure is an approximated value given by the community leaders and not based on any census). Due to the present rush for lands for development, however, there is the presence of people from different ethnic groups like, Ewe, Akan, Kanjaga and even some foreign nationals like the Togolese and Nigerians.

Politically it is under the administration of the Ga West Municipal Assembly. Traditionally it is ruled by a Chief and a Queen mother whose spiritual powers are derived from a Wolomo (Fetish Priestess).

The main occupation found in the area is rain fed farming with basic tools. There also exist traders and artisans of all sorts within the community. The community is surrounded by a string of mountains within which can be found satellite towns like Faase, Okaiman, Oson Dompe, Adusah, Owulaman, Osofoiman, Katapkor, Korleman, Samsam, Mantsi and Donyo. These towns derive their livelihoods from Mayera Okuleyman due to the fact that it lies in the centre of all these settlements. In other words, Mayera Okuleyman is the centre with these towns on its periphery.

It is worth noting here that the mountainous texture of the locale gives the whole area a cool feel. The resultant effect of this seeming coolness is that more and more people from the city are moving towards the area to settle. As such this is affecting the economic fortunes of the area. People who own land are having a field day selling them to prospective developers, thus putting a lot of pressure and stress on the available land for farming purposes. The effect of this development on the community is that farmers within the community have to walk longer distances to access farmlands which are being pushed further and further away.

3.3 Research Design

The researcher employed the qualitative type of data collection and analysis. It must be stated here that emphasis was laid on the exploratory and interpretative approach to the analysis. The following processes were involved in collecting data for the research; interviews, one on one as well as Focus Group Discussions (to analyse data for deductions and make conclusions), creating

the play (improvisation), rehearsals, pre-test of the play, performance and post-performance discussions, evaluation, and follow up. These processes are discussed in detail in the next chapter. The study employed this type of design to enable the facilitator to be with the research population throughout the entire process. This was also done to enable the participants to get to know each other and also get to know the researcher well enough to remove any form of inhibitions that they may have. The result of this was that the study was able to get as much information as required from the respondents on the issues at stake as possible.

3.4 Population

The research population was made up of farmers. There were a total number of 24 people comprising 14 men and 10 women. This number came about as a result of the fact that the researcher needed a number that could conveniently constitute the proposed Focus Groups. However, concerted efforts were made not to create gender imbalance; hence as many men as women were brought in to satisfy the ratio in terms of the number of male to female farmers within the laboratory site. A decision was made to work through existing extension officers of the Agricultural Extension Services of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture in the Ga West Municipality. This decision was made on the grounds that it was desired for the research data to compare the approach being used by the extension officers previously to the processes that Theatre for Development appropriates using participatory methods that the research employed. This was done in order for the study to measure the extent to which both methods could encourage adoption and to contrast them. Furthermore, this was to use these extension officers as a check and a guide on the various data that would be collected so that deductions that would be made from them could be credible. The study set out to work within the Mayera Okuleyman community but it ended up engulfing eight (8) different communities at the close of the

processes. This was due to the fact that the information contained in the study was brought into by the farmers, and on their own, spread the word to their friends and family within these communities. The study did not include any non-farmer respondent due to the criteria set out to select respondents. This was also done to enable the study make deductions based on only informed positions as would be clarified in the next stage of this discussion under the sub-topic study sample and sampling technique.

3.5 Study Sample & Sampling Technique

The study based its selection of participants and/or respondents on these criteria:

1. History of extension exposure
2. Growing of more than one crop at a time (mixed cropping)
3. History of fertilizer and or weedicide use

The study selected its sample based on the above criteria due to the following reasons:

The farmers being already aware of extension services would provide a better platform on which to stand and build as well as make it easier to extend further assistance. This would also give a basis for comparing the methods as discussed previously, i.e. those being used by the extension officers and that which the study was introducing.

Again, the researcher believed that dealing with farmers who are involved in the production of more than one crop at a time gives more latitude for the project in terms of its expected outcomes which includes the use of organic matter to assist in increasing the fertility of the soil. Besides,

different crops have different nutrient requirements. Considering this as a yardstick, it makes comparisons of the methods simple and easy.

Furthermore, selecting farmers based on prior use of fertilizer and/or weedicides would accord these selected farmers the ability to appreciate the savings they would make when they no longer would have to buy these inputs for their work when the outcomes of the project are made manifest.

3.6 Research Instrument

To efficiently collect the data for the research, the approach was divided or segmented into various processes and steps. These include the following:

A situational analysis of the laboratory site was done. Through this, a general familiarization tour of the community (the proposed lab site) was taken. This enabled the researcher get familiar with issues on the ground such as where to go; who to see for permissions since one cannot just walk into a community and begin a study; what to do and at what times. These, when completed, provided a clear picture of who to go to for permissions, who to include in the list for interviews, and the subsequent interactions. The process began with a visit to the assembly woman of the area, Hon. Nancy Netey. She thought that the study was good for the community so she accompanied the researcher to the elders of the community and introduced the project. Fortunately, some of the elders were also farmers and so accepted to assist in whatever way they could but insisted that they would be a part of the processes. However, the set criteria for selection were applied and three out of the four community elders qualified. The last elder who did not qualify was a driver and so had to be excused. They bought into the idea and that set the tone for the commencement of the study.

The selection process began with various interviews with members of the community to determine who could be selected and also to gain insight into the existing problems and how they thought solutions could be found. This enabled the researcher get a fine mix of farmers to add to what the extension officers had already assisted him to identify.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held with the selected farmers. The discussions were based on issues such as the types of crops being grown, whether or not they are using fertilizers, what kind of farming methods were being practiced, how effective or efficient were these methods, are they involved in rain fed agriculture or are into irrigation, and so on. After the Focus Group Discussions were completed, the researcher and respondents/participants went into brainstorming sessions where the farmers used the deductions from the focus group to again discuss possible and suitable solutions for the problems and issues confronting them.

At this stage, the selected group was introduced to the idea of using a performance as a vehicle for selling the idea to the community. Through the consensus that was built out of the above processes, a play was fashioned out from the data collected. These were done with the aim of letting the community have a sense of ownership towards the project.

A work plan was developed to get the improvisation ready for performance. Here the researcher made it a point to make sure the rest of the community was encouraged to be a part of the project as possible. This was done by not turning away people who stopped to witness the various discussions and meetings. By this, interested members of the community were allowed to observe what was going on. Doing all that was in the hope that people will get close enough to the process and as such feel free to discuss whatever they thought would enable the processes unravel issues that cause the identified problems.

3.7 Story Creation, Performance and Post Performance Discussions

The outline for the improvisation was created from discussions amongst the group. This was then subjected to further discussions for fine tuning. Each member's opinion was sought as to how the outline could be improved. After three meetings on the outline of the improvisation, a Playlet emerged and stakeholders agreed to cast and start the rehearsals for the actual performance.

Casting was done by way of several try-outs and on the performance of the various members during interactions to get players for the improvisation. With casting completed, work began on improving characterization. They were given the free will to come out with their own characters but once rehearsals started, members of the group were free to make suggestions as to how they thought the characters should come out.

Rehearsals were scheduled for Sundays and Fridays in the evenings.⁵⁹ These days were selected because they did not go to their farms. Two successful rehearsals were done and various suggestions came up and were put up for adoption. However, on the third rehearsal day an emergency meeting was called at the instance of the group. They demanded to know what financial benefits awaited them at the end of the performance. In fact, this request came as a shock to the researcher so efforts were made to explain to them that there were no financial rewards attached. This really rattled the boat and for some time it became obvious that the group wanted some financial rewards after the project. By the next rehearsal date it was becoming a reality that they needed to be assured of some form of financial inducement. It was at this point that some of the participants spoke about the fact that they had been taken for granted by a similar research team who used them in the past and never fulfilled their promise to pay them.

⁵⁹ See Appendix C

The researcher took time to explain situation and told them categorically that there was not going to be any such benefits simply because the project was for academic purposes only and as such there was no budget. This affected rehearsals; the researcher would go to the community to wait for rehearsals only to cancel it because only a few people would turn up. By the help of the Assembly woman who spoke to them, the researcher was able to get them back on course and so rehearsals resumed. However, this time, members of the group started absenting themselves with weak reasons.

This delayed the work plan that had been set by the project. It became apparent that something ought to be done to save the situation. The rehearsals were supposed to go on for three weeks and then we would pre-test. We went behind schedule for several weeks and when rehearsals resumed progress became slow. Things became so slow that the researcher had to think of a way to move things faster. This was due to the fact that a performance that was to be staged by the middle of December, 2012 was not ready for pretesting one week to the scheduled date.⁶⁰ Christmas came and so we had to break for the holidays. Work resumed after the holidays but tried as the researcher could, the financial issue had eaten into the participants so much that by the 2nd week in January the main characters were lost. A meeting was held with them in which it was explained to them again about the study's honest inability to offer them any financial rewards. They understood me and offered their apologies but stated emphatically that they could not continue to perform the improvisation if they could not be assured of what they were asking for. Left with no choice the researcher asked them if it would be appropriate to bring student actors from the university to perform for them. They agreed on two conditions. Firstly, that the performance should be based on the ideas they have shared so far, and secondly that the

⁶⁰ See Appendix C

performance should be subjected to their scrutiny before it is shown to the public. With these lines drawn the researcher had to start all over again.

The researcher after discussing the problems with the project supervisors and the Head of the Department of Theatre Arts advertised for auditions. On Tuesday, the 12th of March, 2013 auditions were held on campus and selected a cast (student performers) for the performance. A Production conference was subsequently held on the Friday 22nd of March, 2013.⁶¹ A new work plan was drawn and rehearsals started. The work was scheduled for four weeks with four days of rehearsals per week. The first week was used for educating the team on the technicalities of the method such as how the method works, when to harvest the plant and how to apply them as mulch. Then what they as cast and crew thought would be the best approach for the improvisation was discussed. This way members of the team were schooled on how biomass for mulching works and then the various plants that could be used were explained and samples shown to them. The outline of the improvisation was explained and various suggestions were put up by members of the team. Rehearsals were conducted with all seriousness and by the third week the improvisation was ready for testing. A pretesting was held on the 23rd of April at the Mayera Community School (This was a closed event solely for the participants) and a final performance held on the 27th of April 2013 at the Mayera village centre. This event was open to the entire community.

Below is a Synopsis of the improvisation: *Perseverance*

⁶¹ See Appendix D

Nii Ayi feels he knows it all and as such does not listen to any advice on ways of improving his farming activities. He is as such facing problems such as over grown fields, unproductive fields due to infertile soil and by default low income.

Ataa Oko on the other hand is listening to advice and as such reaping the benefits of using simple but effective methods as propagated by the researchers. Nii Ayi meets Ataa Oko on his farm mulching with *Chromolaena Odorata* and laughs at him for being crazy to the extent of collecting weeds and piling them onto his farm. He goes home to narrate this incident to his wife and tries to solicit for a loan to purchase fertilizer and weedicide but is scolded by the wife. Nii Ayi, after several unsuccessful attempts to secure a loan to resuscitate his farm, decides to abandon the farm to go to the city to look for greener pastures, leaving the farm to his wife.

On her way to the farm in her husband's absence several months later, Tsotsoo (Nii Ayi's wife) chances upon the flourishing farms of Ataa Oko. She approaches him for the secret and was introduced to the use of *C Odorata* as biomass for mulching with its effects. She pledges to practice it on her farm come the next farming season.

Nii Ayi returns from the city poorer than he left. His wife consoles him and gives him hope by telling him about what she had learnt from Ataa Oko. They together practice it and soon his farm is doing well. He wants more information on other existing methods so he revisits Ataa Oko who takes him to see the resource person for more education.

The performance ran for an hour after which we had the Post-Performance Discussion. Several pertinent ideas, knowledge and questions were shared and asked with the resource person leading the discussions. He also took time to answer some of the questions as well as discussed a general view of the method that was presented and its benefits as against the use of chemical fertilizers.

For the researcher, these discussions gave an indication of how effective the project had been. Enough questions were asked on various aspects of the method and its effects on farming to the extent that, as of the time of writing this report, the debate on the project is on-going in the community and people are still going to see the focal person in the community with questions that they didn't get the chance to ask. These, he compiled for my attention in the next stage of the process which was the follow up.

The follow up which was done three weeks after the performance was successful in the sense that a lot more people who heard about the project and were either occupied or busy to attend came and sought clarification and explanation for their questions as well as misunderstandings. Those questions that were beyond me as a researcher working under supervision were forwarded to my supervisors and the resource person for redress.

Discussions on this chapter is concluded with a reiteration that the approach and processes used were in accordance with Theatre for Development principles and based on these approaches, the project was able to underscore the ability of theatre to communicate. Also, based on the responses after the project, the researcher believes that the processes were carried out well enough to create social actors who in will turn push for the needed change for the community to see some improvement within their circumstances.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT OUTCOME AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the outcomes of the project and analyses how these affected the set goals that were spelt out in the beginning. The analysis is done within the framework of the various theories and concepts that were deemed relevant for the realization of the set goals which was to try and show that theatre can be used as an additional means in enhancing the dissemination of information and encouraging the adoption of available improved farming methods through the Theatre for Development processes.

4.2 Work Plan

Ascribing to Mda's assertion that development is best achieved when the processes involve the people, the researcher wanted a work plan that capitalised on persuasion and conviction to enable the community to see the need to do things for themselves. The project was intended to be as participatory (with the people and for the people) as possible so as to make them feel involved enough to be obligated to ensure that the needed change being looked for can be feasible as well as lasting. This was essentially to make it possible for the individual as well as the community to benefit at the end of the processes.

The researcher therefore clearly defined the focus of the project. This meant spelling out what exactly was going to be sold to the community. Of the myriad of issues confronting the community with regards to farming, infertility of the soils topped the list. Therefore, the study set its focus on how to assist the community to improve the fertility of the soil at no cost or with

very little spending. Looking at the options available in terms of methods for improving the fertility of the soil, the study opted for the use of green leafy plants as biomass for mulching as a method of increasing the fertility of the soil (organic means) as against the use of chemical fertilizers (inorganic means). The choice of this option was informed by the fact that the green leafy plants that are used for this purpose are cheap, available and environmentally friendly.

In order to understand how the above can be professionally achieved, the researcher deemed it necessary to see expert on using organic matter as biomass for mulch in the person of Mr. Tony Mainoo⁶² for a discussion. He explained the various options available when one wants to go organic in terms of increasing soil fertility. These he did on authority because he is personally involved in using *Chromolaena odorata* as biomass for mulch to increase soil fertility in the Mampong area of the Ashanti region.

The researcher went through the training on the three common, available and most used mulching materials around. These were *Calopogonium Mucunoides* (Mucuna Beans), *Luceana* and *Chromolaena odorata*. Out of these three, the study opted for the use of *Chromolaena odorata* which is commonly known as Siam weed and locally called Akyeampong/ Busia. This choice was based on the fact that it is available in almost all farming areas in Ghana as ascribed to by Braimah and Timbilla⁶³ and free whereas with the other two varieties, one needs to buy the seeds from an agro inputs shop before it can be established.

To use *Lucaena*, one has to establish the plants on the site to be cultivated for some time to enable it to grow and have enough biomass before the area is cleared and prepared for

⁶² Personal interview with Mr. Tony Mainoo (ADRA Ghana's Deputy Director in charge of Agriculture and Food Security and the researcher's Resource Person and Technical Expert) on 12th November, 2012 at 10 am.

⁶³ H. Braimah, J.A., Timbilla: *A Survey of the Introduction, Distribution and Spread of Chromolaena Odorata in Ghana*, Unpublished Report, (CSIR-Crops Research Institute, Kumasi),1990

cultivation. The exact time of cultivation depends on the farmer. It is very important that at this point slashing and burning (The process of clearing the land, allowing it to dry and setting fire to it to help burn the debris) is avoided as much as possible. This process allows the biomass to stay on the land. The crops to be cultivated is then planted in the field after it has dried down to a point where the density of the debris has considerably reduced. This allows for the fertilizing elements found in the leaves to effectively get to the soil.



Fig 1. Sample pic of *Luceana* Leaves



Fig 2. Sample pic of established *Luceana*

With *Chromolaena odorata* (Akyeampong/ Busia), it is allowed to grow in the wild but is harvested for use when the stems are tender, fleshy and green with a lot of leaves. This way the shrub is prevented from reaching a mature stage where it could flower and bear seeds. This, when done properly and timely, does away with the plants becoming matured to the point of becoming invasive.



Fig 3. Sample shot of *Chromolaena Odorata* (Akyeampong or Busia)

To use *Calopogonium Mucunoides* (Mucuna bean), one needs to grow his crops until they are about to flower and then plant the Mucuna underneath. The beans that grow establishes under the plants. It is a crawling as well as climbing plant and as such closes its canopy quite fast. By this ability, it is able to cover the entire base of the field. Once the canopy closes, it is able to subdue all other weeds and also effectively improves the fertility of the soil for better crop life. It must be noted that even though Mucuna is a cover crop that spreads all over the field, as well as climbs onto crops, it does not affect the crops or plants under which it is established in any adverse way. This method works best when the plot planted with Mucuna is cultivated on a later date. This means after the crops are harvested one must allow the cover crop as well as the crop

residue to stay on the field. For the next planting season, the area is then cleared for planting.



- Fig. 4. Sample shots of *mucuna* leaves and how they look like upon establishment.

With the above information, the researcher embarked on the journey of going to participate with the people of my proposed community and to conscientize them on the study's mission.

A discussion of the project was held with the Agricultural Extension Municipal Directorate in the area. This was done purposefully for the following reasons: The fact that these extension workers are dealing already with these farmers or have already dealt with them in one way or the other in the past; their ties with these farmers in the community would help the researcher gain entry. These proved useful at the end of the day as they made it possible for a discussion of the project with their farmer groups. The Lab site, Mayera Okuleyman, was chosen due to the fact that it is situated right in the centre of about eight other satellite communities. So the study believed working from there which is the centre, would afford the project a lot of latitude in terms of reaching out to the fringes.

Working with the Municipal Directorate of Agriculture extension services was also to use the extension officers as a check and a guide on the various data that would be collected so that deductions that would be made from them could be credible.

Data was collected primarily through interviews and discussions with members of the community. Secondary and tertiary data were collected from reports of the projects that MOFA, ADRA and the CSIR were involved in. Other relevant background information were obtained through readings from related published books as well as unpublished works on other projects-reports, handbooks, articles and journals.

At the offices of the Municipal Directorate of Agriculture, the researcher was warmly received by the Director, Rev. Michael A. Dadebo after which a discussion was held with him and his team. He however minced no words on the potential for both *Chromolaena Odorata* and *Lucaena* to colonize areas where it is introduced to, and cautioned that care must be taken with their application. At this point, it was explained to him how the researcher had been taught⁶⁴ to go about this challenge and manage it without any problems. Being a technical person on the subject, he expressed his enthusiasm for the project and wished the project well but cautioned strongly that the point of harvesting at the right time is clearly stated; during the deliberations, he repeatedly stressed need for the participants not to forget. After this, he introduced Mr. Franklin Adusei as the focal person to represent the directorate on the project and to assist with any technical needs. Together with Mr. Adusei, the researcher visited the assembly woman of the lab site, Hon. Nancy Netey, who led us to the community elders.

The study selected participants in the following categories:

⁶⁴ See page 54.

1. The group of farmers who have already dealt with or are still dealing with the extension officers (Had a history of extension exposure)
2. Where the farmers are working with chemical fertilizers, and
3. Farmers that were practicing mixed cropping.

The next stage was to interview respondents for selection onto these groups. With the assistance of Mr. Adusei, 35 interviews were conducted and out of these 24 participants were selected.

4.2.1 Outcomes of Data Analysis

Out of the interviews that were conducted with the respondents, the study deduced that the following challenges were confronting the lab site:

1. General infertility of the soil which was as a result of the fact that lands were becoming scarce by the year. Farmers are therefore being forced to cultivate the same piece or parcel of land repeatedly and that is the main contributing factor for the soils getting depleted of basic nutrients that are essential for plant growth.
2. Low soil moisture content for most farming areas. The reasons for this challenge were twofold: The first being the farmer`s own farming practices. It was established that in a bid for their farms to look clean they tend to remove the weeds that they clear and pile around the fringes of their farms, especially to serve as boundaries where they farm close to each other. Secondly, for the fact that they need fuel wood (firewood) to help them undertake cooking activities at home, during clearing of the lands, all sizeable trees and shrubs are cleared so they could be used as fuel wood. This end up depriving their fields

of the necessary shade and tree cover and that allows the rays of the sun to impact the soil directly, thereby causing evaporation of the soil moisture.

3. Post-harvest losses for produce which was probably mainly due to the use of chemical fertilizers (in the cases of yam and vegetables like tomatoes, pepper and okra). For instance, in an interview with Aawon Anuu (Fetish Priestess of Mayera and one of the participants) on why she thinks this situation is so, she stated that in her opinion, that is attributable to the chemicals, especially the fertilizers that they are applying. She stated:

“I think it is due to the chemicals and fertilizers that we are applying that is causing that. It is true that the fertilizer makes them produce more, but they lose some very important qualities that I as a woman will want to see in my vegetables. For example, there is no more aroma in pepper and tomatoes that have been grown with chemical fertilizers.”⁶⁵

She went on to add that vegetables like tomatoes and pepper ripe too fast on the plants and that accounts for the low prices at the market place. To her, in the olden days when they used to farm vegetables without using chemicals, “one goes to harvest every four days and that was enough for one to maximize profit on your sales and also one can smell the aroma on your tomatoes and pepper from afar when you are grinding pepper , but today it is not so. It ripens fast and so everyone has to harvest daily. This causes the produce to become cheap on the market because if you do not sell, it will rot.”⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Personal Interview with Aawon Anuu, (Fetish Priestess, Mayera) 24th March, 2013 at 3pm.

⁶⁶ Personal Interview with Aawon Anuu, (Fetish Priestess, Mayera) 24th March, 2013 at 3pm.

For maize, Mr. Akwasi Agyeman, in an interview (Video Documentary on *Better Farming Systems*)⁶⁷ gave the reasons that it was partly due to the use of chemical fertilizer and more so due to improper post-harvest handling, such as not harvesting the crop at the right time and also not shelling, drying properly and bagging before storage that causes it not to last long on the shelves. Here he suggested the use of organic matter as the best way to improve the nutrient content of the soil. With yam, the explanations as given by Mr. Tony Mainoo were that the use of chemical fertilizer was solely responsible for the reduction in its shelf life.

With these three findings as the main challenges facing the farmers identified, the researcher went on to the thrust of the project, dialoguing, persuading and convincing them on the issues at stake so they could buy into it.

4.2.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGD)

With the 24 farmers identified and selected, the researcher formed two groups of 12 members each (A and B) for the Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The selection of 24 participants was based on the fact that FGDs make use of numbers between 8 and 12. The researcher did not want to use the minimum number so as not to limit the latitude of the discussions. With the maximum number of 12 the study was sure to get varied opinions, options and alternatives in terms of ideas. The reason for the two groups during the Focus Group Discussions was to avoid offending the sensibility of the elderly by way of the opinions of the Youth. The researcher decided to put all the farmers who were 35 years or less in Group A. Farmers from age 36 upwards went to Group B. The age selection, however, was not scientific in the sense that the participants were

⁶⁷ A video Documentary by the CSIR and ADRA on Improved Farming Systems (Available on DVD at the CSIR, Accra)

just asked to tell their ages. We all then decided on whether or not someone's age was true by using their physical features as a determinant.

The groups did not know what was going to be discussed until the day of the discussions. This was done so that fresh and spontaneous ideas were shared. Each group however discussed the same issues such as the types of crops being grown, whether or not they are using fertilizers, what kind of farming methods were being practiced, how effective or efficient were these methods; they were equally asked if they relied on rain-fed agriculture or were into irrigation, etc.

The discussions identified crops like maize, cassava, yam, tomatoes, okra and pepper as the main crops that farmers within the area grow. The farmers were predominantly practicing rain-fed agriculture with a few farmers whose fields are close to the river in the area using the river for irrigation during dry season vegetable farming. Almost all farmers use chemical fertilizers, but the level of usage correlates with their income. More endowed farmers use more fertilizers to farm whilst less endowed farmers use much less.

We used the first meetings of each group for the actual Focus Group Discussions to first and foremost identify the problems. The groups were however kept for general brainstorming sessions. At these sessions, the researcher explained to the group members thoroughly what had been deduced from the responses they gave during the interviews. As such they were also to discuss such deductions, and then through that identify their problems after which the discussions moved into finding possible and suitable solutions for the problems and issues confronting them.

Prior to these discussions, however, the researcher had two different meetings with the Municipal Director of Agriculture to discuss all deductions. Owing to the fact that Mr. Adusei was present all the times that the interviews were held, he was able to discuss some of the issues with the director even before such meetings, so it paved the way for very easy interactions. At the end of these discussions, they were able to authenticate all the deductions that had been made and granted the study to proceed as planned.

During the group meetings, it was agreed to first discuss the researcher's analysis of the interviews and the subsequent conclusions and then the members would also subject such interpretations to their own analysis and agree or disagree. After their discussions, the researcher's findings, analysis and deductions were corroborated. Discussions of what in their estimation were responsible for the findings were next. Thus, we started looking for the way forward.

It was at this point that the researcher introduced the focus of the project and brought in suggestions on the use of *Calopogonium Mucunoides* (Mucuna bean), *Chromolaena odorata* (Akyeampong/Busia), and *Luceana* as biomass for mulching to increase the fertility of the soil. Explanations were given on how each of them worked and the pros and cons of each were discussed.

There was, however, a limitation in the experiments to show participants the effects the various types of plants that could be used for the same purpose could have on the soil in this way: The fact that both Mucuna and Luceana needed to be established on the field before their effects could be seen, we could not conduct an experiment to assess its effects. As such we were only able to experiment with Akyeampong. A spot of land was cleared of all its vegetative cover and

then dug it up nicely like it was preparing the land for nursing seeds. This was to loosen the soil and enable the sun's impact to be seen. Fresh Akyeampong leaves were harvested and after watering the spot covered half of it with the mulch. The spot was left unattended for three days.

After three days the mulch were removed from the spot. The result was that the spot where the sun had direct impact was drier as compared to the spot where there was mulch.



Fig.5. Unmulched soil after three days of exposure to sunlight



Fig.6. Mulched soil after three days of exposure to sunlight

That simple experiment was proof to the participants of the fact that without mulching, the soil loses water faster than when it is mulched. Using Akyeampong as biomass for this purpose does not only preserve soil moisture but also improves the fertility of the soil.

After two meetings of serious deliberations, a consensus was reached over the point the researcher was trying to make. The participants view were that for as long as *c. odorata* (Akyeampong/Busia) is free as compared to the other two materials, they thought it was best to adopt it for use. Those who were into vegetable farming were especially happy due to the added nematicide effect Akyeampong had. Here, one of the participants, Nii Djan who was present on the day the researcher interviewed Aawon Anuu recounted her comments on the way vegetables these days have very short shelf life and prayed that its ability to act on nematodes could also help them overcome their infestation of their vegetables especially lettuce, carrots and cabbage.

The researcher would like to state here that all through the deliberations, a conscious effort was made to draw on the study's underpinning theories and concepts in order to continue to involve the participants as much as possible. These gave them the latitude to suggest what they thought and felt could be done to make the whole process better.

The researcher followed the above pattern in order to theoretically conform to both Boal and Brecht that the audience should be made to think critically about what is before them: to think of ways to make it better. Opportunity was given to them to assume the lead role of showcasing how they want the situation depicted. These options, the researcher believed, empowered them not only to challenge what they have discussed with me but feel like an integral part of the whole

process and also have the right to suggest any changes they thought would make the processes become what they want it to be.

By getting them so involved, they were able to contribute meaningfully through active participation; this to me meant that their opinions were brought to bear on what they want to see happen in the community. This way, the researcher was assured that they can help in the sustenance of the process and this no doubt will help lead to a change in how things are done, and this can lead to development.

To add to the above, the researcher also drew from the theory of Freire which made it mandatory to ensure that the participation of this group required their active participation as a group with experiences that are useful to their educational process and not just as recipients of my information. Working along and very conscious of how these theories function in Theatre for Development, the researcher was again reminded by the important point that the creation of change in any society might be impossible or difficult if the members of the community within which one is working do not believe in themselves. So by giving them the chance to freely share their opinion and suggestions, the researcher was able to get them to be convinced that they are of influence to society based on their contributions and the information they have shared with me. And with this, they have been exposed as per their participation in the project.

The zeal to further see to the manifestation of this influence they wield became crucial. For the researcher, that meant that for as long as the community, and for that matter, members of the group believed in themselves, they were positioned to be pivotal in the change process. It is therefore believed that based on the above processes, the group was given the impetus to

showcase what they think and that was one sure approach in solving the problem or issue at hand.

By the end of the group discussions, the researcher was convinced by the group's responses that they were convinced and had taken the opportunity and acquired the ability to take up the challenge to deal with the identified issues and that in my opinion was going to lead to a higher degree of self-efficacy. At this stage, the participants were introduced to the idea of using a performance as a vehicle for selling the idea to the community.

4.2.3. Rehearsals

A rehearsal, per the definition of John Ahart is “the process by which the play finds its own unique life with this cast [...]. It is the process by which the play stops being tied to the page or the playwright and becomes ours.”⁶⁸ Despite the fact that our play was an improvisation, the researcher used this assertion to apply some stage production techniques and procedures. These were employed to get the participants get used to acting with each other, which was something they have never done. The participants were also shown some blockings and got them used to the various characters they are to showcase well before the performance.

Before starting the rehearsals, the two groups were brought together and a new schedule drawn for the next stage of the project. This new work plan⁶⁹ was developed to get the improvisation ready for performance. Rehearsals were scheduled for Sundays and Fridays in the afternoons at 3pm. These days were selected because they did not go to their farms on those days. Concerted

⁶⁸ J. Ahart, *The Directors Eye: A Comprehensive Textbook for Directors and Actor*, Colorado, (Meriwether Publishing, 2001), p. 47.

⁶⁹ See Appendix C, p.109

efforts were made to make sure the community is encouraged to be a part of the project as possible by not turning people who stopped by to witness the various discussion and meetings away. This was done in this way: once the core group had been identified, anybody else who was interested in the process was free to come and go. These were done in the hope that people will feel close enough to the process and as such will feel free to discuss whatever they thought would enable the processes unravel issues causing the identified problems and move the process forward.

Casting was done by try-outs and then rehearsals began on improving characterization. Local names like, Ataa Oko, Nii Ayi, and Tsotsoo, were chosen for the characters so that the participants as well as the community could see the play from their own perspectives. In addition to the above, the local language (Ga) was used as the medium of communication. Participants were given the free will to come out with their own interpretations of the characters they were to depict. Again, once the outline of the Playlet was defined, members of the group were free to make suggestions as to how they thought the characters should be portrayed. Two successful rehearsals were held and various suggestions came up and were adopted. At this point, blockings of movements were suggested by the researcher. Things took shape nicely until again, the financial issues as earlier on explained popped up. This made the researcher realize that all consultation channels were not exhausted to enable the participants factor the fact that there was no budget for the project in terms of offering financial inducements for the performers into their decisions before becoming a part of the cast. That would have enabled work proceed without such hiccups.

This setback notwithstanding, the researcher having consulted with the supervisors, returned to campus (University of Ghana) and started the process of getting the improvisation ready for

performance. A work plan was drawn and rehearsals started.⁷⁰ The work plan was for the team to work within a period of four weeks. Rehearsals were held four times each week. The first week was used for educating the team on the technicalities of the method and then discussing what they as cast and crew thought would be the best approach for the improvisation. This way members of the team were schooled in how biomass for mulching works and then the various plants that could be used were explained and samples shown to them.



Fig7. Close shot of c. odorata (Akyeampong) leaves

The outline of the improvisation was gone through and various suggestions were put up by members of the team.

⁷⁰ See appendix D, p 110



*Fig. 8. A shot of the right time and stage at which *C. odorata* should be harvested for mulching*

During rehearsals, members of the cast were allowed to come out with their own ways of depicting the improvisation but at the end of it all the actions of the characters were made to reflect issues identified within the community. A conscious effort was made to use Performer-Audience Relationships as well as Audience Related Language as much as possible. To do these, performers were asked to get as close to the members of the audience they want to address at any point in the performance. Then they were to look at them and directly address them so that they could be drawn into the performance.



Fig. 9. Nii Ayi and his Wife Tsotsoo in action during rehearsals

In addition performers were asked to pose direct questions to members of the audience and if possible borrow items that they thought they could use during the performance from them all in our quest to involve the audience. As explained earlier, all the characters had local names, and Ga which is the main language used in the area, was our medium of communication.



Fig. 10. Ataa Oko and his wife in action during rehearsals with members of the cast and crew looking on.

By the above processes, the improvisation kept improving till the third week when the whole team agreed the improvisation was ready for testing. A pretesting was held on the 23rd of April in the community but only for the members that were involved in the Focus Group Discussions. Observations such as the ability of *Chromolaena Odorata* to suppress weed growth should be down played and its fertilizing ability highlighted, was raised by the members of the group. Their reason was that for them the infertility of the soils was more of a problem than weeds growth and they would prefer the drama to reflect these. With these suggestions we came back to campus and fine-tuned the improvisation for a final performance on the 27th of April 2013 at Mayera in the Ga West Municipality of the Greater Accra Region.

4.2.4 Performance

The performance, titled *Perseverance*, (Based simply on the persevering nature of Atta Oko and Tsotsoo that enabled them to help and encourage Nii Ayi to accept new ways of farming) lasted about an hour. This time frame was selected intentionally and specifically to ensure that the performers would be able to present the issues in a way and manner that the audience will understand the message without being rushed and or feel bored. This also enabled the performers to take their time in speaking and gesturing so that the audience could follow them.

Before the commencement of the performance, there was a musical interlude. This served as a drawing force to get people to come around. Then a member of the team came to tell the reasons why we were gathering. Then there was an MC who served as an interpreter and announcer.

Perseverance is made up of three main scenes. The first scene establishes the attitudes of the main characters, Nii Ayi and Ataa Oko. Nii Ayi, though is hard working, feels he knows everything about farming. As such he does not listen to any advice on ways of improving his farming activities. Ataa Oko on the other hand is also hard working but is ready and willing to accept innovations that can bring about changes in his farming activities. He is enjoying the benefits of using simple but effective methods as propagated by the researchers. In this scene, Ataa Oko was depicted as being the farmer ready and willing to do away with old ways and adopt simple but effective methods to improve upon his farm for improved livelihoods. So when Nii Ayi finds him mulching with Akyeampong and laughs at him, he did not give up but tried all he could to explain the processes of what he had been taught to Nii Ayi so he could also benefit. As adamant as he was depicted to be, Nii Ayi did all he could to mock Ataa Oko.



Fig 11. Nii Ayi and Ataa Oko on the farm

He even told him that he was crazy enough to go and collect weeds from outside of his farm and bring them into his farm when it is rather the opposite that they practiced within the area. To this he said “that which even goats and sheep will not eat, you have gone to bring into your farm.”⁷¹ At this point he went to the audience and asked them directly if they by chance know of anyone who collects weeds from outside of his farm and brings them into his farm? By so doing he intentionally engages the attention of these audience members and by their reactions gets them to be involved in the actions of the play.

⁷¹ See Appendix A



Fig 12. Nii Ayi posing a question to the audience

Scene two depicts the core matter of the play. Nii Ayi, after meeting Ataa Oko and laughing at him, goes home to narrate this incident to his wife and tries to solicit for a loan to purchase fertilizer and weedicide but is scolded by the wife. Nii Ayi after several unsuccessful attempts to secure a loan to resuscitate his farm decides to abandon the farm to go to the city to look for greener pastures, leaving the farm to his wife. The actions of Nii Ayi in this scenario is that of the typical conservative farmer who does not want anything to do with new methods even in the face of adverse results from his own old ways. Nii Ayi did everything that he could possibly do to thwart the efforts of both his wife and Ataa Oko to get him to adopt some of the new methods around for use so he could improve upon his activities. Tsotsoo, his wife in this scene made several efforts to persuade him to go seek advice and learn from his friend. She at this point in order to make the situation sink in for the audience posed personal and direct questions to them so they could sympathise with her. These efforts by Tsotsoo were to concretise the wisdom that she had as a wife and to make manifest Nii Ayi's adamant nature. The conversation below is an example, especially when he narrated his encounter with Ataa Oko:

“Tsotsoo: Wait a minute, did you ask him why he was doing that?

Nii Ayi: Why should I? If you met someone collecting rubbish and piling them on his farm, it tells you the state of his mind.

Tsotsoo: I strongly advise you to go back and ask him why he was doing that. I’m sure that man of all people will not be doing that for nothing.

Nii Ayi: (*Angrily*) Let this be the last time you will advise me to go to anyone, do you hear me? Go and find something for me to eat.”⁷²

These efforts were all geared at engaging as well as involving the audience. The interactions that ensued here go to confirm what we set out to achieve: To make the audience a part of the performance. This worked to the extent that when Nii Ayi finally decided to leave for the city to look for greener pastures, the audience went against him and called him a lazy man who does not deserve a wife like Tsotsoo.

The third and last scene sets the tone for the realization of the importance of the use of Akyeampong as mulch when on her way to the farm in her husband’s absence several months after Nii Ayi had left for the city, Tsotsoo (Nii Ayi’s wife) chances upon the flourishing farms of Ataa Oko. She approaches him for the secret and was introduced to the use of *C. Odorata* as biomass for mulching with its effects. She pledges to practice it on her farm come the next farming season. Just as Tsotsoo is preparing to start practicing what she has been taught, her husband, Nii Ayi returns from the city poorer than he left. She consoles him and gives him hope by telling him about what she had learnt from Ataa Oko. They together practice it and soon his farm is doing well. He wants more information on other existing methods so he revisits Ataa Oko who takes him to see the resource person for more education.

⁷² See Appendix A, pg. 95



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Fig 13. Tsotsoo supports her haggard looking husband Nii Ayi on his return

The fact that his wife got angry when she realised he had returned empty handed gave us an opportunity to tell the audience that it was wrong for him to have abandoned his farm for the city. This is because Ataa Oko who stayed on the farm is doing well just by using the simple methods that he had been taught. Tsotsoo did well to prevail upon him to go and seek counsel from his friend. After realising that he had wasted his time, he agreed and went to Ataa Oko who directed him on what to do.



Fig 14. Nii Ayi thanking Ataa Oko for showing him the light with a handshake.

The depiction of these scenes was to encourage farmers who faced similar situations within the community and to let them know that they should rather seek help instead of abandoning their fields. Going to see the resource person was the culmination of all our efforts. He took time and explained the various methods after which the floor was opened for the community to contribute, share ideas as well as ask questions.

4.2.5 Post-Performance Discussions

Several pertinent ideas and knowledge were shared during this period. The Resource Person guided the discussions and this forced people to think. Questions were also asked and here the resource person took time to educate the community more of the issues presented.



Fig. 15. Some participants sharing ideas and knowledge.

As a facilitator, the various ideas and knowledge shared by members of the community during the discussions gave an indication that the message had been received well. This is because the questions that were asked were all effective and reflected the issues that were presented by the project. Enough ideas, knowledge as well as questions were shared and asked on various aspects

of the project and its effects on farming to the extent that, as of today the debate on the project is on-going in the community and people are still going to see the focal person in the community with ideas as well as questions that they didn't get the chance to share or ask. These, he compiled for my attention in the next stage of the process which was the follow-up. The follow-up was successful in the sense that a lot more people who heard about the project and were either occupied or busy to attend came and sought clarification and explanation for their questions as well as misunderstandings. Those questions that were beyond me I also forwarded to the resource person for redress



Fig 16. The Resource Person leading the discussions

4.3 Impact of the Project on the Community

The project impacted the community in a lot of ways. For the simple fact that something that started as a small project for just the Mayera Okuleyman community, spread to all the eight satellite communities surrounding Mayera. This is so not because the researcher/facilitator went

to these communities but through the fact that the community members involved in the project felt that it was good enough for their relations and friends in these communities to also become a part of what was happening. Furthermore, although the people who were present at the performance were not that many as compared to the population of the community, it was revealed during the follow-up that a lot more people have voluntarily opted to try their hands on the method we presented at the performance. At the time of the evaluation more people were coming out to ask how they could be assisted to also practice the methods as presented in the performance. It is important to state here that the participants had already started dealing with such situations. This gives the indication that the project had impacted the community.

To conclude discussions on this chapter, the researcher wants to add that in consultation with the extension staff of the municipality, efforts have already been made to assist all those who were interested to try their hands on the methods once the rains set in. In discussing in detail the analysis of the performance and its impact, it is very important to measure it against the theories that underpin the whole project such as that of Boal's forum theatre which has helped in making the point that theatre indeed is a viable research tool that can be used for information dissemination due to its communicative ability.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5:1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the whole thesis. It captures in total all issues related to the research topic *Encouraging the Adoption of Improved Farming Methods at Mayera*. The project was successful because it got people thinking about new farming methods that could help them increase their productivity. However, this project faced challenges because of the fact that it was human centered. The difficulties of this project therefore reveal some of the complexities and challenges of Theatre for Development as a technique of community engagement and involvement, which underscores the need for tactfulness on the part of facilitators.

5:2 Summary

The project, though well received by the community, had its share of shortcomings. The researcher could have made the whole process a complete learning opportunity for the community if residents had availed themselves to perform the improvisation. In as much as the whole process was made participatory as possible by involving them in all the processes, their inability to perform for themselves was a shortcoming. However, the fact that the participants were involved right from the data collection process to Focus Group Discussions meant a step in the right direction. Again, though they did not perform, they initiated the processes that brought about the improvisation and subjected the performance to their own analysis during the pretesting. This was enough to make a case for mass participation and support as critical elements for the success of the project. For instance, salient amongst their suggestions was the fact that during the performance, some of the issues presented were stressed more than others. Specifically, the fertilizing effects of Akyeampong were stressed more than the weed suppressing

abilities. This was as a result of the fact that the data analysis brought out the infertile soils as more of a problem to the community than the weeds. It was therefore a suggestion on their part to make it so in the performance. Their reason was that they wanted the performance to reflect the issues as they exist on the ground. That is, the people of the community saw the infertility of the soil as a more serious problem than weed growth. These, to the study, are some of the successes that the project chalked in the face of the challenges.

Some other challenges were also recorded during the processes. For instance, the researcher's inability to start the project as a cultural event just like a festival resulted in the participants asking for remuneration before performing. Also, the performance started late because more effort was put into getting the people convinced to buy into the processes to the detriment of the actual performance. Equal effort could have applied for both the conscientization and performance to avoid the above.

5:3 Conclusions

To conclude, the researcher will borrow from the decision made by the Lesotho government in 1986 as part of its planning programs as cited by Mda that "mass participation and support are critical for the success of most programmes, particularly those in the rural sector. Such support can only be generated if the people are able to actively participate in the decision-making process."⁷³ These become possible only by involving the people in the processes. In my opinion, this goes to say that participation is very crucial in any Theatre for Development project.

⁷³ Z. Mda, *When People Play People: Development Communication through Theatre*. London: Zed Books, 1993, p:61

As a result of the above discussions, the researcher believes there is the need to provide stakeholders in the agricultural sector with unhindered access to improved methods of farming--this certainly cannot be over emphasized. This is because low productivity due to the application of traditional farming practices is a problem that is faced by most farming communities within the agricultural sector. It has become a bane that affects the social, economic and political lives of people in the communities where they occur. The rate of infection is therefore alarming and demands extra attention despite the fact that a lot is already being done. This quest for additional efforts translates into looking for other means to add to the dissemination efforts already in existence. Again, this quest is in response to the clarion call to fulfil part of *Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy II* document, which stresses the fact that Ghana's economy has been "largely dependent on agriculture over the years, [...]" and that no significant progress can be made in raising the average real incomes of Ghanaians as a whole without significant improvements in the productivity of the agriculture sector [...]"⁷⁴ The growth of agriculture in this direction will therefore continue to be very important to the overall economic growth and development of this country. This call for extra efforts to enable stakeholders in the agricultural sector, especially farmers, has access to improved methods of farming for increased output is laudable. It is the means of providing these extra efforts that are geared towards guaranteeing farmers an improved future that this research set out to emphasize. This serves to answer the questions raised by the Department of Agriculture Extension Services (DAES) in a report on the state of Agriculture Extension Services in Ghana. The report attributed "low agricultural production, among other factors, to poor linkages between Research Advisory Service and Farmers as well as ineffective

⁷⁴ National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), *Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy I and II Documents*, (Accra, 2003)

technology delivery systems, including poor information packaging, inadequate communication systems and poor methodologies [...]”⁷⁵among others.

Also, the question of how farmers can gain access to knowledge and information on modern and improved farming techniques and practices in order to increase yield and income irrespective of the fact that numerous efforts are already in place, can be answered through the use of theatre. Theatre can be based on the outcome of this research; help enable extension services achieve its aims when the approaches that are being used to reach or communicate to farmers are inclusive of improvisations. This then can manifest the statement by the Department of Agriculture Extension Services that the “use of innovative approaches and strategies to increase coverage is therefore a concern for all involved in agriculture extension and advisory services.”⁷⁶

In trying to uphold the efforts as elaborated above, the researcher agrees with Sachs and reiterates that any process of growth that does not lead to the fulfilment of basic needs is a mockery of the idea of development. Consequently, the study tried to make the processes of communication between the researcher and the target community very easy and through that create the atmosphere for people to effect the change that can lead to development.

The collaboration was made as effective as it could be by making sure what was performed was able to incite the audience to get them to debate the issues at the end of the day. This was a basic way of assessing how effective the project communication channels had been and the level to which it was able to conscientise the community. The debates that ensued after the performance gave me an indication of the extent to which the message was received and understood.

⁷⁵ Department of Agriculture Extension Services (DAES), *Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*, (Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra,2010) p7

⁷⁶Department of Agricultural Extension Services, *Extension Approaches Being Implemented in Ghana*,(Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Accra,2010) p6

Conscious efforts were also made to employ the most suited approach (to engage, involve and ensure that they participated enough) to get the main objective of the project (to show that theatre can be an added means for enhancing the efforts being put into linking farmers with improved methods) to be realised.

The researcher is able to come to this conclusion because in spite of all the approaches that were being used to sensitive farmers to adopt the various methods, most of the farmers in the lab site were still practising basic methods with its attendant problems.

Having gone through these processes, the researcher is convinced that communication between members of the target community has been enhanced and that ultimately it is going to ensure that they are placed in the best position to take the needed actions to improve their lot. However, sustaining the gains is as important as the process itself and the researcher believe that the social actors that have been created within the community have the power and the needed ability to continue with the processes now that the project is ended.

Comparing the processes of this research to the methods that the extension officers were using, (in the view of the farmers) Theatre for Development communicates better in the sense that it engaged the people more, and through that stimulated them to adopt positive attitudes; unlike the process where trained frontline extension agents went to train farmers and/or farmer groups on the new technologies. For the farmers some of these trained agents made them feel like school children due to the fact that the extension agents transferred concentrated standardised extension messages. This can conveniently point to the fact that theatre, when employed in addition to existing methods, can improve information dissemination and that can augment existing approaches to sensitize farmers to adopt new methods for increased productivity.

These gains achieved with this project notwithstanding, it is obvious that a lot more needs to be done to make sure the efficiency of this and all the other methods under the umbrella of Theatre for Development are investigated to make their use more effective. The researcher wishes to implore Theatre for Development practitioners, and all other interested parties to look at supporting initiatives that aims at creating an avenue for the exploration of theatre as a tool for research for it to continue to help provide additional means for disseminating information.

5:4 Recommendations

Going through the processes that culminated in the successful completion of this study has exposed the researcher to a lot of experiences that brings the belief that theatre can indeed be, and is a viable additional tool for the dissemination of information especially in the agricultural sector. The researcher therefore recommends the under listed to make its employment more holistic:

1. That policy makers should endeavour to adopt and incorporate the Theatre for Development processes into the syllabus of all Agricultural Training Schools under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture for use, so that extension workers before coming out of these schools, would be equipped in addition to all that they are being trained to do, to include the use of improvisations as additional ways of assisting farmers get to know best practices for improved productivity. This I am sure when done will enable Extension services to be organized and delivered in all its forms; this will ultimately increase farmers productivity and income.

2. That anyone undertaking a similar project should start the whole process as a cultural event so that there will be no need for anyone to ask for remuneration for taking part in it just like people not getting paid for partaking in a festival.
3. The researcher will strongly suggest that any Theatre for Development process makes conscientization a major objective. This is because it plays a major role in making the target audience aware of the need for the change and how to sustain the change when it happens. To do this effectively, every effort must be put into involving the community in investigating the problem, discussing possible reasons for their existence, and then finding solutions to them through the processes of creating the improvisation, rehearsing and then performing it.
4. It is also important that Theatre for Development practitioners employ the use of indigenous performance approach in their efforts. This means the use of local languages and in particular the appropriation of the culture in the performances. This ensures and facilitates easy audience participation, which helps to diffuse the notion of the community members that they are being dictated to. And that in effect makes them participate actively in the process.
5. For the purposes of documenting the processes and the performance, it is recommend that any facilitator should make it a point to get capable hands to help him/her record the processes and not try to do everything by himself. The performance for instance should be recorded by professional film makers as much as possible since it is going to be the blueprint of the whole project on video.
6. The study also brings into focus the efficacy of theatre as a research tool. It bridges the gap between the researcher and the community members. This gives the researcher

bigger latitude in terms of dealing with people. This is because it enables the researcher reach a wider cross-section of people at the same time. Individuals and organizations such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) who are into research are therefore encouraged to adopt this approach as an added avenue for the dissemination of their research findings.

7. This research work can also be used as a yardstick to compare different approaches in information dissemination and the Theatre for Development processes and see the extent to which they can effect change.
8. Finally, this study and the accompanying video can be used as a reference material for future research work and studies in the area of theatre for development. It can be used as a guide for students and anyone who has the enthusiasm in Theatre for Development as well as those interested in community development.

In concluding the discussions on this chapter, the researcher hopes that this study will afford all stakeholders the opportunity to re-examine the sustainable aspect of Theatre for Development so that its processes can be made more involving, participatory and holistic.

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Appendix A

(The facilitator's transcription of the improvisation after it has been performed)

Title: *Perseverance*

Scene One

(Ataa Oko enters to see Atsweii Sweeping)

Atta Oko Ei Atsweii, are you still sweeping after all these hours?

Atsweii: Oh I am a little tired today so I am taking my time

Atta Oko: Oh ok, hurry up then. I have good news for you

Atsweii: What good news, have you won the lottery?

Ataa Oko: Oh, more than that, it is about what the Agric people taught us in our last training. Did you know that this Akyeampong weed that we have been struggling to deal with can be useful to us on the farm?

Atsweii: Really, what exactly can it do?

Ataa Oko: They say when we use it to mulch our farms and it decomposes, it is able to do what exactly fertilizer can do, i.e. improve upon the fertility of the soil.

Atsweii: Really? Does it mean we wouldn't have to spend on that?

Ataa Oko: Yes, it also loosens the soil as well as prevents the weeds from getting sunlight, this suppresses their growth.

Atsweii: Ei this is good news, it means we would no longer spend money on chemical fertilizers and weedicides, oh this is good news. (*To the audience*) Indeed it is true what the elders say that 'the river that you don't respect that will drown you'. For me the most important part is its ability to suppress weed growth. This means I will no longer have to carry water with my daughter all the way to the farm for spraying of weedicides to control weeds. (*To one elder*) This is more than good news and I am so happy. Let me hurry up and go. Where is this girl? (*Shouts*), Laaley, Laaley o (*Exit*)

(*Enter Nii Ayi talking to himself*)

Nii Ayi: One farm, if I hold it here then it turns there, ah what kind of farm is this? I have borrowed all around me yet it is getting worse. In fact I am tired of this farm. Where is this woman (*calls out*) Tsotsoo, Tsotsoo! Ei so haven't you heard me call you?

Tsotsoo: Oh my heart, are you back already? And why are you looking so disturbed?

Nii Ayi: Yes am back but you surprise me.

Tsotsoo: Oh, what have I done?

Nii Ayi: Are you asking me what you have done? When I asked you to accompany me to the farm, did you not refuse? Well the news is that our farm is getting out of hand. In fact weeds have taken over our farm so I will like you to find something small for me as usual so I can either get labourers or buy weedicides to try and control the situation,

Tsotsoo: Hmmm, (*moves to the audience pleadingly*) my elders, have you seen Nii Ayi's character? Ask him for me if we are the only poor people in this village. He is always borrowing money to either buy weedicides or fertilizer yet I am not seeing any progress. In fact I have realised his colleague farmers don't complain the way he does. Please plead with him for me to go and ask for help. I have been telling him to but he won't listen.

Nii Ayi: In fact Tsotsoo, I just came to borrow money from you, so stop insulting me. Just 50 Cedis and you are insulting...

Tsotsoo: (*cuts in*) What I am saying is, if it is money you want, then you won't get it for I don't have it. Even the banks will run out of monies if loans taken from them are not paid back.

Nii Ayi: My God! Is this what a woman I have married and have children with is doing to me? (*To Tsotsoo*) In fact, if you will not help me I have heard. I will go and look elsewhere.

Tsotsoo: I said I don't have some, ei so what kind of situation here I have found myself? *(To a woman in the audience)* Ao mother, if I was your daughter and you found me with such a man, won't you ask me to return home? Hmm we shall see.... *(Exit)*

Atta Oko: Today is today. I will do my best to get enough Akyeampong for mulching. *(He gets busy cutting and gathering the mulch to the farm).*

Nii Ayi: *(comes along whistling. He sees Ataa Oko and moves to him and calls with surprise in his voice)* Atta Oko! Atta Oko!!

Ataa Oko: Nii Ayi, you scared me.

Nii Ayi: Yes, *(scornfully)* you should In fact; I have a question to ask you, what is happening here?

Ataa Oko: What kind of question is that? Haven't you seen what I am doing?

Nii Ayi: Yes, I said what is happening here? Are these not Akyeampong weeds you are busily spreading on your farm?

Ataa Oko: Yes it is.

Nii Ayi: In fact *(moves to the audience and asks)* please is something wrong with him? Please can you tell me if he is

alright? (To Ataa Oko) my brother, please tell me what these debris are doing on your farm?

Ataa Oko: You think am sweating over this for nothing? At least I was expecting you to ask me why I am going through this before concluding. But tell me, were you at the meeting we had recently with the Agric people?

Nii Ayi: Have you forgotten what happened to me after I followed their advice to use fertilizer to improve on my farm? Did you hear that I was almost sent to jail by the woman who came to buy my produce for the simple reason that the produce did not last on the shelves? Are these people you are following again? Ok, what did they say this time?

Ataa Oko: (*sarcastically*) You are now talking. They say that these weeds that have been disturbing us as we all know can help us a lot on our farms if we use it mulch. They say it can do exactly what the fertilizers you have been going round borrowing money to buy when it decomposes into the soil.

Nii Ayi: (*Burst into laughter he picks a branch of weed from the ground*) Hahahaa, you are seriously funny (*moves towards the audience with the branch*). Even the goats, sheep and cattle don't eat this. Of what use could this be? You are annoying. (*And with that he begins to walk away*)

Ataa Oko: *(follows him shouting)* Please, it is not just that oh, listen...

Nii Ayi: *(cuts him off, by shaking the leaves in his face)* ...what even animals will not eat, you are here telling me it will what? You are not annoying at all. You continue. I am leaving. I have better things to do *(he exits)*

Ataa Oko: Ei, what is wrong with this my friend? *(Moves towards the audience)* My elders, do you think this man is thinking straight? Is it not money that we use in buying fertilizer? And tell me again, is money easy to find these days? So if this weed can do what fertilizer can do and we would not need money to buy it is it not good news? In fact I will not mind him if he will not listen since he did not even attend the training. I am tired and so I am going home.

(Enter Nii Ayi talking to himself and laughing with the branch he picked from Ataa Oko's farm)

Nii Ayi: What animals will not eat... annoying issues. What can man do with what even animals will not eat? This man is annoying indeed.

Tsotsoo: *(surprised at her husband's behaviour)* Ei what's happening? And please what do you think people will say if they found you like this?

Nii Ayi: You have asked, but if you had given me the money I asked for and had accompanied me to farm you would have been equally surprised. (*Thrusts the branch to her*) Here, what are you seeing?

Tsotsoo: Akyeampong leaves. Please what is the problem?

Nii Ayi: Exactly, your friend's husband is the problem. I met him seriously wasting his time spreading these on his farm. In fact he was sweating profusely.

Tsotsoo: (*Drops the branch*) You mean you met my friend Atsweii's husband spreading these on his farm? Is that what you are saying?

Nii Ayi: Yes, exactly,

Tsotsoo: Wait a minute, did you ask him why he was doing that?

N.A: why would I? If you met someone collecting rubbish and pilling them on his farm, it tells you the state of his mind, he is insane

Tsotsoo: I strongly advise you to go back and ask him why he was doing that. I'm sure that man of all people will not be doing that for nothing.

Nii Ayi (*Angrily*) Let this be the last time you will advise me to go to anyone, do you hear me? Go and find something for me to eat (*he walks off*)

Tsotsoo: Ok, there is some food. Let me go and prepare the table for you. (*To Nii Ayi's receding back*) You don't listen to anything I tell you as a wife, I will leave you soon.

Scene Two

(*Enter Nii Ayi talking to himself*)

Nii Ayi: Why is this farm worrying me like that? I am seriously tired (*Sits down dejectedly*)

Tsotsoo: (*walks in on him*) Oh my husband, what is the problem? (*Moves closer to him*) You know I don't like seeing you like this ,eh, please tell me what the problem is?

Nii Ayi: (*Asks her to sit down*) You are aware of the situation yet you are always asking me why I am complaining. You refuse to borrow me money to help me on my farm and yet you claim you love me, is this how you show love? Do you remember my friend Ataa Lankai? He said I should come to the city

Tsotsoo (*Jumps up and begin to dance*) Wow, the city?

Nii Ayi (*Shuts her up*) who is going with you? Do you think we are going to display families there? I am going alone.

Tsotsoo: Ei Nii Ayi, what are you saying? You mean as you sit here you are ready to go to the city?

Nii Ayi: Yes my friend says I should come asap so I am leaving today. Go and prepare my bag. Hurry up because I am behind time

Tsotsoo (*Angrily*) You mean you are leaving now? What trouble is this? Eh, the little money we have left is what you want to take to the city?

Nii Ayi: (*Moves to the audience*) Madam, please tell me, all this materials things that women want, is it not money they take from us men to buy them? (*Moves to Tsotsoo*) You are always buying new things. Is not money that we use to buy them? I am going to the city to look for more money and look at you trying to discourage me.

Tsotsoo : (*Sadly*) I know, but why just can't you take me along?

Nii Ayi: Please, there is no time. Go and pack my bag.

Tsotsoo : (*To herself*) In fact if he will not go with me then I don't think he should go.

Nii Ayi: (*Shouting from afar*) Tsotsoo are you coming?

Tsotsoo: Yes please. I am (*She exits*)

Scene Three

(*Enter Ataa Oko and Atsweii*)

Ataa Ayi / Atsweii: Oh, It feels so happy any time we come into this farm. Look at the work this Akyeampong has done? The soil is now loose. The weeds cannot grow like before and the plants are doing so well. In fact the farm is looking healthy and green.

Atsweii: So what work are we going to do today?

Ataa Oko: Indeed it is. Just look at the maize? Well since the weeds are not too much let us dig and pick them out. (*They begin to dig and pick weeds out of the soil*).

(*Enter Tsotsoo in the back ground*)

Tsotsoo: Ayikoo, but is this your farm? What happened here? Let me look again.

Ataa Oko: Yes o it is our farm ...

Tsotsoo: (*Cuts in surprised*) ... but my farm is far bigger than yours, how come yours is looking so well? Please tell me what your secret is?

Ataa Oko: It is good you are asking. It is no magic. We just found a new way to improve our farm. It is Akyeamong that is helping us like this o.

Tsotsoo: Did you say Akyeamong?

Ataa Oko: Yes.

Tsotsoo: How? Please explain to me?

Ataa Oko: I will so relax. All you have to do is to mulch your farm with the leaves. When it decomposes it will improve upon the fertility of the soil and also prevent weeds from growing plenty.

Tsotsoo: (*Talking to herself*) in fact life is becoming too hard for me, am so sad. (She gets up and turns around) look at a fine lady like me. My clothes are even getting torn. I hope Nii Ayi succeeds and brings plenty money home (looks up into the sky) oh Lord help me (*there is a knock at the door*)

Nii Ayi: Agoo! Agoo!

Tsotsoo: Who is it? (*Sees her husband and runs to his embrace*) oh my dear welcome, sit down and let me get you water. But where

is your luggage? (She makes a move towards the door) let me go and bring them inside before thieves steal them.

Nii Ayi: Tsotsoo, please come back I did not bring any luggage. I came empty handed.

Tsotsoo: (*surprised*) What! What did you say?

Nii Ayi: (*In a low tone*) I came empty handed. In fact am lucky to be alive

Tsotsoo: (*Burst into a sad song*) you went away with the little resource we had in the house with the promise of coming back with riches. Now you come back with your ten fingers?

Nii Ayi: (*Slowly moves to a lady in the audience*) you see how the world is? Is t this how a wife should welcome a husband from a trip? And you, instead of sympathizing with me, you have join hands with her in making fun of me. Hmm, Tsotsoo, Tsotsoo.

Tsotsoo: what is it?

Nii Ayi: Please sit down so I tell you my story

Tsotsoo: I'm listening

Nii Ayi: in fact, it was more hard work than I imagined in the city, they did not allow me to do any carpentry work at all. I was made to carry concrete. The little money I made, I use it to

feed and to buy medicine. It has not been easy at all. I almost died. So be happy that am alive

Tsotsoo: well, what can I say. Indeed we are far behind but I think all is not lost yet. I found myself on Atta Oko's farm the other day. I would like you to go with me so you can see what I saw. In fact it was wonderful

Nii Ayi: Ei, ei, so Atta Oko did not listen to my advice? This man is stubborn. I'm sure he is following those Agric people and not learning from my near downfall.

Tsotsoo: what are you talking about? Please I really would like you to go and see what his farm looks like...

Nii Ayi: (angrily) Tsotsoo did I not warn you against telling me to go and see anybody? (Charges towards her) are you married to them or to me?

Tsotsoo: Oh please I am sorry (kneels down) I didn't mean to annoy you. Please forgive me.

Nii Ayi: You know I have B.P and anger is not good for me yet you always do things to annoy me.

Tsotsoo: Calm down my love, there is no handsome man like you. But, if you wouldn't mind, ermm, ermm...

Nii Ayi: WHAT!

Tsotsoo: I was trying to say let`s go so that you can see the farm for yourself...

Nii Ayi: *(This time very angry)* Tsotsoo, I have been warning you! What do you want from me? Will you stop bothering me if I follow you to that farm?

Tsotsoo: *(Happily)* yes, I promise. No, in fact, I swear never to say anything again if you follow me to the farm.

Nii Ayi: Okay, come and let`s go. Hurry up! *(They Exit)*

(Enter Ataa Oko and Atsweii)

Ataa Oko /Atsweii: We are always happy when we come to this farm, it is doing so well.

Atsweii: Let us harvest a few produce

Ataa Oko: Ok, I`m going to get some cassava so that you can prepare me some fufu when we go home.

(Enter Nii Ayi and Tsotsoo. Nii Ayi upon seeing the farm seems to be transfixed)

Tsotsoo: Agoo, look at their beautiful farm

Atsweii: Oh Tsotsoo welcome.

Ataa Oko: *(Surprised)* Tsotsoo, is it not Nii Ayi I am seeing?

Tsotsoo: Yes, it`s him.

Ataa Oko: *(Goes to a bewildered Nii Ayi feeling the soil in his palm)* Nii Ay!, Nii Ayi isn't you I'm calling? Where is your mind, what did you bring from the city?

Nii Ayi: *(starts in surprise)* Is this your farm I'm seeing? It is very beautiful what happened here?

Ataa Oko: Nothing why?

N.A: I am asking because I can see that your farm is different. The soil is very loose and I can see not much weeds and your crops are looking healthy and very green. Please tell me what happened to your farm?

Ataa Oko: I am glad you are seeing the transformation of my farm with your own eyes. I am indeed happy that you are asking what happened. *(Sarcastically)* Do you remember the time you came and met me busily mulching with Akyeampong? The leaves that you said, "even animals will not eat?" This is the result of my sweat. What you called a waste of time and laughed at me over.

Nii Ayi: *(Pleadingly)* Oh please, must you remind me of all that? But wait... You mean it`s the Akyeampong that has brought about these transformation?

Ataa Oko: Yes, nothing else.

Nii Ayi: Hmm, please would you be kind enough to teach me how to do this? Please don't think about the fact that the framing season is over. I will apply it diligently over the next season.

Ataa Oko: Don't worry; all you're to do is to mulch your farm with fresh Akyeampong leaves.

Nii Ayi: Really? Is that all? In fact, my brother, thank you very much. We must be on our way then, Tsotsoo lets go. Oh sister Atsweii, I didn't even see you are here. Later then. Thank you.

Atsweii: Oh welcome. *(Tsotsoo and Nii Ayi exit)*

Atsweii: *(To Ataa Oko)* Look at how old he has suddenly became. He shouldn't have left for the city. But I am happy he is back and is ready to adopt this method. He will not regret it. It is late so we must also be on our way

Ataa Oko: Hmm, I hope so too. And yes you are right let me help you with your load. *(He helps her carry her basket and they also exit)*

(Some months later).

(Nii Ayi enters excitedly)

Nii Ayi: My farm is now looking so well .(moves toward the audience) Madam ,this is called "Akyeampong miracle ". In fact my farm is looking far better. I don't have to worry about weeds any more. Just a few weeds here and there so I just uproot them with my hand . Indeed this is wonderful. *(He begins to work on the farm).*

(Enter Tsotsoo to see her excited husband)

Tsotsoo: oh my love, you look happy. what's the secret? I am here to help you on the farm today.

Nii Ayi: NO, no, go back and attend to the shop. There is not much to do around here. The weeds are not growing any more so I can take care of them alone.

Tsotsoo: It is the Akyeampong, I guess? Please tell me it is

Nii Ayi: Exactly. I am so glad I listened to Ataa Oko. I am happy now. I don't worry about weeds any more.

Tsotsoo: So Akyeampong has made my husband and happy again? Oh God we thank you .You see what I told you? We would have gone far had you not been so adamant

Nii Ayi: Come and take this *(Gives her money).*

Tsotsoo: Ei, today my husband has given me money. Is it for me?
Are you sure?

Nii Ayi: *(Moves towards the audience)* Have you seen woman? She used to insult me when I had to borrow from her. Now that I am giving her too she is doubtful. Just listen to what she is saying *(Returns to Tsotsoo)* Anyway do you remember our friend who used to buy from us?

Tsotsoo: You mean the one who got angry with us some time ago?

Nii Ayi: Yes. She met me on the farm today. She was so impressed with the farm that she gave me some money as deposit against the harvest.

Tsotsoo: That's very wonderful people are paying for our crops that are not even matured? Oh God we thank you.

Nii Ayi: What gladdens me is I will not need those bad boy boys to come and weed for me as labourers. Please let us go home so that you can prepare food for me.

Tsotsoo: Oh don't worry; I prepared something for you before coming *(she starts to leave)*

Nii Ayi: Err... Tsotsoo, please wait. I think I will have to revisit Ataa Oko so that if there is any more secret he can show me. I don't want to miss out on anything this time.

Tsotsoo: *(moves to the audience in surprise)* Ei, this world? How can this my husband be so greedy and ungrateful? Is he not satisfied with all Ataa Oko has done for him? Hmm...

Nii Ayi *(cuts her)* ...No, far from that , I am not going to him for any quarrel. I just want to make sure he will let me in on any new developments. I feel satisfied with his help.

Tsotsoo *(relieved)* Ok if you say so. Let`s go home so that you can eat. *(They exit)*

(Ataa Oko and Atsweii sitting down)

Atsweii: They just brought the money. Can you believe how this farm is helping us? Please your daughter asked that we send her some money.

Ataa Oko: Yes o my dear. I am so glad that we did what we were told to do. Ah but do you need to tell me before you send our daughter money? Please do send her what she needs.

(Enter Nii Ayi and Tsotsoo)

Nii Ayi: *(Excitedly)* My good friend, the master of his trade, Akyeampong man.

Ataa Oko: Oh my brother, welcome. You are also looking good. Ah what brings you here this evening ?

Nii Ayi: Good. I have come here for two things. To first thank you for not giving up on me. But persevering to encourage me to adopt the use of Akyeampong to improve upon my farm. Now it has made me a happy man. Secondly , I would like you to help me with any new methods you know, so than I can also be as successful as you are in farming.

Ataa Oko: Thank you for coming. I am glad you need more ways of improving your farm. It shows you are serious. I am happy to tell you that those Agric people are in town again so I would like that we both go and see them yourself.

Nii Ayi: Then what I am hearing is true. I hear that today is their last day?

Ataa Oko: yes it is true. They have been around for some time. If so then I would like to go with any wife so that she can also hear some. That way she can remind me if I forget something. (*Shout for her*). Tsotsoo, Tsotsoo o (*They all exit*). **The End.**

Appendix B (Pictures)



Some Community members at the Performance



Some Participants at the Performance



A Community member looking on



The Resource Person and some community members



Ataa Oko and his wife (Atsweii) during rehearsals



Nii Ayi and his wife Tsotsoo during rehearsals



Nii Ayi and Ataa Oko in Performance



Atsweii and Tsotsoo in performance mode



Nii Ayi visits Ataa Oko and wife



Tsotsoo in a pensive mood



Jeffet Ekow Cobbah (The Researcher/ Facilitator) making a point during the Post-Performance Discussion

Appendix C: Community Work Plan

Work Plan A (Interactions)

Group A (Focus Group Discussion) Tuesday 9th, October, 2012

Brainstorming Sessions 16th and 23rd October, 2012 all from 3pm to 6pm

Group B (Focus Group Discussion) Friday 12th, October, 2012

Brainstorming Sessions Friday 19th and 26th October, 2012 from 3pm to 6pm.

Groups A& B

Sunday, 14th and 21st October, 2012 all from 2pm 6pm

Work Plan B (Rehearsals and Performance)

Fridays 1st, 8th and 15th November, 2012 all from 3pm to 5pm

Sundays 4th, 11th 18th and 25th November 2012 all from 3pm to 5pm

Pre-test: Friday 7th December at 3pm

Performance: Friday 14th December at 3pm.

Appendix D: Campus Work Plan

Auditions: Tuesday, 12th of March, 2013

Production Conference: Friday 22nd of March, 2013.

Rehearsals 4pm – 6pm each day

Monday 25th March -Friday 29th March 2013

Education on technicalities of the method, i.e., how the method works, when to harvest the plant and how to apply them as biomass for mulching etc.

Monday 1st April – Friday 5th April 2013

Discussions on what cast and crew think is the best approach for the improvisation

Monday, 8th – Monday 29th April, 2013

Rehearsals

Tuesday, 23rd April, 2013: Pretesting at 4pm

Saturday, 27th April, 2013, Performance and Evaluation

Saturday, 17th May, 2013, Follow Up