

A Comparative Analysis of the Efficacy of a *Once-Off Forum Theatre* Intervention and *Weekly Ongoing Workshops* used by DramAidE

CONTENTS

Abstract.....	02
Introduction.....	02
DramAidE.....	03
Literature Review.....	05
Theoretical Framework.....	06
Methodology.....	11
Data Analysis.....	14
Conclusion.....	19
Bibliography.....	23
Appendix i: Forum Theatre Questionnaire.....	26
Appendix ii: Weekly Workshops Questionnaire.....	27
Appendix iii: Forum Theatre Interview Guide.....	28
Appendix iv: Weekly Workshops Interview Guide.....	29

Abstract

The methodology used in communication for development has changed in the last 30 years from a linear top-down approach to a much more inclusive participatory model of communication as dialogue in which ideally all stakeholders are involved (Parker, 1997). During the same period the related field of Entertainment-Education (EE) has undergone similar changes in its audience approach (Tufte, 2005). One aspect of EE is the use of drama for social purposes, which is practised by DramAidE, a “project [which] uses drama methodologies to critically engage young people to communicate effectively about issues relating to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS” (dramaide.co.za). At the moment, DramAidE has two projects with very differing levels of audience participation. The one consists of a Forum Theatre play that is taken to many schools for a once-off intervention and the other is an ongoing series of weekly workshops with the same students participating each time. In this paper I will examine how drama is used in each case and compare how the different levels of the participants’ involvement in the interventions affect their life style choices. This analysis will help to draw conclusions as to the effectiveness of each of the two interventions examined according to DramAidE’s stated goals “to equip young people with increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the skills to inform and communicate with others about sexual health” and “to create a network of peer educators that practice safer sex and other positive behaviours, and initiate a social movement that promotes healthy lifestyles” (dramaide.co.za).

Introduction

Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator and author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) argues that “if humankind produce social reality [...], then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity” (1970:33). This is the task DramAidE, faced with the social reality of an unjust society which offers fertile breeding ground for the potentially devastating pandemic of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, is trying to take up with a multitude of different tactics. Much of DramAidE’s work is inspired by Paulo Freire’s liberating theory of education and “uses drama methodologies to critically engage young people to communicate effectively about issues relating to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS” (dramaide.co.za; Dalrymple, 2004:2). One of DramAidE’s projects at the moment is a travelling theatre show visiting many schools in one area and another is comprised of weekly workshops, working continuously with the same

schools and students. The drama methodologies mainly used in these interventions are Forum Theatre and Role Play respectively, both being largely inspired by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre practitioner and social activist, and adapted for the South African context.

This paper will investigate and compare the efficacy of each of these approaches according to DramAidE's stated aims. To do this I will enquire into how drama is utilised as a tool for communication in the Forum Theatre performances and in the weekly workshops by DramAidE and into what the main similarities and differences between the two interventions are. In addition to that I will compare responses from participants of both interventions according to the perceived change the projects effected in their lives. To put these findings into context, I will at first analyse how the project fits into the wider field of Development Communication (more specifically Communication for Social Change) and Entertainment Education (EE) and how these theories might impact on the interventions. I will then look at how DramAidE is using drama techniques in the Forum Theatre performances and the weekly workshops and how this is informed by the theories of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. After examining the two approaches in more detail, the paper will end by drawing conclusions as to the efficacy of each intervention based on the data collected. I will conclude by arguing that the 'ideal solution' is known to the DramAidE organisers, but that financial and organisational restraints hinder the implementation of the most appropriate response at times.

DramAidE

DramAidE is an independent non-governmental organization attached to the Universities of Zululand and KwaZulu-Natal which "uses drama methodologies to critically engage young people to communicate effectively about issues relating to sex, sexuality and HIV/AIDS". In addition to stimulating communication,

DramAidE aims to equip young people with increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the skills to inform and communicate with others about sexual health. The goal is to create a network of peer educators that practice safer sex and other positive behaviours, and initiate a social movement that promotes healthy lifestyles (dramaide.co.za; also see Nupen, 2007:1; Bourgault, 2003:68).

This network of peer educators is started by DramAidE by organising 'Act Alive' clubs in participating schools. These clubs at first undergo a series of weekly workshops with a facilitator and are later monitored by DramAidE. The focus of these workshops is not only on imparting information to the learners, but also on empowering them to make more informed

choices in their lives and to ultimately become ‘peer educators’, teaching other learners what they have learnt. In addition to their own programme for example, the learners organise health awareness campaigns, open days and more trying to reach out to the wider community by using the arts as a drawing card and a tool for communication. Membership in these clubs is voluntary and open to all students in a participating school.

Apart from the clubs, DramAidE is also organising and partaking in many other projects that are focussed for example on curbing violence, promoting gender equality and supporting Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). In addition to that, because of the need to reach a large number of learners, DramAidE occasionally produces travelling theatre shows which are shown in many schools in the areas they work in.

At the moment, one such show is visiting many schools in the Maphumulo area. Some of these schools have a DramAidE programme running, but most of them do not. The play was devised by Thabsile Mkhize¹, a DramAidE facilitator, together with four out-of-school-youth who are being employed as actors for this show. The actors animate the crowd with dancing and singing and then show a little skit which poses a problem, which will be resolved by the audience’s discussion facilitated by Mrs Mkhize. During the process she also asks some learners to come up, take an actor’s place and try out a different behaviour that might solve the problem or will avoid it altogether. By using drama methodologies which are based on the liberation theories of Freire and Boal (see Theoretical Framework), DramAidE hopes to provide learners with “a ‘problem-solving’ educational experience” which, if the learners have effectively participated in it, will “imbibe [them with] creativity, innovation and [affirm them] as beings in the process of *becoming*. Their experience will be of one who is moving forward and looking ahead” (Nupen, 2007:7).

This paper will focus on examining and comparing the weekly workshops of the ‘Act Alive’ clubs, which use Role Play methods, and the Forum Theatre technique being employed in the travelling theatre performances. Both approaches use drama to engage the participants, to stimulate critical reflection on the presented situation (and in extension on their own life), to provide a space for meaningful debate and to present an opportunity to rehearse skills needed in real life. The most obvious difference between Forum Theatre and the workshops as used by DramAidE is the fact that the Forum Theatre show is a once-off intervention (recurring at

¹ Not the real name.

most once a year) and the workshops are on-going at least for a year. The Forum Theatre performance therefore needs to be self-contained and restricted to the school setting it is performed in, while the club can not only build on past experiences, but also actively tries to reach out into the wider community. On the other hand, due to its nature as a travelling theatre show, the Forum Theatre performance reaches much more learners than the workshops (close to 100.000 as opposed to ca 900).

In summary it can be said that DramAidE aims “to empower the community through developing self-reliance in all aspects of life” (Young, 1997:24) by using a variety of participatory drama methodologies drawing heavily on Freire and Boal.

Literature Review

Apart from DramAidE’s own research, there are a few studies concerned with its work. Dominique Nduhura for example examined *Freirean pedagogy as applied by DramAidE for HIV/AIDS education* and came to the conclusion that although DramAidE was very successful in imparting knowledge and changing the attitudes of the learners in the clubs, it was very hard for the youth to change their behaviour – and especially maintain the changed behaviour – because of “peer pressures and other culture-based hindrances abounding in their communities” which also “prevented them from spreading information they got from DramAidE” (2004:62). In the context of this paper, the question then will be which of the methodologies used by DramAidE enable more learners to resist these ‘peer pressures and culture-based hindrances’ and to pursue a healthy lifestyle. The same author and Emma Durden concluded in a paper entitled *Use of participatory forum theatre to explore HIV/AIDS issues in the workplace* that

In the South African context, barriers to self-efficacy may include “poverty, limited access to health and social services, labour migration, urbanisation, unemployment, poor education, the inferior social position of women, diversities in language and culture amongst others” (Kelly, Parker & Lewis, 2001:2) (2007:14).

Miranda Young, analysing *Gender Dynamics and the role of participatory /development theatre in a post-apartheid South Africa: The example of DramAidE*, focuses on the aspect of the ‘inferior social position of women’ and argues that if any “change in attitude is to be translated into a change in behaviour” it is necessary to recognise the “interconnected nature

of the oppressions of race, class and gender” (1997:63). This paper will investigate how and if the Forum Theatre performance and the weekly workshops succeed in communicating this ‘interconnected nature’.

Validating the points made above, Nupen, when interviewing youth partaking in DramAidE clubs, found that they noted “that one of the major challenges that directly impacts on the success of the project is the difficulty of gaining acceptance from the community at large that there is equality between men and women” (2007: 17). DramAidE also understood early on that “sexual behaviour could not change unless both partners [...] were equally free to negotiate” and that rather than just imparting knowledge, the project had to indeed provide learners – boys and girls – with “life management skills” (Bourgault, 2003:69). Nupen concluded therefore that the focus of the DramAidE programmes is to not only teach learners about sexuality but also to “work collaboratively with educators, learners, the Departments of Health and Social Welfare and Education respectively, as well as the community in the selected areas of KwaZulu Natal, to creatively share information about the complicated nature and effects of HIV AIDS” (2007:3). These findings go hand in hand with DramAidE’s stated goal “to create a network of peer educators that practice safer sex and other positive behaviours, and initiate a social movement that promotes healthy lifestyles” (dramaide.co.za), which this paper will use to assess the efficacy of both the DramAidE weekly workshops and of the Forum Theatre show.

Theoretical Framework

Development Communication, of which DramAidE can be said to be a part, has undergone a significant metamorphosis over the past decades as practitioners have compared their experiences to the expected results and have become more cognisant of their own subject position in the process. This change is perhaps most obvious in the definition itself of what constitutes development. While up to 20 years ago development was generally defined as economic development according to the pattern the West followed to which all other countries should adhere (Tomaselli, 2002), it has since then slowly given way to a much more holistic view of human society and progress. In 1995 the United Nation’s *Programme of Action for the World Summit for Social Development* for example argued that “development is inseparable from the cultural, ecological, economic, political and spiritual environment in which it takes place” (UN, 1995:4).

With this shift in what actually is being pursued in Development Communication came also a shift of how development should be brought about and who should be in charge of the process at the end of the day (Parker, 1997:49f). It became apparent that to sustainably effect development it is necessary to not only encourage individual behaviour change but that it must go hand in hand with changes in the social environment individuals find themselves in. It became also clear that people are much more likely to own this change if they are given the chance to define, plan and support it, without somebody from outside the community telling them what to do. These insights and others led to a “call for a model of development communication based on *dialogue* versus monologue, *horizontal* versus vertical information sharing, equitable *participation*, local *ownership*, *empowerment*, and *social* versus individual change” (Figueroa et al, 2002: 3).

An attempt at such a model can be found in Communication for Social Change, a methodology defined as “a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and how to get it” (Gray-Felder and Deane, 1999:15). This model of communication is based on the assumption that sustainability is more likely if the individuals and communities most affected are empowered to *own* the process and content of communication. In that way communities would be the agents of their own change, which would be negotiated from the inside rather than forced from the outside and would affect not only individual behaviour but also social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment. (Figueroa et al, 2002:ii):

One example of Development Communication in which this shift towards participatory methodologies is apparent is Entertainment Education (EE), of which DramAidE considers itself to be a part, which can be defined as:

The process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes and change overt behaviour. (Singhal & Rogers, 1999:9; also see Tufte, 2005:163f).

Arguably one of the theories which exerted the biggest influence on EE is Albert Bandura’s social learning theory which states that “individuals learn not only in classrooms but also by observing role models in everyday life, including characters in movies and television programmes”. This process is “regulated by four cognitive sub-processes: *attention*, *retention*, *production*, and *motivation*” (Singhal & Rogers, 1999: 65) in which a modelled

behaviour is found useful, remembered and finally reproduced in his or her own life by the spectator. EE practitioners found though that no two audience members take the same route in this process and are obviously influenced in their decisions and actions by their social environment.

This realisation signalled a shift towards a growing desire to understand the meaning-making process more fully and away from the focus on individual behaviour change towards a more holistic social change paradigm. Especially agencies and projects using EE to combat the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS - like DramAidE - came to realise that “in order to respond to the [...] pandemic it is imperative to recognize that the disease exists within a complex system, and the circumstances surrounding the illness may be just as important as the illness itself” (Cardey, 2006:1). Multimedia EE intervention *Soul City* for example explicitly states that it “operates strategically within three interlinked units of change: the individual, the community and the broader society” (Tufte, 2002).

During this move “from a ‘production-centered’ approach to a more ‘audience centered’ approach” (Singhal & Rogers, 1999:222), it became apparent that the more the spectators felt involved in the intervention, the more motivation they had to affect personal and social change and that this was linked to self-efficacy which is here defined as “peoples’ beliefs about their capabilities to exercise control over events that affect their lives” (Bandura, 1997; Sood, 2001:158f, 167). For people to transform themselves it therefore does not only require them to recognise the need for change and to have the will to change, but they also need to be empowered to take action. Complicating empowerment though is the fact that no person lives alone and everyone is shaped by their social context and while certainly some empowered individuals can affect change in their societies (Singhal et al, 2006), it more often than not needs a dual process of individual and social change, with the one reinforcing the other. Emma Durden, an Applied Theatre practitioner, argues that “individual change is unlikely to be sustained unless the context in which it occurs is supportive of those changes” (Durdén, 2003:78). This mirrors the findings of the DramAidE studies quoted above and supports the notion that DramAidE’s goal of an inclusive approach is not only timely, but indeed necessary. The question this paper asks is how much each of the methodologies investigated support this goal.

The idea that “world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction” and that just as humans shape society, society is shaping them is the basis of Paulo Freire’s liberatory pedagogy, which has influenced many EE practitioners and is acknowledged by DramAidE as one of their strongest influences (Dalrymple, 2004; Nupen, 2007). Freire argues that social problems are due to unjust structures, which benefit one part of the populace – the oppressors – while perpetuating the poverty and dependency of the other part – the oppressed. The problem is that in most cases the oppressed do not realise the root cause of their sufferings since “oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating” (1970:32f).

Freire argues therefore that to change the oppressive system and to transform their reality, the oppressed first have to become conscientised that means they have to come to realise that the oppressive system is not just and can indeed be changed by them. This conscientisation then leads to emotional independence and praxis, which Freire defines as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (1970:33). But he warns that conscientisation cannot “be packaged and sold” but can only come about through sincere dialogue and proposes “a humanizing pedagogy” as one form of conscientisation. This new form of communication replaces the “‘banking’ concept of education” in which students are seen as passive, empty receptacles with “problem-posing education” which views students as actively involved in their own learning process and as people already experienced and knowledgeable in many aspects. Freire describes this process as follows:

“In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” (1970:64).

It is this view of the world as a reality in process and the belief in one’s own power to transform it that DramAidE wants to offer to its participants. Since it mostly uses drama methodologies to arrive at this goal, it is strongly influenced by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian like Freire, who heavily relied on the latter’s ideas to create his *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Boal agrees with Freire that it is necessary to break the culture of silence to transform society and claims that “to speak is to take power” (1979:xx). He therefore created a form of theatre that allowed the spectator to become a Spect-Actor, actively suggesting and even acting out

solutions to the problems posed on stage. He called this interactive theatre *Forum Theatre* and argues that the Spect-Actor, although acting in fictional circumstances, is still transforming himself: “By taking possession of the stage in the fiction of the theatre he acts: not just in the fiction, but also in his social reality. By transforming fiction, he is transformed into himself” (1979:xxi). Later on in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal softens this stance a bit: “Maybe the theatre in itself is not revolutionary, but these theatrical forms are without doubt a *rehearsal of revolution*” (1979:141).

At another place yet Boal places the emphasis of the outcome more on the intellectual conscientisation of the audience than the action itself: “It is not the place of the theatre to show the correct path, but only to offer the means by which all possible paths may be examined” (1979:141). These two poles, the ‘transformation through action’ and the ‘means to examine different paths’, set up by Boal, are useful to study DramAidE’s (and indeed all Applied Theatre) approaches, since all of their interventions place their intended outcomes somewhere between these two markers or try to combine them (see for example Durden, 2003:73).

But more than just affecting individual empowerment and transformation though, Boal and other Applied Theatre practitioners claim that drama can also have a socially galvanising effect:

“Theatre of the Oppressed – and more specifically Forum Theatre – aside from promoting the discovery of the self, aside from reinforcing an individual’s self-esteem and self-confidence, also contributes to the establishment of the collective “we” [...] that comes from becoming a citizen who understands the world as a collective in which events are interdependent, both cause and consequence of social, political, economic and religious occurrences” (Santos, 2002:232).

For Boal, this collective effect is arrived at by destroying “the barrier between actors and spectators” and “the barrier between protagonists and choruses”, meaning that everyone partaking of the performance is on an equal footing and can both perform and watch the performance and act and comment on the action. But while Forum Theatre in practice often struggles to completely destroy these barriers, interactive workshops using Role Play have frequently succeeded in creating a space of collective acting and reflecting. Role Play can be defined as “an active, experience-based learning method, in which learners explore a situation as though they were the people involved in it” (Hunt, 1989:3) and is a method extensively

used by DramAidE in their workshops. For Role Play to be successful though it is necessary that “the role is taken on in a *safe* environment in which students are as inventive and playful as possible [...] and by doing so, are experimenting with their knowledge of the real world and developing their ability to interact with people [my italics]” (Ladousse, 1987:5). One could therefore describe Role Play as taking the premises of Forum Theatre (participation and empowerment) to another level. In that sense then they do not differ much in their essential goals and methods, but more in their settings and levels of participation.

Methodology

One form of data collection was giving out questionnaires to both, learners who had seen a Forum Theatre (FT) play the previous year and learners who are part of a club and had weekly workshops until the beginning of this year. The reason for giving out questionnaires was that the researcher was hoping to collect a bigger sample than, for example, with a focus group, working within the time constraints given. The questionnaires mainly used open ended questions and assessed how much and what the learners remembered and if the respective intervention had made any impact on their lives (see Appendices i and ii). Some questions were, for example, what the students remembered as the main topic of the show/workshop, if they remembered any characters, if they thought about it afterwards and if they changed their own behaviour after participating. All the learners filling out questionnaires were students at Ngcongcongga High in Maphumulo; this school was selected because both groups of learners (former workshop participants and FT audience) could be found there and therefore shared the same environment.

The respondents of the workshop group were chosen based on availability. The contact teacher (DramAidE liaison), was asked to organise a club meeting during the big break and all the students that came were given a questionnaire. Unfortunately, they did not have time to fill it out completely and were asked to finish at home and return it after two days. This resulted in some of them having problems understanding a few of the questions and forgetting to return the forms. This sample group therefore is comprised of only 13 respondents. These ranged from grade nine to twelve learners, with the average age being 17.

The only requirements for the respondents of the Forum Theatre group were that they had to be in grade nine or older and had enough time to complete the questionnaire, so in the end they were chosen because they were all in one class and the period could be given to the

researcher. These 40 respondents were all in grade eleven, with the average age being 17 as well. It can be said then that both sample groups were quite similar, in both cases comprising students of the same school and area (and therefore social background), roughly the same age group and both sexes. To avoid possible ethical problems, the school's, the parents' and the learners' consent was obtained, by providing each with a form to be signed, which explained the nature of the research and informed them about the learners' rights.

It is important to note here that the fact that both sample groups were found in the same school is on the one hand an advantage since it means that the learners share a similar environment, but can on the other hand have influenced the outcome of the questionnaires in terms of the FT group's answers. Although they are not taking part in the DramAidE workshops at their school, the possibility remains that these learners were already more knowledgeable and aware of issues surrounding HIV/AIDS and sexuality because of the presence of the club which organises information campaigns for example. In addition to that, the sample groups turned out quite small (40 and 13 students respectively) and the students in the workshop group misunderstood some questions for reasons explained above. Judging from the facilitators' comments and observation though, the results nevertheless seem quite representational of the two groups investigated. It should be borne in mind though that this is of course only a small study and should merely act as a guide to where future studies can continue and hopefully cover a much larger sample group.

In addition to the questionnaires, the researcher joined two DramAidE facilitators, who were working in Maphumulo area as well, and observed both a weekly workshop (albeit in a Primary School) and two FT performances in two high schools. Both these interventions took place in schools in close proximity to Ngcongcongga High in Maphumulo, with their learners therefore sharing a similar background with the respondents of the questionnaires. Thereafter, a qualitative in-depth interview (approx. 45 min) was conducted with each one of the two facilitators accompanied earlier (who gave their written consent to circumvent ethical problems, in one case asking the name to be changed) and informal conversations held with other DramAidE staff focussing on why they chose the respective drama methodology in their projects, what they see as its strengths and weaknesses and how they see this tying in with the broader field of development communication or Communication for Social Change (see Appendices iii and iv). All of these research activities were greatly supported by DramAidE.

It is important here to include a note on the methodology of research used. The learners' questionnaire included both qualitative, that is open-ended, and quantitative questions so the researcher would be able to quantify the responses, but also to explain them to a certain degree. This method is supported by many researchers in development communication who agree that a mixed methods approach, a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, is the most appropriate when evaluating interventions (see for example Figueroa et al, 2002; Kelly et al, 2004: 10, 12; Kincaid, 2004:5, 34). The interviews with the facilitators on the other hand, although using a guideline, were organised in a very flexible way and frequently digressed to gather as much of the facilitators' opinions about their work as possible, rather than statistical information they could have provided. This was done to not only provide an answer to the question of the efficacy of the two approaches from the facilitators' perspective, but also to value their explanations as to the reasons for the former findings. I believe that as stakeholders involved and experienced in the process, the facilitators (and participants) generally have a deeper understanding of the complexity of the process than the researcher (Also see Parks et al, 2005:7).

This assumption also underlies the data analysis, which relies mostly on the reports of facilitators and learners, of their subjective experiences of the process and their own report of change in their lives. To be able to generalise the answers, they were grouped according to their main points which would shed light on the efficacy of the interventions to cause individual behaviour change and social change around the issues covered by DramAidE, namely HIV/AIDS, sexuality in general, drugs and alcohol and violence. Other points of departure offered themselves during the analysis which could not be followed here due to the constraints of this research, but which would be worth pursuing at another time, like the difference in answers of girls and boys and how this differed according to each sample group and the importance of the facilitators.

Data Analysis

Speaking about her experience using drama methodologies (mainly Role Play) in the workshops and why she considers these useful, Mesuli Ntshalintshali, a DramAidE workshop facilitator, said that "people are able to express themselves freely when using drama [...] Then the realities that have gone unchallenged are being given a chance to be challenged [...] with drama you get people to talk about those things without there being a quarrel". She asserted

that especially for the youth in rural areas with whom she is working, drama is often necessary to start the process since “you find that most of them are shy, they cannot talk about themselves, about their sexualities [...] but once they get exposed to this [drama methods] they open up and you see a different side of them”. Ntshalintshali attributes this success of drama in opening learners up to the shift in the power relations that goes hand in hand with the “participatory method, because you know most of the time they are used to lecture type learning with the teacher in front in the position of power [...] So with drama I am able to be myself and learn – in a fun way” (Interview, May 2008).

Speaking about her choice to use the Forum Theatre method in the travelling theatre show she directed for DramAidE, Thabsile Mkhize² raised similar points:

When you do a play, [the learners] get to think. They sit there and they get entertained, yes, but they also get to think and it just stays in their minds. Especially when you do Forum, where they take part, they remember some of the things. It’s not you just stand there and tell them things and then you go away. So I guess they get time to choose stuff, rather than us just chucking it into their mouths and forcing it down their throats (Interview, May 2008).

The learners’ answers seem to mostly support these claims, especially the one that the drama methodologies are working very well in engaging the learners in the process. All respondents in the FT group for example said that the show was either “very enjoyable” (the vast majority) or “a bit enjoyable” and all respondents in the workshop group said that they found the process “very enjoyable”. The reasons for the enjoyment differed at certain points though. While the FT respondents said that the play itself and the transfer of information was enjoyable, the workshop group had a much wider range of answers. Some of them also said the reason for their enjoyment is the learning while others were more cognisant of the effects of the process, like gaining in confidence and meeting different people or simply enjoyed acting in the Role Plays and getting goodies (like t-shirts).

Weekly Workshops:

	I learned about my life and future		I was listened to and gained in confidence		Role plays & goodies make me happy		I got to meet different people	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%

²Not the real name.

Female	3	50.0	1	16.7	2	33.3	-	-
Male	2	28.6	3	42.9	1	14.3	2	15.4
Total	5	38.5	4	30.8	3	23.1	2	15.4

These more differentiated answers from the workshop participants can also be found when comparing other answers in the two different questionnaires. For example, when asked what they remembered as the main topic of the show/workshops students in both groups remembered the factual knowledge they gained (mainly about HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol) and the positive behaviour advocated around these topics, but some learners in the workshop group also remembered “self awareness and goal setting” as the main topic.

Forum Theatre:

	Abstain		HIV/AIDS & STIs		Use condoms		Drugs Alcohol &		Violence Rape &		Be Faithful	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	21	87.5	5	20.8	3	12.5	4	16.7	2	08.3	-	-
Male	11	68.8	2	12.5	3	18.8	1	06.3	-	-	1	06.3
Total	33	83.0	7	17.5	6	15.0	5	12.5	2	05.0	1	02.5

Weekly Workshops:

	HIV/Aids, STDs, Teenage Pregnancy		Drugs & Alcohol		Crime & Violence		Self awareness and Goal setting	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	3	50.0	1	16.7	3	50.0	2	33.3
Male	3	42.9	5	71.4	1	14.3	3	42.9
Total	6	46.2	6	46.2	4	30.8	5	38.5

Interestingly, when asked what they learned from the play/workshop that was new to them, some learners (mostly female) replied that they learned from the FT that “your actions affect your life” and that one should “respect oneself”, obviously having reflected on the action shown on stage and drawn some conclusions about the reasons for the events portrayed. Although the workshop participants mentioned almost the same issues as the FT audience, they phrased them differently. In most cases, they added a “how to” at the front, indicating that they not only learned what the appropriate action in a given situation should be, but also

how to implement it. Interesting here is that while drugs seem equally important to boys and girls, it was two boys who mentioned “how to live with HIV” and two girls who wrote “how to stand up against abuse”, indicating different lived experiences and that both of them were catered for in the workshops.

Forum Theatre:

	Abstain		Use Condoms		HIV/AIDS*		Drugs & Alcohol		Your actions affect your life		Respect yourself		Nothing	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
F	10	41.7	6	25.0	3	12.5	3	12.5	2	08.3	2	08.3	-	-
M	4	25.0	3	18.8	3	18.8	2	12.5	1	06.3	-	-	2	12.5
T	14	35.0	9	22.5	6	15.0	5	12.5	3	07.5	2	05.0	2	05.0

* HIV/AIDS here means knowledge about how it is spread and prevented and how to live when one is HIV+

Weekly Workshops:

	HIV, STIs and how to protect myself		How to live with HIV		How to say no to drugs & alcohol		How to stand up against abuse		To be self-confident and set goals	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	4	66.7	-	-	1	16.7	2	33.3	1	16.7
Male	3	42.9	2	28.6	1	14.3	-	-	2	28.6
Total	7	53.8	2	15.4	2	15.4	2	15.4	3	23.1

When asked what they thought about in their ‘life outside’ after the show/workshop many learners in the FT group, especially girls, said that they thought about how to apply their new understandings to their own life, while a substantial number also indicated that they were mostly thinking about the characters and the form of the play and a minority stated that they did not think about it afterwards. When looking at the answers of the workshop group it is striking that half of the girls indicated that rather than just thinking about it, they talked about it with their friends. It is important to note here, that this does not mean that the FT participants did not speak about the show afterwards. A question aiming at determining this factor was not but should have been included in the questionnaire. Even more encouraging is that all of the boys and half of the girls in the workshop group said they remembered the club’s advice and acted more responsibly.

Forum Theatre:

	How to apply to own life		ABC		The characters' actions		The form of the play		Abuse & Rape		Did not think about it	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Female	10	41.7	9	37.5	6	25.0	3	12.5	1	04.2	1	04.2
Male	4	25.0	2	12.5	3	18.8	4	25.0	1	06.3	4	25.0
Total	14	35.0	11	27.5	9	22.5	7	17.5	2	05.0	5	12.5

Weekly Workshops:

	Contents: T.B., abstinence, abuse		I shared the ideas with friends		I remembered the club's advice and acted more responsibly	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	1	16.7	3	50.0	3	50.0
Male	2	28.6	-	-	7	100
Total	3	23.1	3	23.1	10	76.9

In comparison, when directly asked if the play caused them to act differently, about 5 % of the FT group mentioned various situations in which they changed their behaviour but the overwhelming majority said they did not change their behaviour. Also interesting here is the comment of one girl who related that she started abstaining because her friend got pregnant **and** because of the play. This points to the accumulative effect an intervention such as this play can have when it reinforces other events and thoughts in people's lives.

Forum Theatre:

	I stopped alcohol & drugs		I started to abstain		I taught a friend what I learned		I respect my body		My life at home has changed		I have not acted differently	
	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%	Fr.	%
Female	1	04.2	1	04.2	1	04.2	2	08.3	1	04.2	18	75.0
Male	2	12.5	1	06.3	1	06.3	-	-	-	-	10	62.5
Total	3	07.5	2	05.0	2	05.0	2	05.0	1	02.5	28	70.0

When examining the response to the FT performance, it is interesting that only 27.5 percent of the audience stated they remembered best the different issues covered in the play and 12.5 percent remembered how to apply the message to their own lives, while almost half of the respondents said they remembered best the different show elements, especially the dancing. Learners of the workshop group also remembered best the activities (rather than the topics for example), but other than the FT respondents they laid the emphasis more on the outcome of these activities, their increased confidence.

Weekly Workshops:

	Role Plays, Discussion → Confidence		Becoming aware of many topics (HIV, drugs..)		Goodies, Food, Outing..	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	2	33.3	2	33.3	1	16.7
Male	5	71.4	2	28.6	2	28.6
Total	7	53.8	4	30.8	3	23.1

When asked if they think it is beneficial to them to have an FT performance in school, all of the respondents in the FT group said they think a show like this is useful, with 65 percent claiming that it teaches them about life and 20 percent stating it motivates them to do better.

These answers were echoed almost exactly by the workshop respondents who said they found the workshops very useful because they “learnt a lot about life” and it “motivates you to change your life”. Interesting here is that other than in the FT group both these answers were given equally frequently, with the girls leaning more towards the first and the boys toward the second answer. It is noteworthy though that only one person replied the workshops were useful because they “can help others with the knowledge gained”.

	We learnt a lot about life		It motivates you to change your life		We can help others with the knowledge gained	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Female	4	66.6	2	33.3	-	-
Male	3	42.9	5	71.4	1	14.3
Total	7	53.8	7	53.8	1	07.7

Conclusion

Measuring the efficacy of a *Once-Off Forum Theatre* intervention and *Weekly Ongoing Workshops* provided by DramAidE using their stated aims to “equip young people with increased knowledge about HIV/AIDS and the skills to inform and communicate with others about sexual health” and “to create a network of peer educators that practice safer sex and other positive behaviours, and initiate a social movement that promotes healthy lifestyles” (dramaide.co.za), one can conclude that both projects examined did achieve the first goal, but that the weekly workshops were more successful in achieving the second.

This result will not be surprising to many development communication practitioners, who, as quoted above, have been arguing for a while now for an on-going, inclusive and dialogical process (Figuerola et al, 2002:ii), which “operates strategically within three interlinked units of change: the individual, the community and the broader society” (Tufté, 2002). It is the failure of the travelling theatre show to address these interlinked units and to move “from a ‘production-centered’ approach to a more ‘audience centered’ approach” (Singhal & Rogers, 1999:222), which also accounts for its failure to transcend teaching the learners a solution, and to help them analyse the deeper causes of the problem and come up with their own solutions, which, at least in part was achieved by the workshops. It seems that Freire’s premise that “world and human beings do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction”, before being communicated to the learners, has to first be truly internalised by DramAidE itself and be accounted for in the planning of their interventions.

To explain these results even further, one can define the first goal of imparting knowledge as first-order change which “occurs within the given system which itself remains unchanged” while the second goal would constitute a second order change in which “the system itself changes” (Watzlawick et al, quoted in Singhal et al, 2006:271). Singhal et al argue that this “second order change requires greater creativity and *prolonged investment of time and contact by a change agent* [my italics]” (2006:271). It follows then that a once-off theatre show, no matter how participatory and inspiring, is not able to bring about second-order change, simply because it is not repeated.

David Beare and George Belliveau similarly see “development [as] a process, not an event” (2007:3) and explain their theatre participants’ attitude and behaviour changes along a scale of what they term *positive youth development* which focuses “on how youth build up their

self-confidence, resilience, and other protective factors” (2007:3) and is comprised of the stages “inclusion, control, intimacy, [...] empowerment and vision” (2007:7). It can be argued from here that the Forum Theatre performance managed to bring most students to the first two stages in which they felt included and in control of the situation, while it did not manage to create an atmosphere of intimacy, in which most students felt free to voice their concerns. It did on the other hand empower a few learners to take action. The weekly workshops though seemingly moved almost all of the participants through the first three stages and empowered more than half to change their behaviour with a few of them mentioning that they gained a new vision of their life, which inspired them to set goals and to share their knowledge with others. While the Forum Theatre performance was by no means without effect, it becomes clear then that the participants of the weekly workshops in general did advance further on the scale of *positive youth development* and therefore did fulfil DramAidE’s self-set goal of second-order change more – although not in a hundred percent of cases either.

While the once-off Forum Theatre performance then did not cause the behaviour change it desired, it did prove a very effective means of sharing information, since most audience members remembered not only the overall issues, but also the desired behaviour and how this might apply to their own lives. It does therefore seem to have great value as a tool when a simple transfer of information is desired or as one of many inputs in one intervention. This became clear for example when one girl mentioned that she started to abstain because her friend fell pregnant **and** she watched the show. While neither of these events caused the behaviour change on its own, it was their accumulative effect that had the desired outcome.

This is a point eloquently made by Frances Babbage who writes that “a Theatre of the Oppressed production is essentially a starting point” since “at the heart of the work is the ambition of far-reaching social transformation” (2004:67). It is also readily recognised by both DramAidE facilitators interviewed, who stated for example that “linking them [the FT and workshops] is easy, because we see the response to the travelling theatre and we work with this response. [...] The play is giving them [the learners] a platform to think about the problems and then afterwards you ask ‘what can they do about it?’” (Interview with

Ntshalintshali, 2008). They also felt that it is best “not to separate them [the FT and workshops]” and Mkhize³ gave an example to illustrate this point:

Sometimes we need more space in a play to discuss things, like if people are abstaining, they want tips on how do I maintain it, one hour is just not enough for that. But if we can sit down and create that atmosphere then we can come up with some more ideas and then make another play, this time for example about how to maintain abstinence (Interview, 2008).

Both facilitators also mentioned though that DramAidE does not have the resources to provide such integrated campaigns in many schools and to achieve the goal given by their Funders of how many learners should be reached, it then has to resort to measures it knows to be less efficient (mainly once-off travelling theatre shows). Ntshalintshali argued that “the funders must realise that to make an impact it doesn’t only take one or two impacts, it takes constant backing up in order for us to create networks in the areas we’re working in, so that when we leave there’s something there”. To solve this dilemma she suggests that DramAidE’s “programme should be part of the curriculum” but realises that this would “take many different stakeholders working together” (Interview 2008).

This is a conclusion also drawn by Nupen, who writes in DramAidE’s *Mid Term Evaluation Report*, that it is “not possible for DramAidE with its limited resources to be able to meet the demands that should in effect be undertaken in partnership with the relevant government departments” and argues that “the issue of government’s accountability cannot become the responsibility of DramAidE” (2007:22). In other words DramAidE knows how to achieve sustainability, one of the core principles of Theatre for Development (Prentki, 2006:1), but is not always able to implement this knowledge due to financial restraints. The problem then lies not with the project itself or the methods it uses, but rather in how to access funds that would allow DramAidE to work to its full potential. This is probably a question many development communication practitioners are asking themselves and one which does not seem to be answered in the near future.

Apart from this dilemma, I feel that further investigation with DramAidE would benefit from a focus on the facilitator’s role (both in FT and the workshops), what constitutes effective

³ Not the real name.

facilitation and how it can be taught and learned. After researching this project I agree with Nupen that the facilitators take on “a weighty responsibility” (2007:22; also see both Interviews and White, 2006) and feel that while the methods used by them are researched to quite a degree, the role of the facilitator’s personality, life style and training in the process is one yet to be examined in more detail.

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Appendix i: Questionnaire (Forum Theatre)

1. School:
2. Age:
3. Grade:
4. Sex:
5. How long ago did you watch the theatre show by DramAidE?
6. What do you remember as the main topic of the show?
7. Which characters do you remember? What did they do? What did you think about them?
8. Did you take part in the discussion during the play? If yes, do you remember what you said?
9. Did you get up to act during the play? If yes, which character did you play? What did you do? How did it feel to act in the play?
10. Did you learn something from the play that you did not know before? If yes, what?
11. Did you think about the play afterwards? If yes, what did you think about?
12. Were there situations in your life that reminded you of the play? If yes, which situations?
13. Have you acted differently or thought about acting differently to before in certain situations because of the play? If yes, please describe the situations.
14. How did you feel when you watched the play? You can choose more than one emotion.

Happy Surprised Shocked Angry Sad Bored

Why?

15. Would you describe the show as

very enjoyable a bit enjoyable not much enjoyable not at all enjoyable?

Why?

16. What do you remember best about the show? Why?
17. Do you think it is good to have shows like this in schools? Why?

Appendix ii: Questionnaire (Weekly Workshops)

1. School:
2. Age:
3. Grade:
4. Sex:
5. How long ago were you part of the DramAidE workshops?
6. For how long did you take part in the workshops?
7. What do you remember as the main topics of the workshops?
8. Did you learn something from the workshops that you did not know before? If yes, what?
9. Did you think about the workshops in your 'life outside'? If yes, what did you think about?
10. Were there situations in your life that reminded you of the workshops? If yes, which situations?
11. Have you acted differently or thought about acting differently to before in certain situations because of the workshops? If yes, please describe the situations.
12. Do you remember some of the role plays that were done in the workshops? If yes, which ones?
13. Did you act in some of the role plays? If yes, which characters do you remember best?
14. Do you think it is important to have the role plays in the workshops? Why?
15. How did you feel when you attended the workshops? You can choose more than one emotion.

Happy Surprised Shocked Angry Sad Bored

Why? Give some examples of situations in which you felt these emotions.

16. Would you describe the workshops as

very enjoyable a bit enjoyable not much enjoyable not at all enjoyable?

Why?

17. What do you remember best about the Workshops? Why?

18. Do you think it is good to have workshops like these in schools? Why?

Appendix iii: Interview (Forum Theatre)

Name:

Age:

Sex:

How long have you been working with DramAidE?

How and in what were you trained?

Why do you choose to work with drama? What are its strengths as a tool for communication/education? Are there any weaknesses?

How many plays have you directed? Were they all forum theatre performances?

Why did you create this play?

Why did you choose the forum theatre method?

What do you see as its strengths? Any weaknesses?

Do you think forum theatre has a future in the field of communication for social change? Why?

What are your expectations as to the outcomes of your intervention?

Appendix iv: Interview (Weekly Workshops)

Name:

Age:

Sex:

How long have you been working with DramAidE?

How and in what were you trained?

Why do you choose to work with drama? What are its strengths as a tool for communication/education? Are there any weaknesses?

How many workshops have you facilitated? Did they all use role play?

What do you see as its strengths? Any weaknesses?

Do you think role play has a future in the field of communication for social change? Why?

What are your expectations as to the outcomes of your intervention?