

## EXPLORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THEATRE FOR PEACE BUILDING IN GLOCAL CONFLICTS

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### **Abstract**

*Conflict is an inevitable phenomenon in any human society because humans are driven by varied ideologies, interests and positions, which might clash time and again. Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed many conflicts and violence fostered by issues of identity, citizenship and participation in national dispensations. The worst case scenario in this expression is the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009. Conflict in Nigeria has thrived mainly because the approaches adopted to address conflict have been inadequate and unsuitable. This article adopts the Participatory Theory to discuss the effectiveness of applying more subtle approaches such as the Theatre-for-Development (TfD) framework for peace building in Nigeria today. It focuses on the conflict between herders and farmers in Barkin Ladi and Riyom Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Plateau State and the experimentation of the TfD framework to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation between herders and farmers and presents qualitative data to this effect. The paper concludes that conflict and conflict related issues can be addressed without the use of force. Therefore, TfD is the alternative strategy for entrenching peace and building inclusive societies. The study recommends that the Theatre-for-Development framework is pertinent for peace building as it is an investment in humans, both physically and psychologically towards reconciliation and durable peace. It also recommends that there is the need for capacity building within government agencies to improve their fundamental understanding of conflict related issues and enhance their ability to contribute to just and lasting solutions.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, Reconciliation, Peace building, TfD, National integration, Nigeria.

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**Introduction**

The end point of development practice is the wellbeing of the citizens. However, there are always obstacles to be surmounted to be able to reach the goal of improved standards of living for citizens. The absence of good governance and concrete efforts to forge national integration and economic growth are part of the development obstacles in Nigeria. Corruption, mismanagement of public funds, increased poverty and unemployment has led to hardship for the majority of citizens in the pursuit of better living standards. The frailty of Nigeria's school system and the failures of some religious organisations and bodies in their expected roles have combined to impede Nigeria's social and economic development (Emelonye, 2011, p. 23). While these developments would not in and of themselves lead to conflict, it would be unwise to neglect the fact that they exacerbate tensions.

A more pressing obstacle to development in Nigeria at the moment is conflict and violence, which has characterised the socio-political life of the nation since 1999. Flashpoints in Nigeria have covered a wide area such as the Niger Delta, the North Central, North West and the North-East. The worst case scenario in this expression is the Boko Haram insurgency since 2009 and the herdsman conundrum. It is possible to say that the issues that lie at the base of these problems are economic and political in nature since it appears that the politics of Nigeria revolves around two key factors: indigeneship and religion on the one hand and resource control and sharing on the other which have "aggravated inter-communal tensions that are dangerously volatile in and of themselves" (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p.2). Therefore, to make sense of and promote development in Nigeria, these background issues need to be properly analysed, understood and acted upon for an enabling environment to prevail. Timely investments in capacity building to provide basic services or address grievances concerning human rights and the rule of law can make a difference in building confidence among citizens and as well as between citizens and the State (Golberg, 2012).

Since the return to democratic rule in 1999, Nigeria has witnessed a lot of conflicts and violence fostered by issues of identity, participation and citizenship "perhaps because of the freer atmosphere it brings along with it" (Alubo, 2006, p.6). The term 'freer' suggests a sense of belonging and participation between and among all ethnicities and tongues in the affairs of the country. However, what obtains in practice is a continuous deficit of inclusive participation at federal, state and local levels. Part of the problem is that the leaders have not been able to properly harness the various voices of the citizens, to implement people-informed and guided decision making processes, policy

formulation, and other endeavours expected of public office holders especially in a supposed democratic setting. While this is the case, the citizens themselves are yet to recognise the strength embedded in working together, perhaps to upturn this situation.

Plateau State, Nigeria, which defines itself as the 'Home of Peace and Tourism', was created in February 1976 when it was carved out of Benue-Plateau State. It is the twelfth largest state in Nigeria, and gets its name from the Jos Plateau. To its North are Kaduna and Bauchi States while Benue State is at its Southern border. It is flanked in the east by Taraba State and in the west by Nasarawa State. Plateau State is said to be a miniature Nigeria primarily because nearly all the ethnic groups of Nigeria are present there. The State has 17 Local Government Areas: Barkin Ladi, Bassa, Bokkos, Jos East, Jos North, Jos South, Kanam, Kanke, Langtang North, Langtang South, Mangu, Mikang, Pankshin, Qua'an Pan, Riyom, Shendam, and Wase ([plateaustate.gov.org](http://plateaustate.gov.org)); [onlinenigeria.com/plateau-state](http://onlinenigeria.com/plateau-state)) Plateau State has one of the largest concentration of ethnic minorities in the Nigerian federation with over 58 relatively small ethnic communities spread across its seventeen local government areas with an estimated population of 3.5 million (National Population Commission: 2006). Being home to over 58 of Nigeria's ethnic groups earned it the name "mini Nigeria" (Best, 2007; Isa-Odidi, 2004). The main city and administrative capital is Jos with an approximated population of 1 million ([plateaustate.gov.ng](http://plateaustate.gov.ng), Search for Common Ground, 2015).

The first major riot in Jos broke out in June 2001 when the Federal Government appointed a Hausa Muslim politician, Alhaji Mukhtar Mohammed as local coordinator of the Federal Poverty Alleviation Programme leading indigenes to protest his appointment. The indigenes saw his appointment as an imposition and a ploy to marginalise them on their own soil (Best, 2007; Emelonye, 2011). Violence broke out on September 2001, when a Christian woman attempted to cross a barricaded street outside a mosque during Friday prayers. What began as a fight between the woman and a group of Muslims in Congo-Russia, a street in Jos, eventually spread to other parts of the city and nearly all over the state with the greatest intensity in the northern zone of the State (Minchakpu, 2001; Human Rights Watch, 2001; 2006; Krause, 2011). The 2001 Jos riot subsequently led to the expression of long standing tensions within smaller towns and villages in Plateau State (Krause, 2011), extending beyond the city mainly because the conflict parties embarked on what is considered a 'defensive action' against their ethnic and religious kin (Best, 2007). Conflict in the rural areas also escalated as a result of exaggerated or largely falsified information especially in the northern zone of the state about the conflict scenario in the city (Best, 2007).

While the conflict in Jos city was largely as a result of political control between the indigenes (Berom, Afizere, Anaguta) and the Jasawa (people of Jos, constituting the Hausa/Fulani group), the rural conflict is between the indigenes-Christian farmers and Fulani-Muslim pastoralists largely around access to land which gained momentum after the 2001 crisis. The term Hausa/Fulani refers both to the amalgamated Hausa and urban Fulani also referred to as Jasawa (People of Jos) who speak Hausa, and the Fulani cattle herders within Plateau State, who speak Fulfulde and constitute a separate group. These two groups have been labeled thus as a result of the common religion they share and their association with the development of the post 1804 Dan Fodio jihad principles and religious communities of Northern Nigeria (Best, 2007; Krause, 2011). Some Local Government Areas within the state have shown higher conflict incidence compared to others probably because some groups are more defensive of indigene rights compared to others.

Barkin Ladi and Riyom LGAs, have significant conflict risks, with frequent communal violence between pastoralists and farmers. Riyom was also one of the four LGAs clustered around the city of Jos that were under a state of emergency from December 2011 to June 2012 (The Fund for Peace, 2013). Meanwhile, violence in Barkin Ladi spiked considerably after the state of emergency was lifted in June 2012 (Nigerian Watch, the Council on Foreign Relations and Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)). Like Taft and Haken (2015) noted, the issues are complex: from indigene rights to resource control, compounded by religion. So far, the strategies employed in Plateau State have been inadequate towards conflict management and peace building. These have included military deployments, curfews and commissions of inquiry which in practice do not necessarily capture deep seated issues and/or grudges that might be responsible for relapses in conflict and violence. Given this situation, there needs to be a working strategy that primarily takes into account the human encounter that allows for participation, dialogue, and shared decision making to enhance the ability to establish durable peace in Plateau State. The study, therefore, proposes that the Theatre for Development frame work, centred on humans encountering humans is the alternative strategy for conflict management and peace building especially because it promotes participation, negotiation and inclusiveness which are indispensable for facilitating peace in any conflict ridden society.

### **Participatory Communication and Peace Building**

Paulo Freire (1970) is the most influential scholar to apply liberation theology to education and communication practice in development

contexts. Melkote and Steeves (2002, p. 297) affirm that Freire's ideas drew mostly from Christian liberation theology of Latin America and from the teachings of liberation leaders from other traditions such as Gandhi. Freire's literacy work in Brazil which empowered landless peasants to formulate their demands for a better life and liberate themselves from oppressive conditions grew into participatory communication theory and practice (Tufte & Mephalopulos, 2009, p.56). Indeed, Freire (2005, p.81) writes about problem posing education, "a constant unveiling of reality, the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention... through dialogic relations." The dialogic process Freire talks about requires communication that involves a process of shared meaning between people. For Freire (2005, p.14), "...communication should be practised not as message communication but rather as emancipatory dialogue, a particular form of non-exploitive, egalitarian dialogue which is carried out in an atmosphere of profound love and humility...and the focus should be face-to-face emancipatory dialogue". One of the perceived undertones from Freire's position is the value placed on human relationships. Perhaps, if this dialogue of love and humility is transferred to a conflict situation, there is likely to be a transformation in relationship from a chaotic one to an integrative one. Closely tied to the Freirian methodology is the conflict management style described as the problem-solving technique. The problem solving technique in conflict management is "a situation in which the parties to a conflict, either by themselves or through the assistance of a third party, find solutions to their problems in a cordial environment" (Agbu et al, 2006, p. 11). This, therefore, means that communicating peace is a matter of finding a common ground between the conflicting parties. The problem solving procedure according to Agbu et al. (2006, p.12) is:

[It is] non-judgmental and highly participatory in character. It promotes cooperation between conflict parties who jointly analyse the structure of the conflict and carefully workout strategies for reconciling with each other. Peace and conflict scholars and practitioners consider problem solving the best method of dealing with conflict as its outcomes are usually self-supporting in the sense that it is advantageous to all parties in the conflict [despite it being a somewhat difficult process].

It is upon these very principles that the Participatory Communication Theory is premised. Friere (2005, p. 17) writes that: "I engage in

dialogue because I recognise the social and not merely the individualist character in the process of knowing.” Fundamentally, the goal of the dialogic teaching is to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably theorise into shared experiences. Slachmuislder (2009, p. 7) asserts that the process of learning and knowing is “central to the Freirian methodology, setting all parties on an equal playing field and encouraging collaboration and the development of critical skills of analysis, interpretation and articulation.” Drawing from Friere’s work, Tufte and Mephalopolus (2009, p.11) aver that there are “fundamental principles to participatory communication, to lead practitioners and stakeholders”, invariably, towards a critical perception of the world. These include: Voice, Dialogue, Liberating pedagogy and Action-Reflection-Action. These principles are inter woven and operate on the circular, open ended process of engaging people or stakeholders to explore problems and/or situations and reach a collective solution or needed change. Central to “voice” is the understanding of the power it holds in human relationships and realities; to steer voice “to give groups, time and space to articulate their concerns, define their problems, formulate solutions and act on them” (Tufte & Mephalopolus: 2009, p. 11). The essence is to support and strengthen individuals and communities, ensuring that groups have a platform to voice their concerns, engage in debate and solve problems collectively. This process leads to free and open dialogue. Freire identifies dialogue as the conversation between people or groups in a community or across a community in order to name their world. Accordingly, Friere (2005, p.88) notes that:

Human existence cannot be silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but only by true words, with which men and women transform the world. To exist, humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*. Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection.

A situation of free and open dialogue where people can “name their world” entrenches conversations as well as meaningful exchanges that inculcate collaboration, collectivism, voice and horizontal communication, equity and equality. Defining situations this way leads to problem identification, informed and collective decision making which paves the way for a meaningful restructuring and development. This follows Slachmuislder’s (2009, p. 7) observation that dialogue

“encourage(s) cooperation, building social capital through networks of communication and understanding, and developing proactive and collaborative ideas for community progress”

Liberating pedagogy for Freire can be interpreted as the psychological process of liberating self from negativity to positivity, from disempowerment to empowerment, from being objects to being subjects. Sometimes, communities are tied down by negative tendencies which can be transformed through participatory learning and sharing processes where collective problem identification and solution takes place. This is one thing Nigeria appears to lack in the effort to work collectively to identify common problems and proffer solutions to such problems. Hitherto, the focus has been on ethnicities or ethnic groups and the problems associated with them. Sometimes, even when dialoguing occurs within and among groups, the will to translate the outcome to action remains a problem because there are hardly any structures to facilitate and sustain action owing to the fact that the people still see themselves as objects rather than subjects in their own realities. Freire (2005, p. 70) claims that “the result of the liberating pedagogy is based on dialogue translating into action-oriented awareness and action-reflection-action.”

Action-reflection-action according to Freire (1970) implies a participatory communication process based on reflection on problem as well as on integration of action. That is, the attempt to collectively act on a problem identified, in real life situations. The key results of participatory communication are the articulation of awareness raising and commitment to action. First, it becomes a process of empowerment for involved communities that feel commitment to and ownership of identified problems. Secondly, the emphasis of the collective nature of the process speaks to actual issues as well as encourages the need for mutual commitment (Tufté & Mephalopoulos, 2009). It is against this background that this paper examines peace building which also forms the core in Theatre for Development practice.

### **The Effectiveness of Applying TfD in Peace Building Discourses**

Theatre-for-Development (TfD) has over time been used synonymously with ‘Popular Theatre for Community Development’, ‘Theatre for Integrated Rural Development’, ‘Popular Theatre in Development’, ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, ‘Participatory Theatre’ and ‘Grassroots Theatre’ among others (Osofisan, 2004; Omoera, 2010). These several nomenclatures are reflective of the usage of theatre among targeted audiences in both rural and urban settings. TFD as it known today has undergone series of revision and redefinition. The initial method of developing scripts on campus and taking them to communities has

since evolved primarily because sometimes, this method was not exactly reflective of the concerns of the people under study or their contribution towards the process. In the face of this, practitioners sought for a process that was hinged on the value of targeted communities becoming programme participants to achieve more effects; ownership and sustainability even after the TfD workers are gone.

TfD then became known as “theatre by the people, about the people and for the people” (Hansel N. Eyoh, 1986 cited in Osofisan, 2004), a practice that dwells on people’s participation in order to effect positive change in the lives of communities (Osofisan, 2004) to which Illah (2004, p. 11) asserts “...anticipate certain developments in which barriers between people, their cultures and their reality are removed so that they engage in dialogue and capacity building for genuine development...” because: (i) it is participatory, meaning that it is part of a family of approaches and techniques that enable community groups to share, enhance and analyze their knowledge of life and conditions, to formulate appropriate and empowering action, (ii) [when it makes use of drama], the play-making process is improvisational, not inherently literary, and about community and people centred problems and (iii) sometimes, performance is in the open and open ended, to allow for meaningful intervention by the audience or the spectating participants [or spect-actors as coined by Augusto Boal]. In practice, TfD is a collective participatory process of creating knowledge “which is a far better and lasting procedure for change to occur” (Onuekwe, 2015, p. xiii) that makes use of a simple process consisting of the following: 1. information gathering in the target community; 2. analysis of information; 3. story creation and improvisation; 4. rehearsals; and 5. community performance (Daniel & Bappa, 2004)

The democratic nature of these processes not only help to spark conversations, they are also premised on the value of hearing localised voices and standpoints, paying attention to rooted idioms and metaphors and the dignity manifested to create new worlds for all-the facilitators and the communities (Onuekwe, 2015). The highlighted processes as well capitalise on and inculcate the values of hearing, seeing and doing simultaneously which account for 90% of effective learning and behaviour change (Iorapuu & Bamidele, 2004). This further enhances the sustainability of the TfD encounter. Furthermore, “it does not intimidate but rather, elicit and sustain participation in generating and obtaining as much helpful information as possible for and about the community” (Daniel & Bappa, 2004 p. 20). Breed (2002, p.1) noted that:

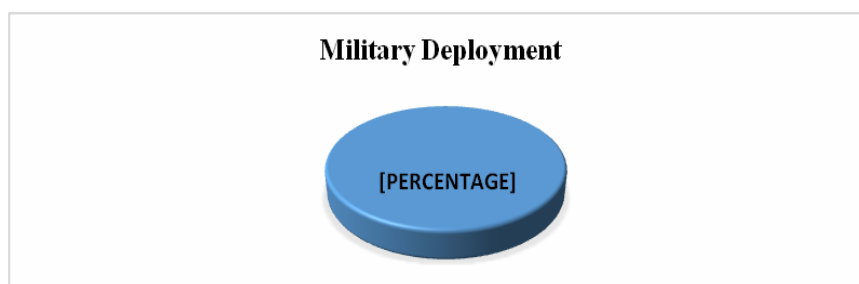
Theatre for Development (TfD) is used as  
an egalitarian method to access and distill



information, working with communities to create a self-sustaining tool for dialogue and from that dialogue to affect policy. TfD creates an infrastructure for communities to define themselves by developing systems of communication that identify key issues, implement solutions, and establish partnerships between resource groups.

What this implies is that Theatre-for-Development (TfD) creates an inclusive platform that relies on the communality that defines communities such that everybody becomes a key player in affecting the community positively. Consequently, TfD come into being as another way of looking at things; encouraging communities to express their concerns and reflecting upon the causes and possible solutions as a collective. More so, the TfD methodology is an exciting process as it is non-formal and not based on the literacy of its participants, giving everyone the opportunity to participate and be heard towards the actualisation of community goals. It is upon this democratic optimization that TfD becomes a viable vehicle to facilitate dialogue in peace building. Having conducted a workshop with herders and farmers that on the basis of collective gathering of information and identification of problems, plenary, brainstorming, storytelling and drama creation processes, drama presentation and post presentation discussions, copies of questionnaire were completed by the participants to reflect the effectiveness of applying Theatre-for-Development in peace building.

#### **Chart 1: Military Deployment as an Effective Approach in Peace Building in Plateau State**



All 36 respondents at 100% testify to the use of military deployment as an approach to conflict management and peace building. True to this, military check points can be seen at the entrances into Barkin Ladi

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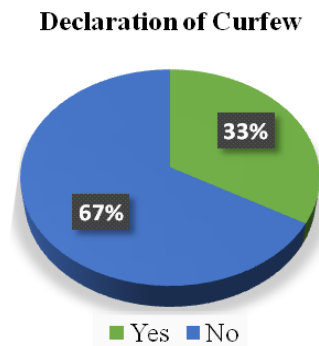
and Riyom LGAs, security agents live within the communities and can be seen walking or driving around. While their presence within the communities and at the borders embodies some level of calm and orderliness, communities still live in fear and suspicion. Some of the respondents were satisfied with the presence of security agents and some were not. For example a respondent stated:

Who are you a bloody civilian to talk to a military personnel? You must dance to their tune even when you are an indigene of the land who is supposed to guide the 'visitors'... I'm not saying that these security agents haven't put in any effort, they are trying but the question is how come we haven't had any peace yet? What the common man needs is peace, nothing more than that. (IDI Jol community, November 18, 2018)

Another asserted that: We appreciate the presence of the security agents in our community. They help us in numerous ways; they safeguard our community ... (FGD Gashish, November 23, 2018). And yet another: They have been very helpful. They help maintain law and order especially when they sense foul play. They also accompany us to various places when we are not sure of our safety (a respondent pointed to a military van with some security agents and community members standing by. A respondent said the security agents will accompany those people to their former homes to retrieve some items that were left behind when they fled (FGD Jol community, November 18, 2018).

The feelings of 'fear' and 'suspicion' are borne out of the fact that guerilla attacks are still being perpetuated despite the presence of security agents within the communities. This buttresses the point that the security agents may be able to halt physical confrontations, but are not likely to address deep seated emotions, sentiments, grudges and/or grievances. The use of force in conflict management and peace building is not always necessary. It might be required to restore order but should be followed by other subtle strategies that ensure human relations.

**Chart 2: Declaration of Curfew as an Effective Approach to Peace Building in Plateau State.**



Compared to military deployment, curfews are not popular as shown in chart 2. But like military deployment, curfews are declared to keep people off the streets and to manage the occurrence of any confrontations which fortunately or unfortunately is still related to halting physical violence which of course is not bad in itself. However, there have been instances of reprisals following the lifting of curfews. Beyond keeping conflict parties away from each other whether by geographical or physical boundaries, more attention needs to be paid to other relational aspects of conflict management and peace building strategies such as town hall meetings, sports activities, concerts/musical shows, inter faith conferences, etc.

**Chart 3: Commissions of Inquiry as an Effective Approach to Peace Building in Plateau State.**

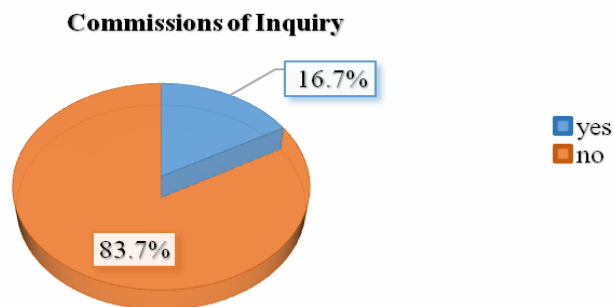


Chart 3 shows that commissions of inquiry are not popular in the study locations. However, approximately 16 commissions have sat in Plateau State from 2001-2010 such as the Niki Tobi Commission of Inquiry in 2001, the Bola Ajibola Commission of 2009 and the Solomon Lar Committee of 2010 among others (Emelonye, 2011). Yet, it is still not popular among the people for whom the inquiries were carried out. Furthermore, recommendations from the investigations and findings have hardly been considered and applied (Krause, 2011). This raises questions about the viability, efficacy and relevance of certain approaches in certain contexts with regard to conflict management and peace building. While the goal of commissions of inquiry, "if conducted properly are an acceptable and useful means of investigating factual situations and obtaining policy recommendations from an independent and impartial source to prevent future tragedies"(Gomery, 2006 p.784), such cannot be said here as the result from respondents prove otherwise. The danger of this still remains that people may not be to move beyond sentiments and emotions despite providing evidence to the commissions which can and have in some contexts led to relapses in conflict and violence.

**Chart 4: Overall, I understood the message and the Technique employed**

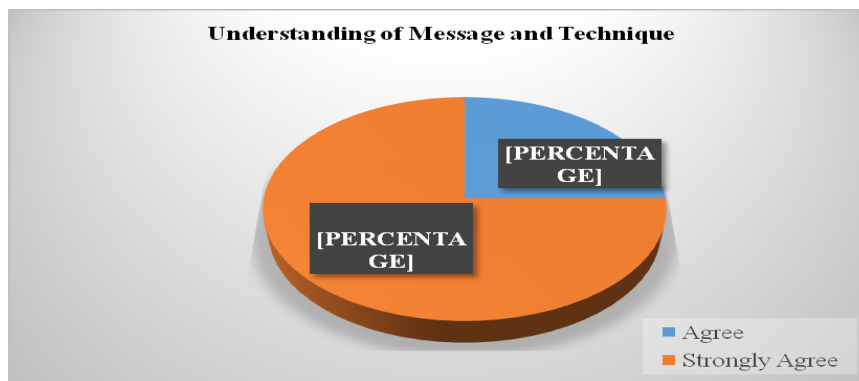


Chart 4 shows that when people contribute first hand in providing raw data and creating a story by themselves for themselves, they are more likely to understand the underpinnings of a message/performance as illustrated. 25% of respondents agree while 75% 'strongly' understood the message and the technique used. Here, because the nature of work being done required no formal training, acting and re-enactment did not appear alien to the participants especially as it is sociable and immediate. It was instinctual for the participants to seize

the opportunity to tell their stories. Instinctual in the sense that the ground was already being prepared through question and answer interactions, games, exercises, etc., to build confidence and trust leading up to the creation and presentation of the performances. Whether this art form is popular to spect-actors or not, people across cultures, easily identify with theatre. To this effect, it can be noted here that though herders and farmers are suspicious of one another, they easily participated in the story making and messages embedded in the drama skits. No force or coercion was required to gain support or cooperation from participants which lends credence to the viability of theatre as an alternative tool for conflict management and peace building.

**Chart 5: The Performance (s) addressed Issues of Conflict and Peace Building Satisfactorily**

**Addressing Triggers and Engendering Peace**

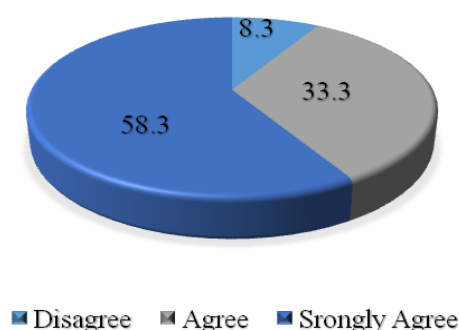
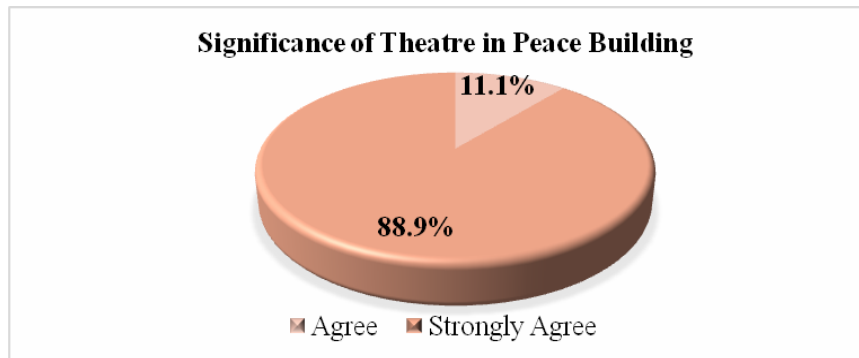
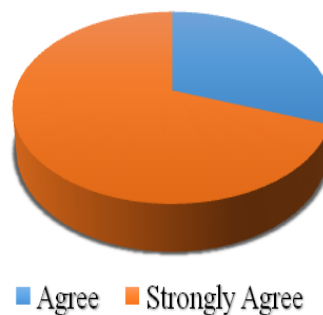


Chart 5 is a representation and reflection of the efforts made by the facilitators and spect-actors climaxing in the performances. In view of the fact that the spect-actors provided information and determined what formed the plot and sequence of the performances, a contrary summation would have been worrisome. While the performances were not exhaustive or end products in themselves as reflected by 8.3% of the study population, they brought to light some of the fears, worries and likely solutions to the conflict situation and peace building in the study locations. Therefore, TfD aids in providing a multiplicity of perspectives for the interrogation and understanding of issues while offering a platform for the expression of self and the collective. Being able to express self and/or the collective, also means that people can "name their world", invariably naming their problems and discerning ways to tackle them which could bring about healing and the likely dispelling of deep seated grudges.

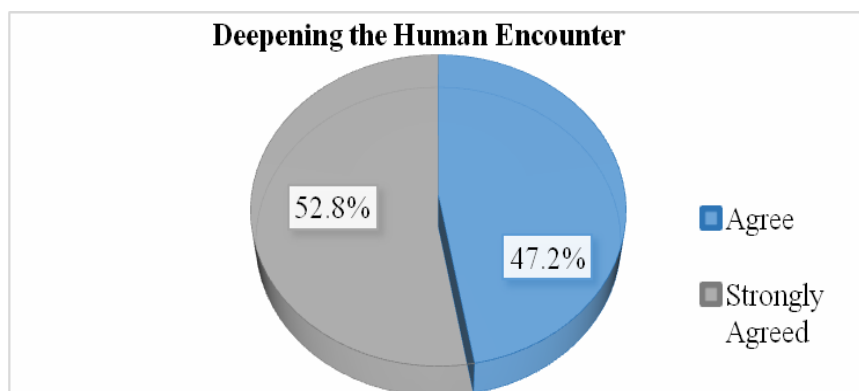
**Chart 6: The Use of Drama is Significant in Peace Building**

Having participated in the processes of information gathering and sharing, brain storming, play creation/drama and post-performance discussions which involve the physical, psychological and emotional contributions of the spect-actors in the sense that they actively took part using their bodies and voices, thought through the sequence of the drama and the images they wanted to present encapsulating their emotions; concerns and hope, the respondents strongly agreed at 88.9 % that drama is important in conflict management and peace building. It is important not because it takes away pain or anger or feelings of revenge but because it engenders reality, people encountering people in a face-to-face manner which helps them unburden themselves using the platform as a buffer for ill feelings.

**Chart 7: During and after the Performance (s), I felt a Sense of Connection with other Participants****Connecting with other Participants**

As pointed out earlier, drama or theatre performances are tied to the audiences' and in this case, the spect-actors presence and emotions as theatre cannot play to itself. 69.4% of respondents strongly agree and 30.6 % of respondents agree that they felt a sense of connection with others; fellow spect-actors. Chart 7 shows that through vivid recreation of events made possible by drama, people can witness and feel firsthand what a neighbour sees and feels and how this affects them; putting oneself in the shoes of others. By so doing, a sense of responsiveness and brotherliness is cultivated. Hence, the ability to connect with others, to understand others and perhaps shift positions or change perspectives which are essential for peace building. Interests and emotions are two factors that inflame conflict and violence. When negative interests and emotions are replaced by positive ones, farmers and herders can look beyond their differences and move on. Thus, TfD plays a role as a catalyst for improved relationships. Amidst deteriorating relationships between herders and farmers, the idea is not only to engage people but to also have them consider their strengths as a community than the weaknesses that tear them apart.

**Chart 8: My Eyes Were Opened to Issues, Ideas or Points of View that I had not Fully Considered Previously**



Empowerment and consciousness remain the core of any TfD encounter. From Chart 8, 47.2% of respondents agree and 52.8% strongly agree that they are now more open to consider other perspectives which simply mean that drama has the ability to inform, educate and entertain and in this tripartite function, issues are raised, various sides of a story are laid bare creating deeper meaning and understanding. This makes it possible to begin to see things in new light, beyond superficial manifestations which is important in the

discourses of conflict management and peace building in the sense that people and communities can begin to move from negative to positive positions when they own a process, when they feel that their opinions not only matter, but are duly considered in the events that lead to or bring about development or improvement in their lives.

**Chart 9: During and after the Performance (s), I began to think about Drama as another Medium to Address Peace Building in my Community**

**Re- thinking Drama as an Approach in Peace building**

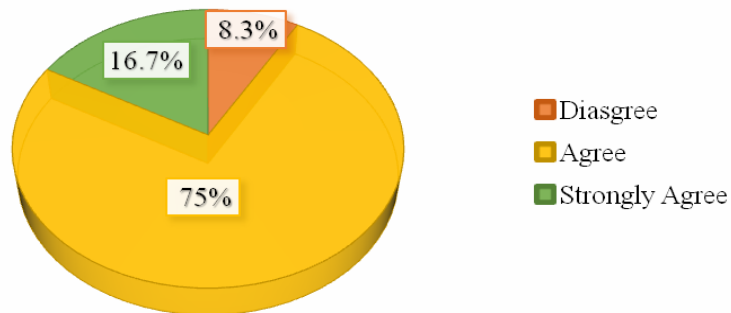


Chart 9 shows that the use of drama in peace building is not only effective in addressing issues both physically and psychologically but that it is also a process people are willing to adopt which further affirms its effectiveness. 75% of respondents agree and 16.7% of respondents strongly agree to the likelihood of adopting drama as a strategy for peace building. Despite the fact that the respondents are enthusiastic about drama and the TfD process probably because it is a sociable process, fluid and informal and does entail any element of force or coercion, it is however worthy to note that some of the respondents at 8.3% do not fail to realise that the process is one to carefully approach and gradually grow into for effective application and successful outings. A respondent noted thus:

I must congratulate you for being able to organise this workshop with all these people here! I don't know how you did it but I am sure a lot of work went into it which is commendable...I don't imagine having the capacity to do this.... (TfD Workshop, Legislative Chambers, Barkin Ladi LGA



Secretariat, Plateau State. November 30, 2018)

As 'informal' and 'emergent' as the process might be or appear to be, it takes a whole lot of patience and careful planning to implement. Accordingly, Titterton and Smart (2008) noted that community engagements are not about quick wins, but to leave a lasting impression on facilitators and beneficiaries even when projects and/or programmes are long over. While drama is significant to TfD engagements, all TfD engagements do not have to encompass drama. Other tools include music, puppetry, cartooning, etc. The general idea is to assist people and communities organise themselves and create a structure with which they are able to consult one another and mobilise for immediate and future endeavours.

**Chart 10: The Performance (s) have Spurred me to Take Action or Make Changes Necessary for Peace Building**

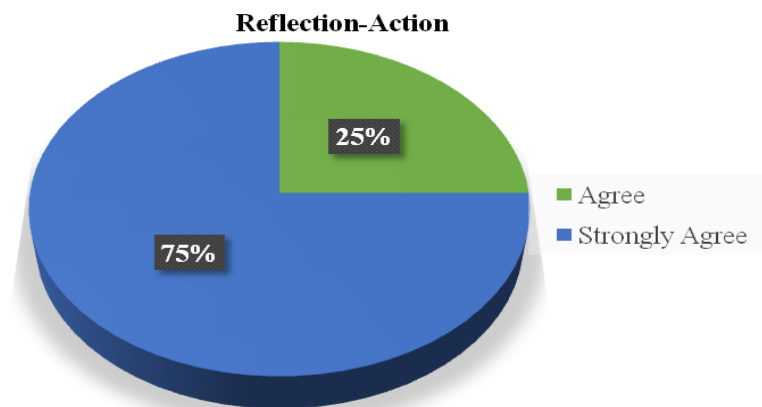


Chart 10 provides insights into the respondent's genuineness and intention to use TfD in conflict management and peace building having been asked three times at different points. Here, respondents showed undoubting interests and the likelihood of applying drama in future endeavours. This also validates the position of applying TfD as stated in the discussion that follows Chart 11 which is, to leave a lasting impression on both facilitators and beneficiaries respectively.

**Chart 11: Theatre should be considered as an Alternative Approach to Discuss Peace Building**

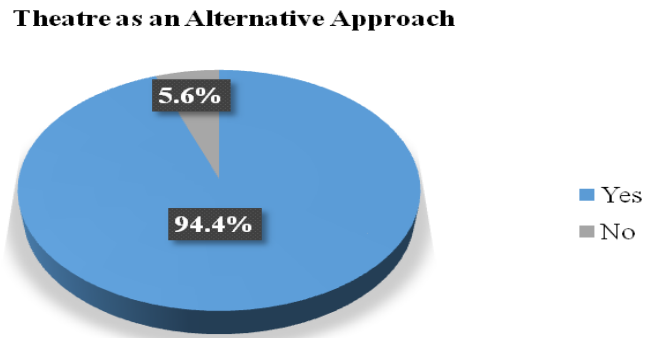


Chart 11 justifies the overall claim of this study which is to advance TfD as an alternative approach to building inclusive societies and entrenching peace in Plateau State. Building inclusive societies go hand in hand with democratisation: promoting some level of free handedness rather than the use of excessive force. Freedom and liberty to express oneself in a tranquil atmosphere paves the way for participation, participation leads to negotiation, negotiation leads to reflection and reflection to action all embedded in TfD. Illah (2004, p.16) noted that "Theatre-for-Development is a mode of popular theatre that seeks to dialogue and participate with and not just for communities." Thus, in working with communities, responses show that participants have attained some level of self-consciousness and the ability to work as a collective. Working as a collective also implies that room will be made for the accommodation of 'others' which suggests inclusiveness and in this manner, cementing relationships.

### **Conclusion**

This article concludes that people encountering people is essential for engendering peace building. TfD processes are usually entertaining, dialogic, thought provoking and inclusive (to get people to cooperate without the necessary use of force). In practice, therefore, TfD is an investment in people and operates as a strategy that reflects the realities of people in diverse circumstances and supports them towards achieving improved living standards especially in the context of peace building as the study has demonstrated. Based on this the following recommendations were made: (i) there is the need for capacity building within government agencies to improve their fundamental understanding of conflict related issues and enhance their ability to

contribute to just and lasting solutions. One way to go about this is to work closely with or consider hiring experts with specific social skills including development communicators, ethnographers and anthropologists; (ii) in addressing conflict, its management and peace building, the opinions, efforts and cooperation of all stakeholders are basic requirements. Thus, there is the need to conduct proper stakeholders' engagements among other existing measures. In light of this, the TfD framework should be employed to ensure widespread participation in the decision making process especially at the grassroots; and (iii) true and meaningful democracy needs to be operational to harness the various voices of people in the multi-cultural set up of Plateau State. There is the need to expand the frontiers of participation of people and communities beyond partisan divide or the use of force for durable peace to be achieved.

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