CHAPTER 7

THEATRE IN/FOR DEVELOPMENT IN TANZANIA: A NEOLIBERAL NIGHTMARE

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed the metamorphosis of new terms – such as 'neoliberalism' – coined to describe the old ones – such as 'imperialism' – that were used to depict surplus generation and capital accumulation (Chachage, 2006: 1). According to Shivji (2007: 1), "neoliberalism represents the return of aggressive imperialism in the form of globalisation". Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1997: 8) observes that the whole process of imperialism in Africa is an issue related to a struggle for power, whereby economics, politics, culture and literature are intertwined. In such an evolution the theatre has been struggling to serve both the particular local society which it is processing and the neoliberal policies that are dominating socio-economic processes on a global scale.

This chapter explores the relationship between theatre and neoliberal policies in Tanzania. It analyses the consequences of neoliberalism for the Tanzanian theatre and exposes the challenges it faces as a simulacrum of people's culture. I also present evidence on why it is important, when analyzing theatre in Tanzania just before and after independence in 1961, one should take into consideration the influence of internal and international political economies. Using the case of Theatre for Development (TfD), the chapter also deals with the assumption that neoliberal policies have pushed theatre to the periphery and created greater donor dependence.

HISTORICIZING NEOLIBERALISM

Neoliberalism is an economic model whereby the market is left to regulate itself. In this case boundaries and rules on how to play the

market game are not set. Apart from deregulation of the market, neoliberal policies go also with the removal of subsidies, retrenchment of the workers, and cost sharing of public services such as education and medical care. It is in the same process where the notion of a public good is disqualified and privatization is glorified instead. The privatization of such public goods allows those with adequate capital to buy publicly constructed factories and other institutions such as those for transportation, communication and banks. This implies that those with advanced economies are in a position to accumulate more capital from the poor economies.

The concept of neoliberalism can be well understood on the global level, where it has been advocated in the form of 'globalization'. According to Cerny (2008: 1), neoliberalism "has often been seen as a revival of what has sometimes been called 'classical liberalism' or '19th century liberalism' – i.e., a return to purer laissez faire principles and the ideology (and economic theory) of the self-regulating market".

Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo García (2000) define neo-liberalism on the basis of its negative effects from the mid-1970s, when it was massively 'ushered' in. Throughout the world such policies have increased the gap between the poor and the rich. The process of legalising neoliberal policies has been advocated by the United States of America (USA) through the so-called International Financial Institutions (IFIs) such as International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

In describing how neoliberalism was welcomed in the 'poor' countries like Tanzania, Shivji points out that:

> Neoliberalism made its entry into our countries through various SAPs [Structural Adjustment Programmes] of the early 1980s. These programmes were nothing more than the further integration of our economies and resources into the world market circuits (liberalization of trade). We were required to withdraw budget allowances from social services to repay loans (cost sharing and balancing of the budget) and deliver natural resources to multinational capital. More importantly SAPs took away the sovereign decision-making right of the African nations. Cost sharing and user fees destroyed whatever little 'welfare' state had been established in the awake of independence (Shivji, 2009: 156).

Such SAPs were advocated as being the one and only solution to the poor economies. Ali (2003: 193) shows how "SAPs were adopted by

African countries like 'secular gods'". Shivji (2009: 156) continues to criticize neoliberal policies, which were introduced under the umbrella of democracy, multipartyism, liberalisation and economic recovery aimed at so-called 'poverty reduction'. To him the whole process of IMF/World Bank development sounds imperialistic, as a majority of Tanzanians have failed to experience *uhuru* (independence) because poverty has become fully entrenched. Chachage and Chachage show clearly how the imposed neoliberal policies marginalized people's voices at the periphery.

> SAPs [Structural Adjustment Programmes] had restructured capital (private and public) which benefited from the statist model of the 1960s and 1970s around newly deregulated branches (import-export activities and the plunder of natural resources). They had also heightened the marginalization of the majority of the people and, aggravated tensions and reinforced further hierarchization. The practical problem for the IFIs International Financial Institutions] and their supporters was how to win popular support for the SAPs measures and the market order, which are essentially anti-people and anti-human rights [...]. It was within this context that those democratic struggles, which sought new historical visions and modes of politics that aimed at defending women, youth, children, workers, poor peasants, the marginalized minorities, etc. were derailed (Chachage & Chachage, 2003: 7).

The shift of the so-called people's revolutions were embodied and paralysed by the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and donors' support. Julius Nyerere (the first president of Tanzania) believes that, apart from internally generated failures of *ujamaa* (socialism), the IMF and the World Bank have played a major role in uprooting 'the little good' foundation *ujamaa* had put in place (Nyerere, 1980: 7-8). To synthesize Nyerere's position, Mlama points out that:

> In spite of the genuine intentions to build a socialist state, Tanzania has not been spared the socio-economic crisis afflicting the rest of the developing world. An intensified of finance capital, an increased debt burden, the manipulation by the World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and a host of donor agencies are all part of the problems that have increased impoverishment of the majority (Mlama, 1991: 104).

Mignolo (2005: 99) reminds us "each goal only tells half of the story" as what happened to Latin America was the opposite side of

the same coin of what happened to Africa. By the end of 1980 the political and economic atmosphere of sub-Saharan Africa was 'grave enough', as Nyerere admits (Nyerere, 1980: 9), the region was bleak and on its knees, as Shivji concludes (2009: 56). Most of the countries failed not only in providing sustainable development, but they also failed to implement independence ideals. The majority of the population suffered because of a lack of social services.

The crisis was fuelled by internal and external factors, as Mlama (1991: 104) points out. Externally, aid from the United Kingdom was cut, then from West Germany and the USA. The controversy revolved around the Tanzanian *ujamaa*-led foreign policy, which advocated Pan Africanism, a call for African unity and Tanzanian support for the liberation movements in Southern Africa and Asia (Lihamba, 1985a: 66). Internally, various scholars (Chachage & Chachage, 2003: 5; Lange, 2002: 64; Fosu, 2008: 145) believe that the Tanzanian economy suffered from the 1970s oil crisis, high levels of inflation, the budget deficit, the cost of the war against Idi Amin,[1] followed by a major famine in 1984 caused by a series of droughts which decreased agricultural production. Poor transportation infrastructure and lack of important social services such as education, health, water and sanitation made people despair of *ujamaa.* When the IMF declared the conditions for lending money to boost the economy, Nyerere admitted that his country's problems were enough on their own without political interference from the IMF. He stated bluntly that "if they [IMF] cannot help, at the very least they should stop meddling" (Nyerere, 1980: 9).

Generally, the problem of Tanzania was not *ujamaa,* but related to the concept and content of developmentalism. According to Chachage (2007: 6-7), developmentalism was the inherited policy which defines development using Euro-American criteria instead of using the social-cultural state of the nation. Zeleza (in Chachage 2007) traces the evolution of developmentalist ideology. He said it started in the 1930s during the Great Depression and culminated in World War II. In Africa this ideology was propagated through the 1929 British Colonial Welfare Act followed by the British Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. These acts forced African countries to plan their development using foreign ideologies. The establishment of the IMF and World Bank was intended to facilitate and glorify this developmentalist ideology (Chachage, 2007: 6-7).

THEATRE/CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT

According to Chachage (2006: 1), development as a concept 'metamorphosized' in the last 500 years of human development. The term has been regarded as highly suspect, especially when applied to the African context. The historical perspective showed clearly that slavery and colonialism emerged in the form of the Christianisation of savages/barbarians and of the civilisation of the primitives. Imperialism and neocolonialism surfaced as the process of modernisation and development. For modernisation it meant moving African societies from traditional to modern life styles with a Western outlook, and for development it implied being able to depend on commodity-based production which leads to capital accumulation as the way of managing the economy. Therefore, it is important when discussing development in Africa in the post-independence era to bear in mind these five main concepts: slavery, colonization, imperialism, neo-colonialism and neoliberalism, with cause and effect relationships between them. Cerny (2008: 39) points out that neoliberalism with its "arms'-length regulation has proven to be a relatively manipulable and fungible platform for actors to use to reconstitute their strategies and tactics".

The concept of culture and development emerged vigorously during the Mexico Conference known as Mondia Cult of 1982. This was the time when research publications and reports showed clearly the challenge of 'development' in the developing countries, especially in Africa, as a result of the development agencies' unwillingness to reflect the cultural conditions of the developing countries (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996: 28-29; Epskamp, 2006: 32). Ndagala (2007: 3) points out that until recently culture was seen as a fundamental force for development. Before the emphasis had been on social service provision – health, education and infrastructure. Even donors themselves kept their focus on social service thinking in the belief that it would result in the rapid development of the agriculture and industrial sectors. So economic growth was perceived to be a quick solution to poverty. To rectify the situation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1988 announced a Decade of Cultural Development. This was followed by several initiatives, including the World Culture and Development Commission Report of 1995 (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996: 28).

On the other hand, the initiative for culture and development started in Africa years before UNESCO recognition. Good examples

were the Accra Conference of 1975, the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980 and the Lome Agreement of 1984, which all discussed and agreed on the significance of culture for the sake of African development (Diagne & Ossebi, 1996). In Tanzania this started in 1962 through the Ministry of Culture, which was responsible for eliminating neo-colonialism and imperialism, and for helping Tanzanians regain national pride (Askew, 2002; Lange, 2002).

The general perception of the IMF and the World Bank was that by lending money to poor countries would boost development. It was only recently that these organizations started to talk about culture and development (Ndagala, 2007: 4). Cerny raised a query about the IMF and World Bank approach to global governance. He says:

> International regimes and global governance institutions have not only sought more autonomy, but have also transformed their policy goals to a more complex, evolved neoliberal approach. For example, the World Bank's shift in the mid-1990s to giving priority to poverty reduction goals over harsh structural adjustment policies has changed the discourse of global governance towards more socially-oriented goals, although how much it has changed the substance of policy is hotly debated (Cerny, 2008: 38).

Furthermore, Amartya Sen (n.d.: 1) in his article *Culture and Development* elaborates on how "the world of banking and that of culture are not thought to have much in common", so it is impossible to accommodate the two phenomena (capital accumulation and culture) in the same basket. As expected, the World Bank deals with culture only in relation to environmental issues, i.e. cultural heritage (Epskamp, 2006: 36). Furthermore Epskamp clearly signals that:

> [The World Bank] introduced the 'environmentally sustainable development' concept, embracing the cultural with the natural environment, and focusing on exploiting human and natural resources without destroying their environmental context. The World Bank's interest in 'culture in sustainable environment' deals with the intrinsic value of the historic cultural heritage of the past and the expression of the local culture today, including the cultural heritage of indigenous people. These resources provide the benefits from sustainable tourism, without denaturing the cultural assets that motivate that tourism in the first place. Cultural tourism is considerable to be 'bankable' activity. Therefore, the Bank is in favour of programmatic people-centred support in the form of financing operations such as loans and credits (Epskamp, 2006: 36-37).

Nyoni (2008: 173) explicitly analyses the reasons for international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) or the so-called 'donor community' (including UNICEF, WHO, OXFAM, GTZ, AMREF, Ford Foundation, DANIDA, NORAD, SIDA and the Peace Corps), to support theatre that directly relates to development. For him there are two major reasons, which have causal effects. Firstly, these institutions strongly support theatre because it is said to 'bring about' development. Secondly, some of the institutions support Theatre for Development (TfD) so as to be able to carry out their responsibilities in a particular community. The level of commitment and responsibility is what this chapter is concerned with. These responsibilities are well stipulated in most of the donors' foreign policies and in fact are more relevant to the donor country than to the intended recipient. For example, the change of Swedish Foreign Policy with regards to 'terrorism' in 2002 directly affected theatre, as most of the project funding from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) were suspended or reshaped to reflect the new Swedish foreign policy. Paul Brian (in Palma, 1983: 43) shows clearly that "what is decisive is that economic development in underdeveloped countries is profoundly inimical to the dominant interests in the advanced capitalist countries". According to Etherton (2004: 204), most donors support TfD in addressing social issues such as HIV/AIDS, the protection of children, human rights, democracy, the empowerment of women, and conflict and poverty reduction. This is because TfD is seen to have a different approach in that it empowers the intended community to take an upper hand in the choice of the themes and incorporated theatre forms. In Kenya, as for Tanzania, Odhiambo (2008: 14) shows how the reintroduction of TfD attracted donor funds because it was addressing fundamental community issues such as HIV/AIDS, female genital cutting (FGC), democracy and so on.

THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT: THE UNHEALED WOUNDS

It is evident that from its inception in the late 1970s Theatre for Development (TfD) has achieved its aim of being both interactive and participatory in its approach in Tanzania and in other African countries where it has been practised. Boal (2000) proposed the idea of breaking the wall between actors and audience to create 'spect-actors' and Freire (1972) proposed theatre to break the culture of silence by animating and emancipating people. All these to a certain level have been achieved by TfD. Kerr (1995: 171) also 'celebrated'

the way that TfD managed to return to the performer-audience relationship and partnership, as can be seen in 'traditional' African theatre. For him the barrier has been broken.

The Malya experience of 1982-3 can also be cited as one of the achievements brought about by TfD. A theatre group in the village of Malya in the Mwanza region of Western Tanzania (Kerr, 1995: 158) put on a performance on the problem of child sexual abuse whereby older men impregnated young girls. The post-performance discussion led to direct accusations against the older men in the village, which led in turn to the dismissal of the village chairperson and the secretary, as under their leadership they had failed to solve the problem. Here one can argue that Freire's approach of using theatre to give a voice to the voiceless has been vindicated. Nyoni (2008: 173) refers to this as the power of TfD to empower community members to realize their aims. Theatrically, the Malya experience also reduced the cultural hostility of the dominant Christian church, known as African Inland Church (AIC), to 'traditional' theatre forms. Traditional dances from the Sukuma ethnic group, which was dominant in Malya village, were incorporated into the performance for the public (Mlama, 1991: 125-127).

Michael Etherton has used his experience of working in South Asia with the international NGO Save the Children to show the usefulness of the process. For Etherton (2004: 191), the use of theatre, i.e. TfD, became useful to Save the Children in addressing the issue of children's rights in the adult community. He argued that TfD helped some Save the Children staff and local organizations, who lacked the skills to work with children and young people. In his conclusion Etherton advocates the approach:

> TfD itself is a method and a process that the young people say enables them to deal with those in authority. The method is collectively creative, based on learning skills in improvisation, analysis and effective communication. The process is contained in a set of tools and exercise that leads children and young people into negotiation with adults in positions of power. TfD, then, is itself a process of empowerment of socially excluded children and young people (Etherton, 2004: 215-216).

Breitinger expresses the same admiration of TfD. He argues that:

> Theatre for Development as a planning, educative and even managerial instrument relocates society from periphery, where remote-control

> development policies had relegated it into the very centre of the community, and makes it central to communal planning and decision making. Theatre for Development takes local culture seriously. It takes local cultural values and practices as the departure point from which to define what kind of development is needed to improve life in the community and by what means it should be affected. Re-focusing on local cultural heritage and de-focusing foreign culture is an important aspect in the new approach to development policies (Breitinger, 1994: E8).

Nyoni (2008: 175) acknowledges foreign aid and donors for enabling TfD to prosper not only in Tanzania, but also in other places where it has taken hold. For him donors have been able to 'return' theatre to the community by integrating it into development. Through such support, donors' projects and programmes have been able to provide employment to groups and artists/facilitators who are working in theatre and development projects. This means foreign aid has been able to empower some theatre groups and individuals financially.

The communication of programmes such as TfD entails an attempt to fulfil certain roles on various levels. These include the transmission of information that aims at achieving a behavioural change of the intended community. It is expected that this change of behaviour will be beneficial to the intended community. However, at the same time there is the communication aim of boosting the image of the funding agency involved (Epskamp, 2006: 109). This implies a dichotomy of funding body and the targeted community.

After looking at these achievements, it is also useful to look at the challenges of implementing TfD. Kerr (1995) as well as other TfD scholars such as Boon and Plastow, (2004) and Epskamp (2006), has been sceptical not only of the TfD process, but also of the current trend of TfD initiatives. Kerr (1995: 159), criticizing TfD, argues that "the major disadvantage of Theatre for Development workshops has been that they have not been truly popular". He provides an example of *Laedza Batanani* in Zambia, where powerful community administrators controlled the whole process in 1976. Boon and Plastow (2004: 5) also raise a question about TfD and empowerment. They contend that donors who support the project in most cases would like to know who is being empowered by TfD, by whom, and the extent of the empowerment. Having to prove that theatre can empower people can sometimes end up being confrontational. The process of answering donors' questions about empowerment has two distinct paths, empowerment for or against the community. This

means that potentially donors would be interested in empowering communities that will support their ideology and mission. On the other hand, donors are probably interested to know which one is the targeted community because they wish to avoid funding a non-allied community or one that will not support their mission. Wallace, Bornstein and Chapman add that:

> For development agencies there is a recognized need to be closely in touch and accountable to donors, beneficiaries and partners; the same tensions apply and what may be best for the donors sometimes may not work well for the beneficiaries. However, in this case only one side has real power, the donors, and reporting against the logframe shifts accountability firmly away from beneficiaries and partners (even the host governments) towards the donors (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 39).

This assertion shows clearly that even if TfD practitioners are aware of the TfD process and requirements, they can find themselves inclining towards donor or state demands, and it is this possibility that made Kerr (1995: 159) suspicious about the 'popularity' of TfD.

One can see how foreign aid in development projects has created new opportunities as well as challenges for the protection and promotion of theatre, as Nyoni (2008: 173) points out. Most (if not all) TfDs have been funded by foreign donors. According to Nyoni (2008: 170), this has been due to its effectiveness in involving the community in deciding, planning and implementing developmental projects. But "this foreign aid injection and donors involvement in TfD has resulted in artists themselves being deceived that the fundamentals/basics or essence of TfD is foreign aid and donors".[2] Moreover, TfD processes which are funded either by foreign donors or the state, especially when it has a strong interest in the developmental aspects, becomes a sensitive issue to discuss. The documented reports (Bakari & Materego, 2008; Eyoh, 1984; Etherton, 2004; Mlama, 1991), which refer to theatre as part and parcel of development, have limited authentic and aesthetic criticism. Such reports recommend further application of TfD to foster 'people's' development, without pinpointing the challenges of implementing TfD in the neoliberal era. This 'glorification' of TfD seems to compromise the disowned concept of 'developmentalism'

In some cases donors have initiated and over-emphasized the use of theatre for their own explorations and adventures (cf. Nyoni, 2008: 173. Hellen Nordenson (2008), Senior Programme Officer, Division

of Culture and Media of Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), points out that theatre activities funded by SIDA must show clearly how to alleviate poverty and have a development concept behind them. So when embarking on a TfD project which has been funded by donors such as SIDA, it is clear that TfD loses its key attribute of having community members be owners of the process. Instead the donors now own it and this is what can be seen as TfD being donors' propaganda for Theatre for Donors' Development (TfDD). Epskamp (2006: 63) also shows clearly that TfD donor dependency poses a threat to its sustainability. He argues that "TfD runs the risk that outsiders will set priorities and strategies, manage up their implementation, broker all forms of aid, and perhaps even supervise the distribution of benefits" (Epskamp, 2006: 63).

According to the World Bank:

> Funding difficulties and complexities have also weakened sustainability. Rather than fund balanced programs fully integrated with national budgets, donors have supported capital investments without adequate attention to the need for both counterpart funding and additional domestic resources to operate and maintain facilities. Without sufficient budget support, investments are likely to be ineffectively used and maintained-especially with debt service draining public budgets (World Bank, 2000: 245).

To understand the consequences of donors' emphasis on funding theatre that has ties to development, we can take the example of the Eastern African Theatre Institute (EATI). This NGO was established in 1998/99 after consultation with the main funder SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency). EATI has been used to fund various theatre and development activities, especially TfD in all member countries: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (EATI, 2004, 2007). After ten years of foreign funding the institution had still failed to carry through its activities, after which SIDA 'suffered' from donor fatigue. Most of the activities in which EATI was involved were only those which SIDA could agree to support. This shows that foreign aid and donors' initiatives need critical analysis, as they have tended to do more harm than good. Most of them are concerned with 'missionary' activities, i.e. executing donors' wishes, which cannot sustain either individuals or institutions.

TfD has been regarded as a 'righteous' process because it has helped to reduce some discrepancies experienced in the theatre models of 'theatre to the people' and 'theatre with people'. The

description of TfD as a people's theatre and the use of internal facilitators represent the so-called equal power sharing between external animators and the community involved. In fact, TfD is a class-based process. For example, the external and internal facilitators do not have the same power in terms of decision-making. Internal facilitators have to follow what the external facilitators, and in most cases what the lead facilitator, has decided.

Apart from inexperience or partial experience, it is also difficult for internal facilitators to carry on the process after the external facilitators have left, as continuing the process has financial implications. External facilitators are being paid for the work they do in the field as 'experts', and though the internal facilitators will receive a certain amount, it is sometimes less than that received by the external facilitators. However, the same internal facilitators are expected to continue with the process indefinitely without being paid, which is difficult and impractical. The assumption is that some people will do 'missionary' work because they want to 'serve' and 'save' their own community, therefore they will carry the process on in the absence of the external facilitators. Epskamp (2006: 63) regards this as a threat to TfD. Odhiambo (2008: 84) shows clearly how in Kenya TfD faced the 'intellectual' problem, namely that TfD cannot be sustained in the absence of 'intellectuals' or the so-called external facilitators. In addition, it is difficult for internal facilitators to carry on the process as the time to learn the process is usually limited. Eyoh (1984: 163) referred to the introduction of the TfD process in the Kumba area in Cameroon in just two weeks as a "herculean task". Epskamp (2006: 62) shows clearly that TfD cannot provide new skills to the intended recipients as the allocated time for implementation is too short.

Currently it is difficult to believe that TfD initiatives stem purely from the facilitators' sympathy and that they simply wish to empower communities to use TfD as a platform to address issues of injustice, prejudice and cultural/economic poverty. The motive has shifted from the community to personal gain (Boon & Plastow, 2004: 1). According to Gibbs (1999: 125-126), "personal circumstances, economic conditions and World Bank policies have sent African activists and writers to seek funds from various sources". Furthermore, Gibbs sees the partnership between TfD practitioners and some donors as forced by the lack of local sources of funding. Gibbs's argument has perfectly linked the evolution of TfD in Tanzania and the circumstances surrounding its popularity. The

1980s was a time of economic hardship, party supremacy and a miserable social life for the majority. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) became part and parcel of the reason for the popularity of TfD as most of the proposed developmental projects necessitated the use of participatory approaches. This means it is difficult to differentiate between 'modernization' and 'development', as Mazrui and Mazrui (1995: 106) argue when projects are being initiated and funded through capitalist systems such as the IMF/World Bank. In addition, Wallace, Bornstein and Chapman (2007: 31) have related the aid chain and power play by donors to the 'delay' of development in the recipients' countries.

> While the packing of aid by institutional donors and INGOs draws heavily on these different languages [rational management and participation], the mechanisms of rational management have been systematized, institutionalized and embedded in aid bureaucracies. Our concern, confirmed by research, was that this heavy reliance on one managerial model would overshadow and possibly undermine a commitment to participatory approaches to development. In understanding how one language has come to dominate through standardized procedures and systems of accountability, it is important to recognize where power lies and how it is currently used in north-south funding aid chains, something often acknowledged but rarely analysed (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 31).

It is evident that TfD as a participatory model has created a more profound donor dependency, as Nyoni (2008: 173) shows the relationship of TfD and donor dependency. Foreign aid and donor funds in theatre come with accountability. For TfD, it is difficult to say to whom these theatre practitioners are accountable.

> The tension between accountability to donors and accountability to beneficiaries is well known and organizations need to find ways to satisfy both if they are to survive, in theory at least. So while large companies have to report to shareholders, they have also to meet the needs of their customers; sometimes what is good for shareholders is not good for customers. However, because they feel their survival ultimately lies in being passionate about their customers, they know the importance of communication with them in order to flourish (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 39).

In a similar way, theatre has to adhere to donors' accountability systems regardless of their effects on the theatre's survival. Various

scholars such as Kwesi Akpabala (as quoted by Gibbs, 1999: 125) believe that "imperialists are impertinent cultural arbiters who use theatre as a neocolonization method". Akpabala's argument reflects the way TfD has been used to address issues proposed from above. The issue here is not to decry the usefulness of donor support in theatre, but rather to address the issue of conformity and the need for using such funds. According to Nyerere (1968: 25), there is a very thin line between slavery and freedom when depending on and receiving financial support from foreign institutions. He argues:

> How can we depend upon gifts, loans, and investments from foreign countries and foreign companies without endangering our independence? The 'English' people have a proverb which says, 'He who pays the piper calls the tune'. How can we depend upon foreign governments and companies for the major part of our development without giving to those governments and countries a greater part of our freedom to act as we please? The truth is that we cannot (Nyerere, 1968: 25).

Nyoni (2008: 174) describes how these gifts, loans and donations have led to impairments in TfD. He argues that some artists, in order to compete for donors' funds, have tried to show TfD can be done within a very short time frame and bring immediate change. This means that 'real' or 'professional' TfD practitioners either have their budgets cut or are rejected entirely when they send their proposals to donors as they seem to be 'expensive'. Additionally, artists have been forced to perform 'low-rated TfD' so as to meet donors' requests and demands or the allocated budget.

Institutionalization has been another challenge of TfD. TfD started as a purely activist movement. According to Lihamba (2004: 245), there were multifaceted layers of TfD popularity and demand in its initial application in Tanzania. These included the inability of the state to provide basic infrastructure for its people. Despite the Arusha Declaration of 1967, there was a rising petit bourgeois class, increased corruption, poverty and abuse of the rule of law in the early 1980s. There was also widespread neglect and misuse of the arts. So TfD was adopted as a means to negotiate for better socio-political and economic standards for people, including artists. Despite its attractiveness, as a movement TfD was not supposed to be institutionalized. The institutionalization of any movement puts it in danger of being captured and controlled by those very people the movement was formed against. This means that if TfD was formed

against the state, it is easy to use state powers to control it. Kerr (1995: 159), using an example of *Laedza Batanani* in Zambia, showed how TfD cannot lead the direction of change, but only second the direction on which the dominant class has decided.

According to Samba (2005: 24), the continuing use of TfD to represent people's participation actually represents the top-down approach. This implies that what is practised is in fact Theatre in Development (TiD) rather than TfD (Nyoni, 2008: 170-172). Samba clearly asserts that "these NGOs and aid donors cannot deny the backlash this model [TfD] produces in the target community. In some cases, it has manifested as resentment and in others as opposition and resistance". Samba (2005: 74) adds that donors should be held responsible for the backlash they have created in the local communities through their top-down approach to development via NGOs.

> There are numerous challenges associated with donors' introduction of participatory approaches. While official recognition of the role of local actors in development is important, such donor approaches can systematize and often depoliticize the push for participation [...], which all too easily becomes a technical exercise. Moreover, the 'empiricist predilection' of participatory methods can result in 'insufficient attention to legitimacy and justice', and 'tendency to get bogged down in methods and techniques without stopping adequately to consider initial assumptions of broader issues (e.g. about the purpose of the techniques) (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 43).

It is clear that TfD cannot work effectively if there is no base to support it at the grassroots level (Materego, 2002: 147). Communities have failed to sustain it and it ends immediately as soon as the facilitators leave. "TfD lacks facilities of follow-up activities by means of training and logistics", according to Epskamp (2006: 63). Community members tend to think that the action plans and resolutions passed during the TfD process should be implemented by the facilitators or the state, and not by themselves. Most of the discussions and solutions (in the post-performance discussions) present administrators and state officials as victims; the community members are rarely presented as victims. This makes TfD not user-friendly, especially to community leaders, because most of the time it does not facilitate their leadership, but rather pinpoints their problems (Materego, 2002: 144-145).

TfD has continued to be a complex practice as it has inclined towards elitism or intellectualism, as Odhiambo (2008: 84) has noted. Data analysis and the preparation of the plan of action (PoA) are among the more complicated TfD stages. These stages lay the foundation for implementation, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. This requires knowledge not only of theatre, but of the social setting. Facilitators must have interdisciplinary knowledge to lead the whole process. The question is how many facilitators are theatre literate, as well as being socio-political and economic experts? What are the levels of their understanding of these issues as facilitators? Wallace, Bornstein and Chapman (2007: 36) address this issue of 'expertise' within a broader perspective. They say:

> The approach to expertise is also problematic. Despite donor or NGO instructions to the contrary, often the logical framework is constructed or finalized by a few individuals, staff or consultants, sitting in an office, working with a vague mandate from local people and a clear set of strategic objectives from potential donors. They may know that they are not constructing the best possible plan, but they are putting together one that is plausible on the basis of their own knowledge. This also raises questions about the legitimacy of the resulting plans and documents, for both beneficiaries and staff (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 36).

Looking at the attributes of TfD leads to the conclusion that only elites and intellectuals can facilitate TfD in a way which fulfils its expectations. Experience shows that, as it evolves, TfD is becoming more and more complex and detached from the community. If the role of the facilitators is to facilitate and empower people to own the process, the outcome can be impressive but insufficient. The emphasis has shifted from the first six stages to the post-performance discussion and the preparation of the plan of action. This implies that the last three stages are more important, as they form the main part of the researcher's or donor's report. Epskamp (2006: 63) shows clearly that artists who participate in TfD activities are there for the theatre aspect. The promotion of development agendas seems not to be within the scope of their work.

The chances of research institutions and universities not treating TfD communities as 'test tubes' or 'guinea pigs', as Kerr (1995: 158) describes them, are becoming less and less. In using TfD as a research method, the aim of the research remains in the interests of the researcher and his/her 'compradors' rather than in the interests of

the TfD community. Using the community for personal research gain under the umbrella of people's theatre has to be questioned, as most of the findings are not communicated to the researched community.

Lihamba (2004: 246) agrees that TfD and its practitioners face challenges. One of the challenges they outline is the relationship between theatre as a process and theatre as a product. There has been an ongoing debate over whether TfD should continue to enhance development and ignore its aesthetics. Bakari and Materego (2008: 41-67), when outlining the stages of TfD, clearly emphasized the message rather than the artistic presentation. They argued that the nature of TfD was not to put any emphasis on artistic creativity or skills development other than making sure it manages to convey the required information, a process which Odhiambo (2008: 21) has referred to as 'codification'. The lack of emphasis on artistic creativity by TfD in turning theatre into a 'medium of communication' has to be questioned. According to Fiebach (2009), theatre is not a medium of communication because not all information that is conveyed is communication. Weber further argues that:

> Theatricality resists reduction to a meaningful narrative by virtue of its ability to signify. This ability associates it with what is called 'language'. As the most ubiquitous of signifying media – a pleonasm insofar as *all* media are such through signifying – language demonstrates the priority of the signifying function over that of representation. In so doing, far from reducing the materiality and corporeality of theatre, it marks their irreducibility (Weber, 2004: x).

Secondly, Kerr (1995: 155) is not satisfied with the way TfD treats theatre. He argues "doubts existed, however, whether such a 'rough' theatre might not in fact be a euphemism for a second-rate theatre, especially bearing in mind that pre-colonial traditions of popular theatre were certainly not 'rough' in the sense of de-emphasizing skills". This implies that the continuation of honouring pre-colonial theatre forms as the 'best' option for TfD as community theatre is a misconception of traditional theatre forms in implying that they were 'rough' and 'half cooked'. Makoye (2008: 106-107) shows clearly how traditional theatre forms were presented according to specified standards agreed within a particular community. That is why Lihamba (1985a: 32) expresses caution about the use of traditional theatre in contemporary society, especially when trying to incorporate it into a 'modern' system. It is clear that the process of

integrating traditional theatre forms in TFD was based on the idea that pre-capitalist theatre was idyllic.

The emphasis of foreign development communication has minimized other alternative routes for development. Theatre has been shaped to communicate development and has forgotten the fact that theatre itself needs to develop, as do its practitioners. That is why Epskamp (2006: 62) regards the returns on TfD, in comparison with its investment, to be 'too modest'. Lihamba (1985b: 31-32) believes that there is a direct link between development, freedom and theatre creativity, which should be embraced, acknowledged and respected. So where funding is concerned, or where there is an emphasis on development communication, it is clear that the performers' imaginations are being interfered with, influenced, manipulated and even corrupted. These sensations and imaginations are the ones that arouse the audiences' emotions, feelings and perhaps bring efficacy. In the case where TfD does not focus on aesthetics or skill development, it tends to work outside of 'theatre conventions'. This means TfD reaps artistic benefits for the sake of development but without any replacement. "In TfD practice, it is often overlooked that promoting TfD in itself neither creates the necessary motivation for learning nor ensures the utility of TfD" (Epskamp, 2006: 62). If the focus of TfD was to link the post-independence communities with pre-colonial ones using traditional theatre forms, then that approach was completely impractical. There should be a new mechanism of integrating current theatre forms within TfD rather than focusing on traditional theatre forms. It is obvious that community members cannot tolerate unskilled or 'rough' performances for the sake of development. The point will come when they will not be facilitated/empowered any longer. That is why Odhiambo (2008: 14-15) calls for practitioners to re-examine their TfD practices and "then decide how to improve and make more effective their own practices".

TfD as a process is not as flexible as practitioners like to advocate. For example Samba (2005: 74) shows how TfD is flexible "as a language of development communication, how different facilitators have adapted it to their immediate socio-cultural contexts, and the purposes to which the approaches have been used". Considering TfD that is funded by donors or research institutes, the whole process is regulated according to the donors'/institute's budget and annual reporting schedule. So facilitators have to struggle to work within the allocated time so as not to 'blow' the budget or overspend. Even if facilitators find a different situation in the

community which perhaps requires extra days, the flexibility is limited by the allocated budget. So because the community members might not be aware of the internal organization of the external animators, they find themselves unknowingly or sometimes knowingly 'bulldozed' in the process. This behaviour has its pros and cons. Wallace, Bornstein and Chapman show that:

> This approach [tight externally controlled accountability] [...] risks replacing trust and judgement, 'distorting the proper aims of professional practice and indeed damaging professional pride and integrity'. Efforts to achieve better performance and results often actually threaten the quality of work, by inhibiting people from using their skills in innovative ways and hedging them about with bureaucratic controls. The pressure for counting and accounting is so strong that trust, flexibility, and the ability to adapt and change are often undermined (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 40).

The other challenging issue is the position of TfD facilitators. For example, facilitators have been granted the power to run TfD processes and oversee the outcomes, but they have no chance to push for reforms. "TfD lacks power to implement sustainable follow-up activities" (Epskamp, 2006: 62). That is why in most cases facilitators have to work in collaboration with other activists' groups to speed up the implementation of the agreed solutions in the plan of action (PoA). In the preliminaries, facilitators have to state the reasons and the aim of conducting TfD in a certain community. In this case, who are the facilitators representing and to whom are they accountable? Is it to the state or research institutions such as universities or to the donors who fund TfD? Epskamp (2006: 62) sees this as one of the weaknesses of TfD, as it lacks internal monitoring and ownership.

The other issue that most scholars have not outlined is the risk of being both internal and external facilitator. In referring to external facilitators, it means those facilitators who come from outside the TfD community but who are from the same country. If there are misunderstandings between any of the parties, it mostly falls to the national external facilitators to resolve them rather than to the international facilitators, who often 'just pay a visit', some as tourists. What must be made very clear, however, is that if the TfD is very successful, then those who provided financial support tend to receive most, if not all, of the credit. 'Best practices' included in the donors' reports (in most cases) recommend 'further research' and/or

further 'interventions', which then lead to other projects. However, when things backfire, the national external facilitators are the ones who are held accountable for unsuccessful project outcomes, as they always act as a bridge between donors and TfD community members

In some cases community members can abuse facilitators for their failure to follow-up, or the community administration can make allegations of conspiracy to wreck their jobs. Being an external national facilitator in a donor-funded TfD means to take a high risk, but this is not stated in the project documents. Sometimes some facilitators work on a project without knowing the content and the consequences of the project. Verbal attacks and abuse are common, such as the village administrator during the TfD process in 2000 in the village of Mlonganzila in the Coast Region, Eastern Tanzania, who said that people will suffer the consequences after the 'Americans' have gone (Jackson, 2000: 9). It is obvious that as a TfD facilitator one has to play the role of an activist trying to apply 'militant reforms', even though sometimes the intention or the inner motive of TfD lies in globally dominant policies.

Although every community setting is unique, at the end of the day it is difficult to limit 'prejudice' against the TfD outcomes. For example, in working with students as a TfD community in several instances, after some time one can predict the nature of the performance and post-performance discussion. For instance, students will either show the weaknesses of the school administration or how some teachers are not gender responsive or abuse students sexually. The same applies to farmers and/or communities that keep cattle. The discussions can be on how cattle keepers have invaded farmers' land versus cattle keepers' accusation to farmers as the ones who have extended their farming land on to the cattle keepers' premises. I do agree that there are exceptional cases, but all in all the research or project reports, the logframe and the donors' tracking formats and templates are the same.

Epskamp (2006: 62) shows how the 'workshop syndrome' as an income-generating activity has led to TfD facilitators not developing new skills. Samba (2005: 74) elaborates how donor agencies have been putting pressure on practitioners to produce 'quick and quantifiable' results, which in one way or another qualify the previous non-participatory methods. Furthermore, Samba (2005: 74) relates the situation to Freire's 'banking method' of education, whereby "dissemination of information [is] characterised by

manipulation and control as opposed to the promotion of dialogue". And this occurs to a large extent because

> aid is not disbursed using participatory mechanisms but on the basis of logframes. The need for planning and control overweighs the push for participation at the bureaucratic level. While participation usually features as a essential part of the logframe it is only one component in the system of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting (Wallace, Bornstein & Chapman, 2007: 34).

This implies that, although donors pretend to support TfD because of its participatory nature, it is clear that their support is for the top-down approach (TiD) whereby information is imposed from the centre by facilitators.

Looking at the implementation of neoliberal policies from the mid-1970s, it is evident that the policies are there to protect the global capitalist system. This is clearly done through some of the international NGOs or local NGOs which are used to propagate and legitimize such policies. Giving INGOs a 'driver's seat' in the development of the developing economies is the same as allowing donors and their countries of origin to dictate, even rule, such developing nations. The use of theatre, especially Theatre for Development (TfD), as a participatory model for development is also a mechanism to justify capitalism as a people-centred economic model when the fact is that it is not. The negative impact of neoliberal policies cannot be justified by the use of 'participatory' approaches, as TfD has been used to do, because historically there are 'unhealed wounds' of slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism and now neoliberalism. The process of using donors to fund theatre has made theatre fail to sustain itself and perhaps become more dependent. Consequently, one might call such theatre either Theatre for Donors' Development (TfDD) or Theatre in Development (TiD).

NOTES

1 In 1978/79, Tanzania went to war with Idi Amin Dada, the Ugandan leader who came to power through military means. Amin had overthrown the then Ugandan president Milton Obote in 1971. The cost of the war was a heavy burden on the Tanzanian economy (Fosu, 2008:145).

2 English translation by the author from the original Kiswahili quote from Nyoni.

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