

USING PERFORMANCE-BASED ARTS AS A DELIVERY STRATEGY IN  
INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

A Dissertation

by

APARUPA CHATTERJEE

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	James R. Lindner
Co-Chair of Committee,	Kim W. Dooley
Committee Members,	Gary Briers
	Edwin Price
Head of Department,	John F. Elliot

August 2014

Major Subject: Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore and describe the perceptions of purposively sampled International Agricultural Development workers who had experienced using performance-based arts as a delivery method in international education and agricultural development. This case study was based on the needs assessment, research paradigms and impacts of using Community Theatre, a performance-based art, as a delivery strategy for communication, education and development to eradicate health, political and socio-economic constraints posing a threat to the net agricultural production of the communities involved in the SPREAD project of the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum co-operatives.

Usually implemented in developing nations, Community Theater had brought itself to Africa post-genocide in 1994 and has been extremely successful in Rwanda. With a historic, tragic post-war and genocide aftermath, communities lacking considerable education and social awareness, found it difficult to address social change to transition into a more peaceful and developed condition. Addressing an establishment of such a reconstruction strategy, through employing Community Theater, the communities engaged themselves as artists and were stretched and challenged to transform into leaders of their communities to improve the lives of their generations and generations to follow.

A qualitative research paradigm formed the basis of the methodology of the study. The study used a holistic, unique and descriptive case study research design. A

purposive sample of respondents, selected on the criterion of having experienced the use of Community Theatre, a performance-based artistic strategy in the SPREAD project for international agricultural development, were interviewed face-to-face, by telephone and electronically.

Findings were reported using categories or themes emerging from data analysis, which implied the positive impacts of theatre on understanding, assessing, staging or scripting and resolving socio-economic and health concerns, which in turn enhanced team building, empowerment, gender role resources, education and awareness, family planning and agricultural production. Owing to its proved success, Community Theater brings forth a considerable level of credibility and legitimacy and a power to engage communities at large, impacting the improvement of the livelihoods involved in agriculture, building capacity and increasing agricultural and industrial production of the cooperatives of Rwanda at each household level.

## DEDICATION

I whole-heartedly dedicate my doctoral dissertation to my beloved parents, my mentors and to all who have contributed to the success of my academic achievement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I come to a close in my Doctoral studies, during my final phase of my higher education in my academic career, I would like to acknowledge everyone who has contributed towards the success of my completion. Owing to each and every such individual who has believed in me, I have been able to reach this stage of achievement, even after a hoard of obstacles, hardships and changes in course of my career path. I have been truly blessed with my instructors, mentors and friends at the Texas A&M University, who have inspired me to build a true passion for the research I pursued, who have supported me through thick and thin to perform better and who have literally stood by my side in the rain and sun. I express my profound gratitude towards every such individual, though I have little room to mention every name.

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. James R. Lindner and my co-chair, Dr. Kim E. Dooley, for being the best advisors ever. They have believed in me from the very first day I brought in the topic of my research of integrating performing arts with agricultural development. Had they not approved or supported the feasibility of this research, I would not have pursued the research of my dreams. They have guided me through all times, have calmed my frustrations, and have helped me every time attaining perfection towards my writing. They have provided me with interesting insights, different upbeat perspectives, kept me on time and focused. I simply would not have been here where I am today without their unwavering support.

I would like to thank profusely my committee member, Dr. Edwin Price, without whom this study would have been impossible. One of the most compassionate individuals I have come across, Dr. Price has stood by me when, as an International student, I faced financial constraints, supported me by permitting me to conduct research on my interest areas and gave me ample opportunities to increase my spectrum of knowledge and research capabilities. His genuine concern for international students has been really touching and inspiring. I have truly started thinking in terms of an International development worker because of the exposure through research opportunities he provided me with, his inspiration and insights.

I would also like to thank my committee member, Dr. Gary Briers, who has provided me with a different quantitative research perspective and in turn has helped me choose and confine my research statement. His immense help in literature review and structuring the problem statement was crucial. His wit, positive energy and inspirational comments have been priceless.

I would also like to thank Dr. Michael Greenwald, who has been my mentor, friend and a second father to me. He has always believed in me, made my research on Rwanda possible and has been the best mentor ever. My profound gratitude goes towards your contribution in my academic success.

I would also like to thank Dr. Kenneth P. Bowman, the Department Head of Atmospheric sciences (2010) and my chair, Dr. Don Collins, from where I graduated with my MS. Without their support my transfer to the school of Agriculture and Life Sciences would not have been possible. Thank you for trusting in my sincere efforts,

respecting my integrity and values, letting me uphold them, and for respecting and understanding foreign culture borne by international students.

I also want to extend my gratitude to Dr. Linda Cleboski at the Norman Borlaug Institute for permitting me to pursue the research study on SPREAD and providing me with every detail, contact and archival reports on the research.

Last but not the least, I dedicate my academic success towards my parents, who have made me into what I am today and supported me unconditionally and emotionally, my grandmother who has always been my well-wisher, yet missed seeing me as a Doctorate; my Guru, Ratikant Mohapatra, Sujata Mohapatra and the entire Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra legacy for imparting in me strict discipline, expertise and background for my research, and my students and friends for making my time at the Texas A&M University a great and unforgettable experience.

## NOMENCLATURE

USAID	U.S Agency for International Development
SPREAD	Sustaining Partnerships to Enhance Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness Development Project
IRB	Institutional Review Board
SOPYRWA	Societe du Pyrethe au Rwanda



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Land of a Thousand Hills, Rwanda, as accounted by Breed (2008) is a landlocked country in Africa, its main capital being Kigali. Rwanda's predominant language is Kinyarwanda, followed by French, Swahili and English. During the traumatic period of genocide, from April through July 1994, around a million Tutsi were killed. The genocide left thousands of orphaned children, widows and millions fled to neighboring countries (Breed, 2008). At the onset of the process of reconstruction and reconciliation, the Sustaining Partnerships to Enhance Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness Development Project (SPREAD) was one of the projects, implemented in Rwanda to confer peace upon the nation.

In the summer of 2011, from the months of May to July, Texas A&M University (TAMU) of the United States and the National University of Rwanda (NUR) collaborated in a continuing effort with USAID's Sustaining Partnerships to Enhance Rural Enterprise and Agribusiness Development Project (SPREAD) to incorporate the concept and art of a performance-based artistic strategy of theater into SPREAD's overall mission of sustainability and improved livelihoods, which initiated years ago. Due to its initial success agriculturally and economically, SPREAD proposed a cross-cutting program of introducing Community Theater as a tool to address social, economic and political challenges.

In collaboration with the National University of Rwanda's University Center of Arts and Drama, the project trained twenty-two Community Theater (CT) groups with a thousand and seven local actors (Annual report, 2012-2013). The Community Theater became an effective tool for transferring information across the coffee-pyrethrum regions. The topics chosen and developed into skits were based on challenges faced in the community- social, economic or political. The project was to improve the social and health aspects of the lives of the members who worked at the coffee and pyrethrum co-operatives as well. With improved access to health services, workshops to train community health workers, and the investment in the lives of the Rwandan members, SPREAD had not only proved, but also empowered these individuals to pursue better and healthier lives (Pichanick, 2011).

In the summer of 2011, the students of the Texas A&M University and the former National University of Rwanda and the current University of Rwanda, College of Arts and Social Sciences implemented Community Theater or Theater for Development as a delivery strategy for adult education and communications. The University of Rwanda, was a partner to the Community Theater project, through the University Center of Arts and Drama (UCAD), to provide Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum co-operative members, the tools and resources to engage in issues and concerns within the lives of their communities.

Through attending demonstrations and trainings through theatre, workshops and follow-up meetings, the members recognized the shortcomings of their growth and development, acquired self-sustenance, improved problem-solving skills, teaching

techniques, and confidence to be the leaders in their cooperatives to change the post-genocide, post-conflict situations which prevented them from developing further and inhibited agricultural production and sustainability (Pichanick, 2011).

The needs assessment of SPREAD reflected the fact that if one did not address the socio-economic, health and physical needs of these communities, agribusiness and economic development would be extremely limited and would struggle to reach their full potential. SPREAD assessed the need for teaching and educating the adult and youth Rwandan members on where and how to use the sustained incomes for medical and social purposes to ultimately build sustainability in agriculture. Coffee and Pyrethrum production may have been stable sources of income for these members, yet without the education and awareness of ways of spending, investing and saving the income on health awareness and education for their families, this income was apparently wasted in social problems like alcohol abuse, indulging into unprotected intercourse, so on and so forth (Pichanick, 2011). The beauty of the work of SPREAD and the reason for its success was that it contributed towards every facet of development for post-conflict Rwanda and the people it served, at the basic social, economic and cultural levels, not merely at the superficial levels.

The SPREAD project initiated in the year 2010, and took off with trainings of facilitators- local, domestic and international. Workshops were conducted following the trainings and the community members arrived at the workshops with open hearts. The members were expected to pay attention, work hard, participate (vocally and theatrically), and arrive on time. Many of these community members traveled from long

distances. Initially they were resistant and silent during theatre plays. In subsequent plays, most members opened up and answered when asked a question for their opinion on certain problems.

Building confidence, trust, relationships and leadership development were major aims of Community Theater (Pichanick, 2011). The aim was to teach people to believe in the validity of their own words and to speak up voicing their opinion, which undoubtedly could be achieved through theatre implementations, which almost every time benefited the group as a whole. Members (both actors and audience) were encouraged to do most of the talking, to not just talk to trainers, but to talk to each other about possible solutions and ways to depict the problems more effectively.

Due to cultural differences, gender role bias, post-genocide impacts, etc., Rwandans were observed to be more introverted and were usually not the first ones to take initiative to express them and give their perspectives on problems or solutions. Owing to this constraint, choosing a delicate, sensitive, yet effective method of communication, constantly working on empowerment, confidence building, and encouraging them to take initiative was vital.

Most importantly, SPREAD Community Theatre project aimed at making the Rwandan farmers self-sustainable, to make them believe that ultimately they were the leaders of their communities, the trainers were not and that, the facilitators were acting as temporary adult teachers and reconstruction teams. The co-operative members needed to realize that it was their responsibility to unify and learn and educate and that, they had the tools and resources.

According to Fox (2007) through Community Theatre, role player expresses or speaks what they are willing to, what they want to, “whether it is about their breakfast or being assaulted” (p. 95). The audience is usually open to any plot. This liberal attitude is advantageous for storytellers as well as the audience. Thus theatre is popularly performed in several troubled circumstances in reconstruction or recovery, starting from southern India to Rwanda and Burundi (Fox, 2007).

The learning outcomes of the SPREAD project left scores of promise for helping human beings in conflict to evidence and develop considerable understanding of the perspectives of both sides. The project aimed at identifying problems, responsibilities and adapt to a universal language of expression to embody unity and reconciliation, tolerance, acts of forgiveness, truth, social awareness and participation. Theater was not work, it was a fun facet of their daily lives (Annual Report, 2012-2013).

### **Rationale for SPREAD case study design**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe the perceptions of purposively sampled International Agricultural Development workers in the SPREAD project, funded by the USAID, who had experienced the phenomenon of using performance-based arts as a delivery method in education and international agricultural development in Rwanda in 2010-2011. This case study was based on the needs assessment, research paradigms and impacts of the SPREAD project of the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum co-operatives, in using Community Theatre, a performance-based art, as a delivery strategy for communication, education and



development to eradicate health and social constraints, posing as a threat to the net agricultural production of the co-operatives.

Literature reflects that the educational research community, apart from speech, media and verbal modes, is adapting visual arts, music, dance and drama for meaning-making and data representation (Norris, 2000). The findings in drama education have a lot to provide from the wealth of experiences in performance-based arts usage as a process of research and as a presentational form. Eisner (1997), one of the first few authors to have introduced arts-based research in education, mentions that apart from conventional methods of delivery or dissemination of knowledge, alternative methods of data representation reflect more plausible interpretations of the meaning of a phenomenon. He mentions that new forms of data representation signify the advancement of a researcher's literary analytical interest in inventing several ways of conveying research findings.

Following Tolstoy (1960), a work of art is to be understood by a receiver, only if it is not believed to be a source of entertainment or pleasure. Art is the manifestation of a human being's self-expressions and the process of expressing the same to the receiver, who, simultaneously, receives the same artistic impression through one or more of his senses. The usage of art as a representational form roots from the philosophy of Emanuel Kant, and was developed as a type of arts-based research inquiry by Eisner (1997). Aristotle's use of art as mimesis or representation has deep and immense philosophical value as well.

Norris (2000) explains an implied relationship between the experiencing of artistic processes delivered, and the effects on the level of creativity, cognitive development or problem solving in pedagogy and teaching-learning processes. Norris (2000) mentions the study on choosing appropriately the mode of representation of qualitative data by Saldana (2005) explaining, that the responsibility of a researcher is to present a research based on performance arts delivery tools, that are aesthetically and intellectually sound, and emotionally evolving. He mentions ethno-drama is playwriting qualitative data.

Norris (2000) explains an analogous work his students had performed as an assignment. The students improvised a dance, choreographed based on their perceptions of the nature of teacher-student relationships. Two groups staged two different dances portraying two different dimensions of the relationship. He concluded that improvisation is innovative as in that the actors articulate what they know, frame it in the delivery tool and present it to others. Hence, in data collection, analysis and dissemination, there may be a chance of using performance arts as a research method as well.

The SPREAD project in Rwanda, for improving the quality of lives of the Rwandan members of coffee and pyrethrum and to instill sustainable agriculture, together with TAMU Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture and USAID, in 2011, incorporated the art of theatre in community development, following the work of Augusto Boal in the 1950s and 1960s. Community theatre audience involved individuals of any age, gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and educational background

and was an ideally peaceful and creative way of disseminating the solutions to the communities suffering as well as the research results to the general audience.

In Rwanda, all kinds of theater were pre-existing sources of communication spread largely by radio broadcasting. The most common and most available form of theater that was popular was the process of theater broadcasting on radios. Several grassroots organizations introduced Community Theater with the aim to entertain people on one hand and to educate them on other. In several communities, there were already several pre-existing activities on dramaturgy. The case study therefore developed around the phenomenon of using community theatre as one of the performance-based arts strategy to introduce international agricultural development as well as to improve livelihoods of the Rwandan communities.

### **Framework of the study**

The framework of the case study comprised of a thorough review of literature and data converging to triangulation was achieved with the help of multiple sources of evidence such as the researcher's experience, interviews, archival reports (parts developed by respondents as well), pictures, audit trail and the Community Theatre manual (written by researchers as field notes).

The framework comprised of the objectives, procedures and outcomes of using Community Theatre in Rwandan communities guided by the paradigm of a single case study approach. A case study is an empirical method that investigates in depth, a contemporary phenomenon within real life contexts, without any evident boundaries (Yin, 2009).

Following Yin's reasoning of selecting a particular research agenda as a case, this research study was based on answering how and why the phenomenon of performance-based artistic strategies, such as theatre, were effective as a delivery tool in a real-life context of international agricultural development of Rwandan communities (Yin, 2009).

The implicit empirical research design was fundamentally based on the aims and objectives of the case study, which truly originated from the researcher's perspectives, dissecting the literature, and the effective logistical plan and implementation of the phenomenon of Community Theatre being applied to international development in Rwanda.

The SPREAD project respondents, who witnessed the use of community theatre on the communities of Rwanda, being the main unit of analysis, this exploratory case study reflected the immense scope of usage of similar performance-based artistic strategies and explored the methods, needs and impacts of the same on the community as such.

According to Yin (2009) the scope of data collection is determined following the design of the case and it is significant to distinguish data obtained about the phenomenon explored in the case study from the external data to the context or case. In this particular design, a contemporary set of events in the phenomenon of using theatre to educate and transfer knowledge to the community formed the subject of the case and the implications of the findings were explored. This case study was developed as a typical or a unique,

representative case, as it developed around the particular or typical case of Rwandan use of theatre for community development by SPREAD.

The following simple concept path model was employed as the typical single case study research design, implemented for research, data collection, analysis and reporting findings and implications of the SPREAD project case (Figure 1). This path was used to design the study and hence reflects the procedure flow of the research. The steps involved in the model were important parts of the procedure to design and implement the case study of the SPREAD project.

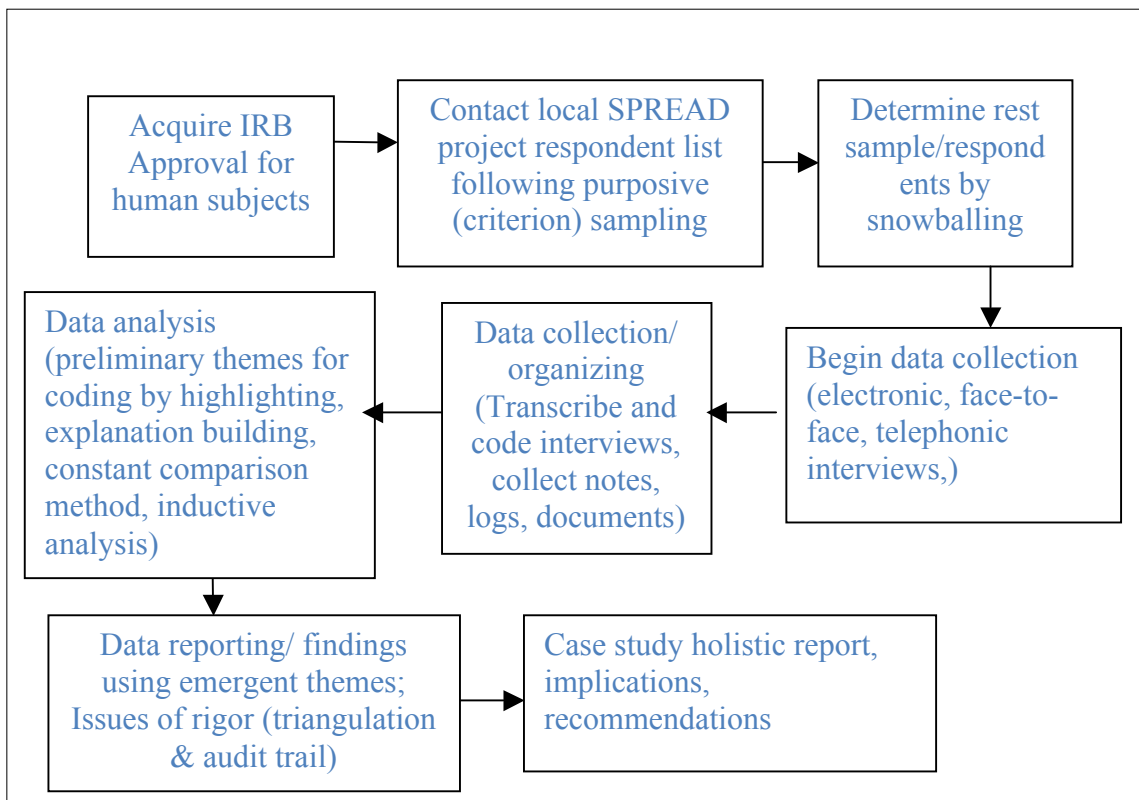


Figure 1. Procedure flowchart for the case study

### **Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore holistically the perceptions of purposively sampled International Agricultural Development workers who had experienced the phenomenon of using performance-based arts as a delivery method in education and international agricultural development in Rwanda SPREAD project. The objective of this study was thus to interpret the meanings constructed by researcher-respondent interactions, contextually understanding the phenomenon from the respondents' perspectives (emic), aiming at findings through an inductive research strategy and finally presenting the findings in a rich description (Dooley, 2007).

The process of this research study is based on the philosophical underpinning of a qualitative case study approach, not sweeping generalizations but aiming at contextual findings surrounding the case of utilizing performance-based educational strategies. The particular methodological paradigm followed in this study was in the form of a qualitative inquiry, a type of naturalistic inquiry, which strives to explore a human problem.

The research questions with the Rwanda SPREAD project case study respondents were:

1. What were the needs, procedures and impacts of using performance-based artistic strategy in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum communities?
2. What type of arts-based research techniques did they use?

3. What were the perceptions of the farmers, communities and international development workers on the impacts of their strategies and which were the fields of application of the strategy?
4. What were the perceptions of the respondents on using performance-based arts as a research method or a data dissemination method?

### **Significance of the study**

The significance of this study lies in the fact that this qualitative inquiry reflects on how the arts-based or performance-based paradigm has potential to be used as a delivery strategy in the field of international development and adult education. The different forms of knowledge delivery and problem solving approaches, such as verbal, visual, electronic or linguistic methods of delivery of knowledge are believed to be finding their way gradually into the educational research community. Keeping in mind this intention, this particular case of using performance-based arts method may be replicated.

Conflict among cultures is not a new phenomenon, and has been observed in different eras, between different cultures and boundaries, locally, nationally and internationally. Be it within religions, within regions, within casts, within languages or within professions, conflict is a continuous phenomenon occurring because of the differences in perceptions of populations. The findings of this study may be utilized in understanding the causes of conflict in various natural settings and reconstructing post-conflict developing nations using other performance-based artistic strategies. Conflict resolution is often one of the important aspects associated with international

development and adult learning and artistic strategies may be utilized to resolve conflicts.

In peace building and reconstruction of post-conflict zones, prior literature from Iraq, shows that understanding conflict causes and relating to the factors causing conflict, may be calculated quantitatively and mathematically, yet when it comes to actual conflict resolution and peace building, human forces need to enter the field themselves and build mutual trust, heal the emotional fractures among the victims and live the moments of conflict to understand the impacts themselves (Saldana, 2005). Here springs the need for a qualitative performance arts-based research delivery to understand and portray the factors causing conflict from a psychological and cognitive viewpoint.

In an international post-conflict zone, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Rwanda, etc., a researcher has a high probability of finding a huge sample of conflict victims and international development workers who can act out their stories to help the audience understand the causes and impacts of conflict. Alternatively, their interviews may be interpreted through arts-based research in staging the lived experiences of conflict.

Kelman (2005) explains the role of the third party or the conflict resolution team during workshops/ lectures as being strictly facilitative, not participating in the substantive discussion or taking sides of one particular culture, rather evaluating ideas presented, or arbitrating between conflicting issues of their conflict history. With a similar approach, performance based delivery strategies may be used as an alternative strategy for introducing development and reconstruction, around or on conflict, with an



additional advantage of actually participating with the victim actors and simultaneously creating the conditions that allow:

- (a) sharing interpretations from both cultures to understand the causes, and
- (b) solutions to resolve the issues giving rise to conflict, that may emerge out of the interactions between the cultures.

As supported by the archival report on Community Theatre in Rwanda (Annual Report, 2012-2013), in Community Theater, the Rwandans assumed the roles of artists and they were stretched and challenged to become the leaders of their communities to improve the lives of their generation and generations to follow. Because of its proved success, Community Theater brings with it a certain level of legitimacy and power that we believe can improve the livelihoods of the people and farming cooperatives of Rwanda at large.

Finally, in this study, one of the significant implications was the integration of the ways of knowing and representing, as shared by researchers, of their experiences of utilizing performance-based strategies to deliver knowledge in the field of international agricultural development. Norris (2000) mentions that the American Educational Research Association (AERA) consists of a Special Interest Group (SIG), who utilized the arts-based delivery tools. It is constituted of a group of researchers who aim at presenting, discussing, and investigating a rich variety of dissemination forms (p.49).

Communicating across cultures to different parts of the world, to developing countries like India, Rwanda, other Sub-Saharan countries, Bangladesh etc. and post-conflict countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, etc., and presenting the research study

through several forms of dissemination to improve and instill sustainable agriculture, adult education and literacy, community peace and better quality of livelihoods will also provide immense scope to further the research implications.

Eisner (1997) mentions that apart from conventional methods of delivery or dissemination of knowledge, alternative methods of data representation reflect more plausible interpretations of the meaning of the phenomenon. Expanding the awareness and understanding of the phenomenon under research is possible once the researcher's view of cognition and the aim of a particular advanced human consciousness, which we define as research, are perceived by the rest of the world and this may be through any process of dissemination of knowledge- propositional and non- propositional.

The aim of this study was to ensure that the study had both substance and form. As a researcher, one cannot manipulate the data in such a method and the investigator completely depends on the examining of contemporary events as described by the informants.

### **Summary**

Usually used in developing nations, Community Theater had introduced itself through radio broadcasting in Rwanda and brought itself to other parts of Africa, being extremely impactful and successful. Due to the devastating aftermaths of the traumatic history of war, genocide, rebellion, or simply the conditions of being underdeveloped or lack of education, the coffee and pyrethrum co-operatives found it difficult to address social change and transition into a more peaceful and developed state.

Cohen-Cruz (2005) as cited by Boon and Plastow (2004) narrates that community-based theater is a frame of reference in which artists, collaborators and audience, whose lives directly inform the topics on which the scripts are based, express a collective meaning on a common stage. Consequently, this case study encompasses lived experiences of the perceptions of communities and researchers who applied community theatre in Rwanda to understand and resolve concerns of their livelihoods.

Community theatre and performance not only attempted to resolve health and social concerns in the Rwandan communities but also helped increase agricultural production. The project respondents contributed to their success on their improved access to health care, adequate housing and nutrition, and education for their families and communities. SPREAD's success was measured by the improved quality of life for Rwanda's rural members and their families.

A sense of ownership and freedom in the lives was lacking, especially in the case of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. The use of Community Theater in the project proposed to develop Rwandan communities through empowerment, team building, education, health awareness and improved livelihoods. Post-genocide, Rwandans lacked empowerment, power, authority or self-confidence. The use of theatre was employed to encourage, motivate, and educate to pursue better lives and to relentlessly pursue a better livelihood.

The most significant and expected outcome of using theatre, as a delivery strategy was to help communities recognize their own problems and the fact that they had to realize that they themselves had the power and ability to change and transform

their own lives and the lives of their communities. Community theatre in Rwanda, previously used, embodied the traumatic experiences of the genocide and triggered the emotions of the community, and the SPREAD project proposed to interrogate several current issues building around Rwanda post-genocide.

Theater performances appealed directly to the communities of Rwanda, especially youths, to reflect and integrate testimonies of their life experiences and to analyze how to solve their concerns, owing to the fact that theater broadcast was already popular in Rwandan communities. In this way, theater scripts were still being reconstructed and transformed owing to the different local audiences and farmers ((Breed, 2008).

Community Theater also produced creativity, allowing the actors or farmers to think outside of the box contemplating different solutions and alternatives to their current problem. It brought many different and diverse cooperatives under the umbrella of one setting. In the case of Rwanda bringing together a community for the cause of development and improved livelihoods, promised to leave scores of options to reduce conflict and eventually strengthen the country as a whole (Pichanick, 2011). A primary advantage of using Community Theater was that, apart from adult education, it was enjoyable for any age, gender, culture, or individual, which was the underlying principle of communication of SPREAD.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From historic times, storytelling, folklore had been delivery strategies and was means by which adults had traditionally learnt and passed on knowledge (Dooley, 2007). It allowed adult learners to understand and communicate to others in relation to themselves, to the surroundings. To ensure complete understanding of the phenomenon, logically the study was set up based on the time and context of a developing nation, a crucial characteristic of a naturalistic paradigm.

As Norris (2000) began his survey of arts-based delivery methods by summarizing examples in literature that used dramaturgy as a research method, he described how Finley (2008) narrated in her qualitative research inquiry, about how the actors on the stage communicated to the audience, through story-telling and shared lived experiences on the lively streets of New Orleans. He mentioned it was a strong method of communication as well that left the audience of educational researchers, exploring how an alternate form of delivery tool was useful to reflect on some of the lived-experiences of the respondents involved. Norris narrated the exemplary work of Diamond and Mullen (1999) and Finley and Knowles (1995) who had mentioned in their research, about performance-based arts such as dance, music and theater being used as delivery tools in education.

Similar to the concept of understanding the meaning of a word, in the context of a grammatical sentence, is the concept of understanding a phenomenon, contextually.

Theater or drama in the category of performance-based arts plays the role of setting up the context and staging the same, to relate to the audience. Norris (2000) mentioned about the five different ways of collecting and disseminating knowledge suggested by McLeod (1985) - number in math and quantitative research, sound in music, gesture in dance, word in linguistics and qualitative research and image in visual arts. According to Norris (2000), theater integrates all these five ways of expression.

Donmoyer and Yennie-Donmoyer (1995) as cited by Norris (2000) supported Reader's theater to be of emancipatory potential of reconstructing qualitative education research methods into drama. They mentioned that statisticians and scientists to display data had mainly used discursive language. Non-discursive language is necessary to be used by empirical, qualitative researchers, as often there is a need to encode data or an experience with alternative formats. In this case theater or drama may be used as alternative modes of grasping an experience or a phenomenon, which is not a mere factual description, but is a public embodiment of a shared feeling. That which is not feasible to be expressed as a fact in discursive language may be conceptualized and expressed through theater or performing arts.

This case study was thus based on the rich literature on the post-modernistic use of performance arts, the researcher's perspective and preexisting experience and involved a structural description, which helped to understand how the informants experienced what they experienced (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). Key constructs were formed by analysis from the statements abstracted from open-ended, semi-structured, interviews with the respondents of the SPREAD project.

In this case, self-stories narrated by the informants were documented to interpret the meanings contextually and explore the implications of the study. The perceptions and interpretations of the respondents were used to find concurrent themes within the same. In this process, it was of utmost importance to understand what the interviewee communicated, the context and demonstrates cultural, historical, interactional and social circumstances in the linguistic discourse in the form of mentioning extensive quotations from the narrator's stories to give an alternate interpretation to the readers. Cross-cultural contexts, gender roles and differences resulted in the variability of features of cases.

### **Researcher's perspective**

As a researcher (R1), as coded for data analysis, a vital contribution to the groundwork of this study), my perspectives or perceptions on how performance-based artistic strategies may be considered to be able to create a form of analytical aesthetic, animating the imaginative capacities and pervading emotional experiences in human minds, were informed by my prior artistic experiences and collaborations in performing arts education, while performing and researching as a dance studies scholar, professionally trained in the field of Odissi, one of the eight Indian classical dance forms, at the school of Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, the great Odissi maestro (who invented and reconstructed the form from the primitive Mahari and Gotipua folk/gymnastic styles). My analytical thinking, views of cognition and youth development, values that I embraced, source of individual salvation, were all linked to the search of an

appropriate application of the performance-based arts education in international development.

Arts education, in curriculum and academic designs, had been put at the rim rather than at the core of education and performance-based arts; such as dance, music, theater/ drama had been considered as nice and not necessary (Eisner, 2002). Contrary to the conception of traditional implications of art-based strategies as entertainment, performance-based arts, to my experience, refines nurtures and develops one's domain of sensory qualities, expressing the perceptions from the memory of those who take part in it, shaping meaningful experiences for them. Perceptions, with which this study dealt with, were thus cognitive events (Neisser, 1976).

As we stamped and sounded our bells, and the Srjan performers' repertory moved with smooth precision on the top floor of the Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Nrityabasa (school of dance) in Bhubaneshwar (capital of Odisha, the state from which it originates), on a scorching hot Sunday morning, Guru Ratikant Mohapatra and Smt. Sujata Mohapatra, the torchbearers of the form Odissi, led us, the professional, highly skilled, performance company with attentive eyes. Though Ratikant Mohapatra's imagination, spirit and eyes were focused on choreography, his work's purpose was deeper than it appeared.

The transformative power of his choreography, the path that I walk today, though tastefully artistic, poetic, and analytic in relation to transferring knowledge, fully engaged the audience. The use of the performance-based art, dance, being instrumental to make everyone understand the logic of arts for globalization, continued to remain



intransigent and socially significant through portrayal of several stages and modes of lives of mythological characters in the Hindu philosophical texts (Mahabharata, Ramayana, Gita, Upanishad) which had economic, technological, even political implications in controlling India's heritage, socio-political infrastructure and education.

My dormant research interests inspired by socio-cultural and environmental issues were explored around the same time, while walking through the long corridors of the school, witnessing days and nights of practice with sweat drenched saris, acknowledging labor of women from around the world, working in a primarily agricultural state of Odisha, and being born in one similar state of West Bengal. Srinivasan (2011) proposed a transformative theory on global circulation of ethnic, performing bodies, investigating Indian classical dancers, belonging to much of my genre, on how the dancers' sweat soaked saris and the aching limbs were emblematic of global migration of labor, dancing bodies, capital, and industrial goods through the embodied experience of Indian dance- a performance-based art.

Our pieces aimed to accomplish an amalgamation of art and active social and cultural transformation through an unconventional creative process that encouraged energetic communication. My twenty years of artistic experience would dispel the truth of belonging, reproducing and replicating such a truly welcoming and inclusive arts campaign as Srjan's, with community building and education. This sense of each other and this sense of place, with which we are able to include people through a quartet of dances from all over the world, reveals the power of meaning-making, expressing, and

communicating, employing moving, consummatory experiences through artistically crafted forms.

Chatterjea (1996) while pondering on prevalent modes of Indian Classical dance/theater training, enlightened the system of the traditional mode of learning performing arts or classical dance forms in India, from Vedic times- the Guru-shishya parampara, (the tradition of the guru- teacher and his disciple- shishya) in which the disciples came at an early age to study with the guru and lived with him/ her within the family, each student becoming an integral part of the guru's family and it was believed that such proximity was essential for imparting and imbibing in-depth arts-based strategies.

The researcher's perspectives or perceptions, shaped by such a personalized experience (guru-shishya tradition), molded by culture, influenced by language (Sanskrit- the mother of all languages on which the scripts were based), impacted by beliefs and moderated by applications of the performance-based artistic delivery of knowledge, gave a socio-cultural imprint to what formed the background of this study. Morelli (2010) discusses how gurus' arts teaching practices in India, adapted to diasporic and individual conditions, yet evolved the disciple's sensory system, being responsive to the individual needs of performance studies students and to changing socio-cultural dynamics.

As a choreographer and researcher, highlighting the transformative, expressive and communicating power of the performance-based educational strategies, I chose to study Rwanda's coffee/ pyrethrum communities, finding my inspiration and familiarity of research with the originality of University of Minnesota's Ananya Dance Theater, set

forth by the ordinary lives and dreams of women in a global context, dealing with systemic violence in global communities of color and expressing those ideas on stage through discourses within social justice and activism. Chatterjea (2004) mentioned the empowerment, evolution of vision and vital socio-political interventions possible through such arts-based strategies by artists of developing nations, resisting commercialization or arts for entertainment, supporting rather for education and communication.

Rwandan communities were of special interest from a researcher's perspective since, the Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives' culture, in an anthropological sense, was a medium of growth and development for the communities. The aim was to instill a sense of belonging, to shape their dispositions, to establish contact and help in agricultural education, communication and production- thus encompassing not only the applied arts-based strategic implementation but also link to a basic resource for livelihoods- agriculture.

As Gardener (2012) perceived immediacy, evanescence and history probably characterized lived experiences, post-genocide Rwanda and any outcome derived from the perceptions gathered from survivors of those temporal situations registered its own becoming. The Rwandan culture and its socio-economic infrastructure depended on the communication patterns fore-grounded by arts-based delivery methods such as theater, as these patterns provide opportunities for members of the culture to grow and evolve (Eisner, 2002).

From a researcher's point of view, I can vouch with a certain degree of confidence that while representing a message or symbolizing through an artistic delivery method, the whole culture embodied in daily life is infused within the aesthetic movement or script, in fact that they are such sources, may be deeply sensed (Ness, 1992). Transmission of ideas and information through dance, music or theater practices are inter-corporeal in nature, which implies that they must be passed on in live interpersonal situations (Gardner, 2012).

Executing movements or dialogue in dance or theater, respectively, and the powerful representative qualities that appeal directly to the audience, function together metaphorically within other disciplines such as education (Citaristi, 2001). The poetics or aesthetics of transmission of the performance-based arts speak about forms of knowledge otherwise inaccessible in the more privileged modalities of Western epistemology (Gardner, 2012).

Through my academic literacy, I have grappled with how performance-based arts entail reflexivity and foregrounds social inscriptions. Forms and acts of theater, which I intended to explore with the socio-cultural impacts of using theater in Rwandan communities for promoting agricultural education and communication, provided axes of subjectivity, knowledge and entrepreneurship. Theater scripts or dance choreographies represented images of the mundane experiences involved in lives of farmers.

As an analogue, Gardner (2012) shared in an ethnographic study, how a student of Odissi, within the periods of waiting in a small room in the house of her teacher, or while accompanying on tour, lived through moments in her teacher's life when she had

lessons, being impressed by her teacher riding a bike to the house of her own guru (Kelucharan Mohapatra), to help him compose a dance late in the night, observing her teacher in her intimate domestic practices of sweeping her house and washing her own vessels, with the intention of sharing lived experiences in the spaces between dance and humanities-based analytic thinking. The SPREAD case study dealt with similar experiences gained through the intercultural encounter through use of performance-based artistic communication and recollected experiences through public discourses from Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives.

### **Performance-based arts: a delivery method**

Based on an analysis of the socio-cultural, and historical contextual needs, performance initiated as a delivery strategy in several linguistic folklores in the early to mid-1970s; the balance between the conception of transformational linguistics and poetics striking a new emphasis on performance in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Bauman & Briggs, 1990). Particularly, performance-based arts expressed texts symbolically expressing through verbal art, through active interactions between performing artists and audiences. Storytelling and folklores were based on the socio-cultural construction of reality, reflexivity, the use of heterogeneous context-sensitive meanings, with artful uses of language, based on Kantian aesthetics (Bauman & Briggs, 1990).

The quest for shared human experiences in this study traces back to the definition of arts-based delivery or performance arts by Dewey (1934), who defined art as a mode of lived aesthetic experiences, implying that an artistic delivery form could be truly felt

through images of feeling, portrayed by symbolization of daily events. These consequential experiences thus probe contemplation, enhance cognitive ability, foster transformation and judgment, develop technical skills and sharpen the intellect, especially in youths.

This concept was supported by Eisner (2002), who introduced the Gestalt Theory, which stated that perceptions from an artistic delivery like theater energize the nervous system, which creates a resonance in the perceiver that implies artists have the power to manipulate perceiver's experiences. There dwelt the significance of using performance-based arts as delivery in agricultural development, as well as other fields of sustenance for a nation.

Goodwin et al. (2011) mentioned about multi-literacies for promoting education in low literacy nations- Gopa Leela or string puppetry in Orissa, an eastern state of India; Punjab Arts Council, Sangeet Natak Academy and Govt. of India's puppetry for Punjab, a northern state of India; biblical teaching in England during 15<sup>th</sup> century, in Burma, the traditions of puppetry were mainly to educate children, teach youths, and at the same time, use it as a medium to communicate social messages, introduce revolutionary movements and educate children for youth development.

The term performance, according to Bauman (1977), conveyed artistic actions, consisting of the context or situation, performers, the art-based form (theater/ dance/ music), audience, and the setting. Performance-based delivery provides a frame that allows critical retrospective reflection on the components of communication (performances, scripts or texts, trainings, rehearsals, entertainment, reports, critiques,

challenges, reflection on past performances, participation structure, performer-audience interaction), which may have profound implications in shaping socio-cultural relation and modes of interpretations (Bauman, 1977). A crucial property of performance-based delivery is usage of language for social action that was reflected in the Total Speech Act in Bauman's emphasis on the emergent enactment of the scripts- a highly reflexive mode of communication (Bauman & Briggs, 1990).

A performance-based art, as Eisner (2002), described, is a process of representation mediated through forms such as theater, dance, music and aims at transformation of consciousness, by appealing to the senses, through public discourse and communicates effectively by reading and impacting minds. Artistic strategies, dependent on differences in gender, social class, ethnicity, age, time, surrounding space, etc., are intersections of heterogeneous construction of reality (Bauman, 1986).

Performance-based artistic modes of delivery have immense capacity of being used to stimulate creativity, promote thinking, thereby helping to improve problem-solving and socio-cultural development within farmers, women, and youths. Working with the arts enables individuals to tolerate ambiguity, to discover an inner emotional self, capable of vicariously experiencing the exploration of new possibilities outside the box (Eisner, 2002).

Goodwin et al. (2011) vouched for a performance-based art, to be introducing diversity among learning cultures, in a postmodern era, to meet the demands of a broader definition of being literate in today's world of globalization. They narrated how dance, an art based strategy for literacy had been proposed to be used as a more pluralistic tool

for children and youths to comprehend, analyze and interact with others. Performance-based action involves an artful way of speaking what represents an interpretive frame within which the action is objectified within an interaction, and opens it to an audience, at the same time evaluates the skill set and effectiveness of the performer's messages.

In SPREAD, from the point of view of actors or performers, performance or acting out involved accountability, individual skill, and the objective of acting for the performers, in the context of particular problematic situations. On behalf of the views of the people in the audience, the evaluation of emotions revealed the skill and effectiveness of the performers, the evolving quality of performance in the interplay between communication and education, and the engagement of the members of a community for conducting performances were significant factors involved (Bauman, 1975).

The key to effective performance, which made up the structured conventional system of performance within the community, was the display of competence, the focusing of attention, the enhancement of experience, highly cultural and contextual. A high degree of proficiency in the conduct of performance was required to engage an audience through communication.

Dance, for instance as Goodwin et al. (2011) pointed out may be categorized as performance-based art literacy, as it can express and reflect one's socio-cultural values, artistically. As opposed to traditional methods of education, dance, through its movements, structure, rhythm and notation, may be used as an alternate form of literacy to engage communities cognitively and kinesthetically.



Across disciplines and cultures, performance arts-based literacies are promoted to introduce unconventional educational paradigms in fields of medicine, agriculture, psychology and anthropology. Alternative forms of literacy have come into play in almost all these fields, to establish successful communication through uncrossed arms to portray warmth and approachability with body language; gestures as symbolization of a meaningful technology to represent ideas and feelings, eye contact to embellish speech and understand across languages- the key elements of theater-based literacies.

In the postmodern era, differences in cultures, language, ethnicity, race, gender, etc. are being overcome using such artistic delivery methods for communicating feelings, intentions, cultural messages, academic conceptions and educational information (Goodwin et al., 2011).

### **Theater and its applications as a performance delivery**

Schechner (1998) offered an interesting model of how theater in general, could be related to script, drama and performance- performance being the largest domain of the audience, containing theater, a domain of the actors or performers, containing script, a domain of the master or guru, which again contained drama at the core, a domain of the composer or author (p. 71). Schechner (2004) opined that different cultures and nations defined these domains differently, most of the times, the domains overlapped. Theater could be conceived as a specialized performance. “Boundaries are set... within the broad region of performance theater takes place, and at the center of the theater is the script, sometimes the drama.” (Schechner, 2004, p. 70)

Denzin (2009) critically analyzes performance-based arts strategy as a function of education on a global stage. Theatrical performance, in a broad spectrum of literature was portrayed as a process of educating, communicating, creating, knowing and fostering understanding, making meaning from lived experiences. Assessing the needs of performance drama or theater, which traced back to transcend and reconstruct the psychological and infrastructural devastations, caused by genocides, wars, economic failures and inequality in gender, culture, race, economy, and socio-cultural politics, manifested usually in developing or third world nations, with problems and issues on lack of education, literacy, communication strategies; poverty, hunger, racial/ cultural/ religious discriminations; lack of health awareness, so on and so forth.

Building on this practical need to introduce liminal performance spaces of culture, politics and education, this study laid its base in assessing the impacts of using Community Theater for reconstruction of Rwanda, to attain sustainability in agriculture, their basic livelihoods and socio-cultural infrastructure, with similar issues to be overcome and tragic history to be transcended. Furthermore, Madison and Hamera (2006) argued that performance (enactment of stories through theater) and globalization, bleeding across national borders, were highly interconnected.

Denzin (2009) narrated the intent of performative pedagogy, which when applied in case of Iraq, a nation with a post-conflict environment as Rwanda, explored how community members worked as performers while staging spectacles of their traumatic history, physical coercion, etc. through theater of resistance, thereby creating empowering performance texts and performance actions. Subsequently, theater or drama

brought a reflective, embodied presence to question the power structures in the nation, the goal being the creation of a critical consciousness that would empower Iraqis to be leaders of their nation.

Similar performative construct was applied to Rwandans. The main objective of using theatrical performance or storytelling was to engage performers, artists, teachers, students, youths, women, farmers and other socio-cultural workers through invoking their personal memories, histories and problems within lives and communities.

During the 18th/ 19th century, in America, traditional forms of dramatic performances (parades or parodies) served as the medium to culturally critique socio-economic politics. Davis (1986) stressed the relationships among folklores or street theatrical performances with industrialization and nationalism, and how women, people from low socio-economic status, and communities of color were excluded from the same. Delivering messages, educating and communicating were thus purposefully used to express alternative and even oppositional ideologies till the Civil War (Davis, 1986). It happened so that Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives needed the most attention in case of transforming or introducing a change in infrastructure working from roots of agriculture as the latter served as the main source of profit or income for Rwandans and henceforth the application of theater in agricultural development was fore-grounded.

As Denzin (2009), highlighted, through theater, the actors performed testimonies; the spectators were able to passionately reflect on the past and the present, juxtaposed with existing experiences, creating new possibilities, images, concepts and socio-cultural

practices (Diamond, 1996). This case study conferring upon the shared perceptions of the respondents in the SPREAD project of Rwanda was built on a block of political theater, a Boalian Theater of the Oppressed, similar to the Brechtian Theater of resistance, which shaped the audience and the performers, with empathy, passion and reflexive critique (Madison, 1998). Denzin (2009) concluded that performance-based theater awakened the participatory democratic vision of a nation.

Chatterjea (2004) on a similar note upheld the signifying potential of performing bodies, in India, to resist fundamentalism and religious ideologies, which inhibited growth and development of the nation. She mentioned Mallika Sarabhai, a social activist and theatrical performer in India who had continuously performed criticizing monopolized patriarchal politics through theater. Internationally known for her outstanding performance in Peter Brooks's epic theater production- Mahabharata, Chatterjea narrated how the embodied performances reflected religious and socio-political interventions.

Conquergood (1995) developed the shift of the paradigm of performance from mimesis to poesis to kinesis as theater or drama involved movements, fluidity in motion and boundaries that troubled closure, implying a broad spectrum of thinking capability associated with theatrical executions. Speaking of execution, Conquergood (2002) brought forth Theaters of life, metaphorically describing the lethal impacts of death penalty in America, execution of humans as performance, thus applying the concept of theater to social justice. Theater performance had been applied in numerous approaches to resist violence against women. Interactive theater techniques offered communicative

ways to initiate dialogue and enable the audiences equip themselves with the skills to be active bystanders. Augusto Boal's Theater of the Oppressed, Boal's Forum Theater approach and the Forum Theater for Bystanders (FTB) modeled gender-based violence prevention (Mitchell and Freitag, 2011).

As Garlough (2008) accounts for Spivak's memories on establishment of the Indian People's Theater Association, (IPTA), as a tool for political protest in response to the famine that the British artificially created provide food for their soldiers around the Pacific during the Second World War. Similar to this case study of Rwandan Community Theater, the actors in IPTA were not actors by profession. They performed the devastating impacts of the famine and how to protest against it. Thus Community-based, street-level Theater came into play from suffering, needs and uncertainty towards sustainable livelihoods of individuals and communities.

### **Post-genocide agriculture in Rwanda: Coffee and pyrethrum**

In Rwanda, in 1994, war and genocide devastated the rural or agricultural economy, in which almost five to eight hundred thousand Rwandans were slaughtered including children, women, farmers, tribes, etc., with over two million refugees abandoning the land, with survivors agonized from violence, creating traumatic suffering and economic loss (Kumar et al., 1996). For reconstruction and reconciliation, following the violence of 1994, several international organizations provided post-conflict assistance to alleviate the human suffering to Rwanda.

Additionally often termed as a cause for genocide, in Rwanda, the majority of the population being Hutus, minority as Tutsi and Twa as aboriginals (according to the 1991

census), socio-political unrest between the Hutus and Tutsis due to desire of gaining power, deteriorated the social, political and economic situations of Rwanda, the communities losing the mutual trust that bound them. According to Kumar et al. (1996) the Hutus migrated to Rwanda nearly a thousand years ago, and the Tutsis, appeared four hundred years later (15th century) and Twas already existed. Colonial history of Rwanda, which brought coffee production favored Tutsis, exploiting the corrupt Hutus, the latter taking over the coffee market, who used coffee for their own benefits, leading to a crisis in coffee production in Rwanda. “The real shift began when Rwanda’s coffee became the primary source of foreign currency and the Hutu ruling class began to control its production” (Kamola, 2007).

The Rwandan economy depends solely on the rain-fed semi- subsistence agricultural production, with scarce natural resources and a very small industrial sector, mainly based on export of coffee (Kumar et al., 1996). Steep slopes and cool climate of Rwanda supported the production of coffee with continued semi-subsistence agriculture.

Kamola (2007) mentioned that German colonies and missionaries introduced coffee in Rwanda in 1905; by 1920, African communities rapidly increased coffee production to supersede Brazil’s production rate; in 1931, policies were formed to cultivate coffee for export. Around 1980s, the international coffee prices collapsed which led to an economic crisis. Additionally, as aftermath of the genocide, farmlands were abandoned and the coffee harvest declined by half; small-scale enterprises were looted or destroyed, and the rural infrastructure was completely damaged.

Support systems for agriculture were almost completely destroyed. The services of the Ministry of Agriculture – central administration, agriculture extension, and regional agriculture units – also suffered extensive losses. Program implementers realized that many survivors who had never left their homes... had also lost their productive inputs and tools and were in need of assistance. The lost earnings from coffee alone are staggering. Had the coffee harvest occurred as normal, the 30,000 tons of coffee likely to have been exported would have earned three times as much as in 1993, up to US\$92 million more than the normal annual earnings, owing to exceptionally high world prices for coffee. (Kumar et al., 1996, p. 42)

According to Huggins (2009) in the Northern Province of Rwanda, in 2011, Belgian farmers brought pyrethrum to Rwanda in the 1930s, a type of chrysanthemum from which an insecticide is extracted, emerged as a powerful crop in the political economy of Rwanda involved in the export and hence production of this crop. However, pyrethrum, a highly labor intensive crop, having a long gestation period, is unfavorable to be grown, yet cooperatives often forced members to purchase artificial fertilizers, lands were confiscated in case of non-cultivation of pyrethrum, local farmers were unhappy with SOPYRWA's monopoly. "The younger generation, in particular, did not want to grow pyrethrum. Three young men were summoned to the sector offices to explain themselves after they called pyrethrum cultivation slavery. They fled the region fearing punishment." (p. 33)

### **Community Theater in Rwanda: Contribution to agriculture**

The application of a performance-based artistic strategy, Community Theater, in Rwanda, was applied to achieve agricultural production and sustainability in Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives, implying an integrative approach of reconstruction by USAID between disciplines of social sciences and arts. The objectives of the application of Community Theater were promoting civic engagement, supporting social transformation to create best health practices, to empower, educate and communicate by using theatrical performances to throw light upon necessary socio-economic and sustenance needs (Garlough, 2008).

According to Breed (2006) Rwanda's history of genocide was a source of creation and cultural production. The conflict scenario and the socio-political unrest were the causes for which the communities felt the need for treating with cultural creations, emotions and feelings. The use of theater for reconciliation was often used in nations with complex issues of justice and nationhood. Grassroots associations in Rwanda used theater as a tool to reconstruct post-genocide Rwanda, which formed the basis of this case study. Sixty such associations, according to Breed (2006) were connected to the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC), and were supported through financial support from livestock, the most successful ones to foster reconstruction.

Fox (2007) enlightened the fact that Pearl Friedman, an American theater practitioner introduced Playback Theater in Cuba within rural farmers and youth groups in 2000, where stories were told on stage as a community-building tool. The beauty of it



was that, there were no costumes, no proper stage. Fox (2007) claimed, Playback Theater to be equivalent to Community Theater, both being theater by, for and about the people of the communities. Although Community Theater in Rwanda apparently emerged from post-genocide aftermaths, by tradition, it was preexisting in the royal courts and was used for communication purposes to ensure justice. Inside the Mwami's court (King), charismatic stories of war were told through Ikinimicu (theater) as the tradition, Ibisigo, which conveyed messages to delineate social hierarchy from the social structure (Breed, 2006). The court historians (Biru) had a central role as the actors.

Breed (2008) highlighted lived instances while participants addressed the horrific reality during the genocide, when they acted out neighbors harming neighbors, husbands killing their significant others, and parents killing their own families. Grassroots associations illustrated how they could all come together and build a fellow feeling in order to stabilize the situation, attain sustainability by paying attention to rural livelihoods.

Most of the associations performed by modeling how people could live unified peacefully. For example, Breed (2008) described how a survivor of the genocide referred to the person sitting next to her, said, "When I do theater, I forget that this brother here killed my five children" (p. 40).

In another instance, Breed (2006) asked a woman about how art changed her views after she lost her husband, when she said, "When we sing and dance, we feel happy and excited. I no longer see them as enemies, but those that share problems of the survivor." (p.509)

## **Conclusion**

Reconciliation and transformed acts of confession, abstinence, reconstruction and mercy were aims to be achieved by using Community Theater, so that in turn the lives of rural farmers, growing coffee and pyrethrum, were peaceful, stable, and sustainable and the net agricultural production increased raising family income, education fees for youths and children, better health practices and improved livelihoods.

As Breed (2006) quoted the words of a survivor of the genocide of Rwanda, sitting next to and referring to the other as brother, was the turning point of using theater as a performance-based arts strategy for education and communication in Rwanda. Farmers, when asked how theater had impacted their lives and the community, most of them stated that it led all to understand issues and solutions, which they did not understand before. They could interact with the individuals they used to fear (Breed, 2008).

Literature with a rich witness of the application of performance-based strategies, especially theater and dance, the ones involving dialogue, speech, scripts or songs, expressing through body language and gestures, among other performance-based strategies, reflect the needs, processes and impacts of using the same for addressing social, clinical, cultural, economic or political issues. Community Theater, in SPREAD mainly was selected as the delivery tool for coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives of Rwanda, to identify socio-cultural, economic, health and hygiene, and political problems and resolve them, which in turn were inhibiting coffee/pyrethrum growth and sustainable living.

The criterion for selecting theater as the delivery or reconstruction strategy for developing agribusiness, increasing agricultural production and farm raise, was that theater was already a successful tool of communication in Rwanda from postcolonial times, which demonstrated immense potential to build capacity, bring together everyone in the community to engage into team work, towards youth development, to empower, to remove gender-based violence or inequality and had pedagogical implications, which posed as the root causes of lack of farm production and raise, the avenues for sustainable livelihoods in Rwanda.

### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY

This particular study was a qualitative, case study research inquiry. The naturalistic, interpretive research paradigm allowed constructs to cascade rather than an a priori hypothesis and followed the path, which emerged as a function of the researcher and the phenomenon, unpredictable and unfolded through the interactions during interviews and formed its legitimacy on a solid theoretical framework (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A case study is an empirical method that investigates in depth, a contemporary phenomenon within real life contexts, without any evident boundaries (Yin, 2009).

Following Yin's reasoning of selecting a particular research agenda as a case, this research study was based on answering how and why the phenomenon of performance-based artistic strategies, such as theatre, were effective as a delivery tool in a real-life context of international agricultural development of Rwandan communities (Yin, 2009).

This unique case study encompassed the praxis by which Rwandans shared their experiences that they perceived through their senses and it was the subjective experience, which was captured to perceive the phenomenon in the study (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). Undergird by this philosophical principle, the international agricultural educators, reflected retrospectively on their collective lived experiences through their consciousness, which helped understand and interpret the meaning, structure and essence

of their perceptions on development through use of performance-based arts- Community Theater in this case.

Various interpretive paradigms used by qualitative researchers to address the study assumptions are namely positivist or post-positivist, constructivist and critical or feminist-post structural (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005). According to Lincoln and Guba (1994) questions of paradigm are primary to questions of method since the paradigm is the principle guiding the researcher's basic belief system, in both ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways. A paradigm is a framework of ontology (beliefs), epistemology (values) and methodology within which the research study takes place (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). This particular study used a holistic methodological approach, involving a qualitative, case study research design.

According to Lincoln and Denzin (2005) within the time period of 1900 to 1950, the traditional paradigm crosscut the positivistic, foundational paradigm followed by the period of 1950 to 1970, which covered a modernistic, post-positivistic foundational paradigm. It is through this time period that the humanistic virtue of a new, interpretive qualitative approach of case study was observed. It is a powerful epistemological paradigm and this study used an integrative methodological case study framework that interlaced different aspects of this particular paradigm. Creswell (2013) defined a qualitative case study research as one, "in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case)..." (p. 97)

The SPREAD project case study was an "instrumental" one (p. 99), in which the case was built around an issue- the concern of impacts of using performance-based arts

to improve agricultural livelihoods of Rwandan farmers. This case study explored the outcomes to be learnt in the case and was designed to pursue particular questions to understand the particular case (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005).

According to Merriam (1998) the paradigmatic framework of a case study design follows ontology where knowledge transfer is made possible by the didactic relationship, evolving during the interaction between the researcher and the informant.

A case refers to a body of knowledge, as it appears to human consciousness- the science of what one perceives and provides impetus for experiences. The narrated, interpretive form of knowledge is created by one's perception and thus exists in the consciousness of human mind. The underlying reason for choosing the research method as a case study was that the participants or key informants in the study were carefully chosen to be individuals who had experienced the phenomenon of teaching, transforming, communicating or educating using performance-based arts such as theater, dance, music, etc., consequently using arts as a delivery tool for agricultural education. While interviewing each of the individuals in the purposive sample, their personal experiences were introduced into the study developing around the assumed phenomenon.

The particular methodological paradigm followed in this case study on the SPREAD project assessment and impact, was in the form of a qualitative inquiry, a type of naturalistic inquiry. The case study research method involving multiple respondents, interpreted as a research inquiry, developed a complex, holistic narrative, analyzing interviews, reporting the views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. This qualitative study was an in-depth analysis of the outcomes, procedures and implications

of using theater for agricultural and socio-cultural development in post-conflict Rwanda, a bounded system to focus on the understanding and meaning of the process.

According to Merriam (2009) what is chosen as the choice of study defines the bounded system, and the group of individuals contributing to the SPREAD project or the list of respondents, formed the unit of analysis for the system. Therefore, in the bounded context, there occurred this phenomenon of teaching and communicating for international development, the proposition being the aim of the project to reconstruct post-genocide Rwandan problems of communities hampering agricultural production.

Pineau (2002) coins the term critical performative pedagogy to refer to a body-centric experiential method of teaching that constitutes experiences across cultures, as cited by Patton (2002). As an analogous conceptual framework, this study was an approach to studying and staging lived experiences and expressions gained through performance of the purposively sampled agricultural educators and interpreting the same. It allowed adult learners to understand and communicate to others in relation to themselves. To ensure complete understanding of the phenomenon, logically the case study was set up based on the context, which was crucial. Lincoln and Guba (1985) characterized the value-bound naturalistic form of qualitative inquiry, by multiple realities and contextual working hypothesis.

A performance-based art is the process by which artists narrate things and experience them through their senses and it is the subjective experience, which is captured to perceive the phenomenon. Undergird by this philosophical principle, this case study involved direct interactions with the international agricultural educators and

farmers or stakeholders, who reflected retrospectively on their collective lived experiences through their *consciousness* which helped understand and interpret the meaning, structure and essence of their perceptions of delivering knowledge through performance-based art.

### **Sampling**

In a naturalistic inquiry as this study, the process of sampling aimed at maximizing the scope and domain of knowledge obtained and the naturalistic sample was thus not a representative population, compared to conventional research but was a qualitative informational isomorph (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In such a sampling method, the point at which redundancy was reached was the desired sample size following which sampling was terminated based on the absence of an amount of new information added per unit of analysis.

Taking into account the research questions and the source of information needed from knowledgeable and experienced informants, this case study determined the choice of a purposive sample of respondents, who had utilized performance-based art as a delivery strategy to introduce health and social awareness which in turn impacted the livelihoods of Rwandans and agricultural development. In the interview rounds that followed, the respondents were expected to recall their experiences, add details to the study, bring new voices and visions, and elucidate the reader's judgments and imagination (Moustakas, 1994).

The sample was expected to be diverse, cross-cultural and interdisciplinary with a prior experience in the field of study. According to Patton (2002) the key reason in



selecting the sample was to decide what the “researcher wanted to be able to report at the end of the study.” (p. 229)

Information-rich informants formed the purposive sample for this study. The respondents reflected in-depth on the phenomenon of using performance-based Community Theater. The sample was purposefully biased to learn from the best exemplars for the study.

Patton (2002) classifies purposive sampling into sixteen different subtypes. This research study followed a criterion sampling method because of the fact that all chosen subjects in the case met the predetermined criterion of utilization of Community Theater, a performance-based art in educating and transforming the coffee and pyrethrum communities. For in-depth understanding, the interviewees who met this particular criterion in the SPREAD project were chosen for the study.

The sampling initiated with the inclusion criteria of interviewing the local respondents and further using the snowballing method of accessing other respondents involved in the SPREAD project case study. Snowball, chain or network sampling strategy involved locating the local key informants at the start of data collection who fulfilled the criterion used in sampling for selection, following which, they referred the researcher to other informants for the study. Among the many reasons for choosing this method, working long distance, approaching out of country/ continent respondents, accessing diverse respondents, identifying unknown workers in the project, were some. By inquiring about other respondents, the snowball could get bigger, to accumulate new information-rich informants (Merriam, 2009).

## **Data collection**

Data was collected following the identification of the fundamental theoretical framework, the problem statement emphasis, the sample selection and the purpose of the study design. The goal of this qualitative research was to discover patterns, which emerged after vigilant observation, documentation, and careful analysis of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This section reflects on the method by which data was collected, reduced, categorized and analyzed and the process by which data was reported in this study. In a naturalistic case study analysis as this one, it is important to document what is “unusual and ordinary” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005, p. 453). In-depth interviews, coding and a final holistic compression of data were required.

Data was collected and explored through conducting intensive semi-structured interviews with twelve respondents- four by face-to-face, another four by telephone and the rest four by email communication. Four others who were also in the list could not be contacted due to their inaccessibility and unavailability during the study. The data collection initiated with several rounds of in-depth, open-ended, semi-structured interviews. Questions were formed on the basis of the four principle purposes or objectives, having defragmented them to fit in the category of six types of questions proposed by Patton (2002). Question type initiated with background and knowledge, followed by sensory and feeling, finally moved on to experience, perception and opinion types (Patton, 2002).

In the first round, the local respondents of the SPREAD project, sponsored by the USAID, were contacted. To choose the appropriate sample, a basic set of research

questions were used. Following this procedure, the snowballing method was used to locate other respondents from the previously mentioned local respondents.

Since the researchers in the project list formed a cross-cultural, multi-ethnic database and were located in different countries and settings, being an international database, consequently, the data collection comprised of face-to-face, telephonic and completely electronic methods of interviewing. This implied that some of the interviews were conducted via email and telecommunications as the respondents were placed out of country. The SPREAD project list consisted of respondents with rich, diverse, interdisciplinary, agricultural education, international development and performing arts population.

Signed consent from the subjects/respondents was obtained following the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board protocol, when the respondents showed their willingness to participate in the study. The personal information, names and contact were to be kept confidential by the protocol director according to the Institutional Review Board protocol. There were no known risks in this case study according to the protocol and additionally, a potential benefit of this study was the multicultural exchange that the data collection and dissemination of findings involved, together with integration of arts into agriculture.

While conducting the study, in-depth, open-ended interviews were carried out to access the respondents. Several individuals in the SPREAD project who contributed to the transformation or reconstruction efforts through utilizing theater on the Rwandan communities, constituted the unit of analysis for this study. The intention was to dissect

the cases and examine them closely to understand the impacts and future implications of using performance-based arts as a delivery strategy in international agricultural development.

Keeping all information provided by the respondents, confidential, ensured data safety and monitoring. Safety of electronic data collected was taken care of by deleting the data sources after the study was over. The data log was stored in a locked filing cabinet and data was transcribed and confidentiality coded. Data sources were kept confidential.

As the study progressed with communication and response from the participants, the follow-up interview questions were designed as open-ended so that there was enough room for variations as opposed to standardized, inflexible interviewing. To understand the interviewees' culture, language and perceptions, the interviews were designed to be active and emergent. In this study, most of the interviewing took place electronically and to gain trust through prolonged engagement as was usual in face-to-face settings, was a limitation in a respondent-researcher relationship.

Lincoln and Denzin (2005) suggested virtual interviewing to be the term for electronic interviews. In electronic modes of communication, gathering information, establishing rapport, being cautious about feign responses and phrasing follow up questions are important. The purpose of the interviews in the study were manifold, starting from reconstructions of the experiences and perceptions of the participants to deconstructing and restructuring follow up questions according to emerging themes.

Data was either collected in the form of handwritten notes, or collected as responses by email directly from the respondents and others were handwritten notes while telecommunicating. Thus response logs were maintained daily. Verbatim transcripts were prepared to organize raw data and to get a sense of the whole (Patton, 2002). Transcripts were coded using the highlighting method. Several rounds of interviews were necessary for best outputs until redundancy in the responses was reached. The emergent response categories and themes were member-checked in subsequent interviews.

The aim of this qualitative case study was to discover themes, which emerged after transcription, careful coding, and inductive analysis of the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). When the interview ceased to be productive and became redundant, it was time to terminate it. Data collection and data analysis were to be done simultaneously (Merriam, 2009), which followed the path of an adequate engagement on the researcher's part, to spend time on each of the interview, notes, responses and coding to construct.

### **Data analysis**

Data collection and analysis were almost simultaneously performed, as qualitative case study analysis was not a linear process, specially this study being emergent as a case (Merriam, 1998). According to Yin (2004) the case study database consisted of interview logs, transcripts, field notes, investigator's notes or memos and archival reports or documents. Data analysis consisted of understanding, examining, categorizing, tabulating and triangulating evidences in the study.

Data analysis initiated with simple open coding, using highlighting method. The interviews were transcribed after each session, the respondents named as R1, R2, etc., following the order of interviewing. This helped to reflect on the responses, without being biased about the respondents. Interview logs were read daily. Highlighting method was used to find similar responses, to generate categories or themes. Yin (2009) prescribed five analyzing methods: pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models and cross-case synthesis. Data was analyzed using the method of explanation building in this case study method, noting the invariant constituents of the experiences shared by the respondents in the transcribed data, and finding the core themes by clustering these constituents.

Usually opposed to positivistic research, this analysis worked on hunches, educated guesses and often the researcher's attention as an investigator was directed to certain sample respondents for data refining from a researcher's perspective. Data was coded using the highlighting method. Multiple emergent themes were combined into larger themes, or perspectives were used to layer the analyses, reflecting all the complexities that existed in data constructs. Data was coded to form interpretive key constructs related to the analysis.

Using a constant comparative method in this study, categories were compared followed by integrating similarities within responses to relate to the same content, obtained from categorizing the data. Inductive analysis was the method used to discover patterns and themes through the investigator-interviewee relationship (Patton, 2002).

Categories or themes emerged which captured a recurring pattern intersecting the preponderance of the data.

Conceptual categories were constructed using the highlighting method and using the constant comparative method, units of data were grouped. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) these units of data were heuristic, revealing information relevant to the study. Naming the categories was dependent on the purpose of research and themes and patterns emerged by comparing the same.

The appropriate choice of reporting outcomes depended on the purpose or the research questions to be answered in this study, which were primarily *how* and *why* a single phenomenon of performance-based art worked in international agricultural development. After deconstructing information obtained utilizing themes, reconstruction of interpretations using the respondent's voices followed. According to Merriam (1998) a case study is describing a bounded unit intensively and holistically. Thus direct interpretation was used to understand issues and contexts with regard to the case.

A thick descriptive report was established through constant comparative method and induction to find outcomes. There were several options for choosing methods for organizing, analyzing and interpreting data, especially descriptive data that this study dealt with. Different parts of this qualitative study used different reporting approaches to manage and report data collected. The analytical methodology followed in course of data analysis and interpretation was an explanation building analysis. Furthermore, the analyzed data were reported through the understanding of the phenomenon and induction in the form of an empirical inquiry.

The focus of this study was to develop a case description after understanding, interpreting and describing an empirical analysis of the data, derived from the extensive resources and then to follow a replication design for implications (Yin, 2009). In order to maintain a chain of evidences and out of desire to understand completely a complex phenomenon as this, the case study method was chosen to be the appropriate way of designing, collecting, analyzing and presenting empirical evidence fairly.

According to Yin (2009) a case study may be exploratory descriptive or explanatory, based on the basic categorization of schemes for types of questions- what can be learned from or how and why questions for instance. This particular case of the SPREAD project aimed at exploration of implications and impacts of using a performance-based artistic strategy, Community Theater, on the livelihoods of the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives. Therefore the study was explanatory in nature with embedded propositions and expected outcomes on a typical case.

According to Merriam (2009) an open coding follows an analytical coding of the data, which reflect the recurring regularity in the data. Paraphrasing Glaser and Strauss (1967) construct categories have their own identity and existence apart from the data from which they were derived. Categories were chosen for the purpose of the research, exhaustively, which were mutually exclusive, sensitized and conceptually congruent (Merriam, 2009). In this case study research, naturally emerging themes evolved from categorization of data and thus, the development of the narrative depended on existing rich, theoretical framework.



While analyzing the categorized data, writing and narrating a story for each of the informants or interviewee was done by grouping together the answers to common questions and then following the process of analyzing different perspectives on the same. Patton (2002) outlines the required steps in the case study method, which initiate with the assembling of data, condensing the data with constructs and themes and coding, followed by a final narrative report, which is contextual and holistic. In this study, the findings were cross-validated from the interviews, from which patterns and themes emerged.

Lincoln and Denzin (2005) suggested for naturalistic researchers, that the primary question revolved around the voices they use as they interpreted and represented the voices of those they study. This raised a poignant issue about the extent of interest that researchers pose towards individuals per se, their personality traits, their relationship to various cultural contexts, and the narrative discourse.

Based on the five analytical procedures through which qualitative empirical data are approached in a narrative inquiry, this study involved the shaping of the past experiences, by understanding, adding and deriving meaning of the researcher's as well as the interviewees' responses over time. The findings of the study intended to narrate to the status quo about the thoughts, perceptions and the interpretations of the similarities and differences between cases and drew constructs by emphasizing on patterns or replications, in an active creative *voice* to construct realities from others' *voices*.

In this process, it was of utmost importance to understand what the interviewee communicated and demonstrate cultural, historical, interactional, social circumstances in

the linguistic discourse, in the form of mentioning extensive quotations from the narrator's stories, to give an alternate interpretation to the readers. Cross-cultural contexts and differences may also result in the variability of features of cases. As illustrated in Lincoln and Denzin (2005) narration is possible for both the researcher and the interviewee.

Interviews generate important meaningful information to the narrative researcher and it is the work of the researcher to encourage interviewees to speak. The narrative interviewee on the other hand, may create a paradox by modifying the underlying experiential theoretical assumptions of the researcher. Key constructs were formed from the respondents' statements uncovered and analyzed. In this case, the aim of the findings was to document self-stories narrated by the informants and interpret the meanings more contextually, by understanding the perceptions and interpretations of the respondents as well as to find concurrent themes within the same.

The study included a method, data collection, data analysis, and report writing. Data were analyzed utilizing multiple levels of abstraction. The best qualitative report aims to engage the reader completely. Using constant comparative method, categories were compared followed by integrating similarities within different cases to relate to the same content, obtained from the data help in coding the data. Inductive analysis was the method used to discover patterns and themes through the investigator-interviewee relationship (Patton, 2002). New themes emerged consequently and were pursued in the successive data collection efforts. The data reporting method in this study followed the empirical case study research design.

An information- rich, thick description of the case study report was established. Constant comparison comparing patterns was utilized to locate similar emergent themes in the data. The purpose, audience and the analytical level of the case study report were kept in mind to produce a valuable narrative (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A thorough description of the investigator's credentials, of the methods involved and the measures to increase the probability of a trustworthy study were provided in the case study report.

### **Trustworthiness**

Issues of trustworthiness and rigor in a naturalistic inquiry as this study were treated once the conceptual framework was built to ensure that the research study results or implications were worth the value. Lincoln and Guba (1985) outlined the criteria for trustworthiness to be met in a qualitative inquiry.

In a qualitative naturalistic study, the researcher constructs multiple realities, which owe credibility to the constructors of the original multiple realities. Credibility was taken care of by ensuring triangulation from multiple sources of evidence, of notes, literature, member checks, peer debriefing, etc. Merriam (2009) mentioned reflexivity as an alternative strategy of ensuring credibility.

In this research study, credibility of the findings through documents and interview data was ensured through triangulation and member checking methods, since the data collection was primarily intended through several rounds of interviews keeping constant interaction over time with the interviewees. As the onset of the project was in an international setting, learning about different cultures, building trust and rapport were a few important actions to be undertaken to engage successfully.

Bilmes (1975) as cited by Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned misinformation in the form of misunderstanding the researcher's questions; perceptual distortions and misinterpretations of the narrator's perceptions and words or phrases were possible, if prolonged engagement was not taken seriously. The researcher-interviewee relationship was developmental and themes or constructs emerged over time. Triangulation was the process of ensuring credibility of the interpreted data. In this particular study, triangulation was achieved by using multiple sources- the lived experiences of the sample and the theoretical findings or literature review, reports, Community Theater manual, and the researcher's perspectives.

For instance, if one of the respondents shared a typical case and published the same, the interview data might be compared and confirmed with those published. In other cases, the themes emerged might be compared to similar literature or texts available, known as contextual validation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

An additional important method of determining the credibility of the findings in this study was the member checking method. Also defined as respondent validation, to rule out misrepresentation and misinformation, all interview findings were member-checked in subsequent interviews and documented at the end, the conclusions, categories and constructions were tested with the sample interviewees (Merriam, 2009).

The data reconstructions were purported in the inquiry report to match the original multiple realities of the audience members. For credibility of data, increasing the correspondence with the researcher and the external world was significant. Multiple sources of evidences were used for triangulation and for credibility of constructions-

field notes, logs, transcripts, member checks, the Annual Report, 2012-2013 and field notes from Pichanick (2011).

The truth in the findings of a naturalistic inquiry as this study is not a single one and thus the results of the study cannot be generalized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability is the term used by qualitative researchers to ensure that the empirical evidence of this study holds a contextual similarity with another to be applied.

Depending on the researcher's holistic, rich description of the findings, the context and case may have immense scope of being applied to comparably fit situations (Eisner, 1991).

In order to construe meanings and replicate findings, one needs to go beyond given information to fill in gaps within other natural settings. With an intention to verify the results in a different setting to test the transferability of the framework, a thick description with respondent quotes was provided. Selected sample, with a contextual natural setting and shared lived experiences were all endeavors of a naturalist to ensure greater validity of the results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A thick description of the conclusions and implications was necessary to utilize the same in a similar setting.

The qualitative findings involve multiple realities and a variety of contextual replication complex in nature. A substitute criterion of replicability in naturalistic inquiry is termed dependability. Taking into account, this study used a human instrument, there was a chance of instrument decay and also the factors of phenomenal or research design or setting induced changes.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) mentioned triangulation and audit trail to be multiple methods of authentication of the findings. An audit trail for ensuring dependability of the processes was used to evaluate the products of the inquiry, called a confirmability audit. Analogous to the term objectivity in quantitative research, the term confirmability was coined to provide for the subjectivity of the characteristics of the data.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) both dependability and confirmability were taken care of by an audit trail, which in this case, consisted of a journal log of the researcher's notes, problems and decisions at each stage to encounter the research study. The inquiry auditor has the task of examining the process, the data, findings, interpretations and implications of the study. According to Halpern's six audit trail categories, a record of the empirically obtained data- data from electronic emails, face-to-face interviews, documents, classified as raw data; condensed data, researcher's notes as a result of data reduction; process notes from categorization and coding; trustworthiness documents; personal reflexive notes and observation notes, was preserved.

The ethical values were considered as part of the IRB protocol as well as on the part of the researcher in stating, interpreting and publishing the findings. Acknowledging the privacy of the respondents, their consent recognitions, their sensitivity towards any issues of culture, norms, customs, etc. were ethically treated with respect and confidentiality. The residual effects of the interviews including stimulating and sharing the respondents' memories, whether embarrassing or painful, were ensured to be calm and enjoyable through sharing knowledge. Any piece of information the respondents

was not willing to share was kept confidential. To the researcher's utter contentment, the respondents were touched by the questions and ended up answering and expressing in detail.

### **Conclusion**

In this case study, the basis of the intrinsically interesting case was to unravel the factors of interaction between significant characteristics of the phenomenon of using theater as a delivery tool and its impacts on the Rwandan livelihoods, as described interpreting the perceptions of the respondents. The uniqueness of the case did not lie in the method of analysis, but in the vivid context of integrating arts with agricultural development, as applied in Africa to improve livelihoods and sustainability.

The data interpretation in a case study analysis is the initial step towards describing the findings of the researcher. Meanings were revealed on the basis of understanding the data using interviews, field notes and reporting documents, which served as archival data, and the findings were interpreted after analyzing the data obtained through the interviews. The review of literature or the theoretical framework for this qualitative inquiry prepared a ground for this study and discussed how the arts-based or performance-based research had a potential to be used as a delivery strategy in the field of international development and education.

Norris (2000) mentioned in his findings how each researcher had collected and analyzed data by traditional methods and had used an arts-based delivery as the research topics of student teaching. Anchored in a real-life context, this case study offered a means of investigating complex social units within the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum

cooperatives, consisting of multiple areas of potential significance of the need, process and impacts of theater use. With multiple areas to address and several different impacts, this study illuminated the reader's experiences and provided a holistic, rich description on the insights on the phenomenon.

Finally, in this study, the ways of knowing and representing were integrated, as shared by the sample respondents, of their experiences of utilizing performance-based strategies to deliver knowledge in the field of International development and agricultural education.



## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

Theater in Rwanda had been a reconstruction process for building the nation in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide (Breed, 2008). The reconstructed identity for Rwanda was performed around the nation through theater companies sanctioned by the government, and through grassroots associations for communities in Rwanda. The pre-colonial use of Ikinamicu (theatre) in Rwanda used the arts for transferring state-driven messages. In post-genocide Rwanda, the use of theater generated and conveyed messages of unity and awareness through a simple performance about Rwanda's history (Breed, 2006).

The art of theater has many uses and purposes, specifically in the world of development. Created in the 1950s and 1960s by Augusto Boal, Community Theater had been used all over the world, in countries such as Brazil, Greece, France, the United States and many others to bring change or transformation to a specific community. Usually used in developing nations, Community Theater, a performance-based artistic strategy, had brought itself to Africa and had been extremely successful in Rwanda.

Typically after tragic aftermaths of war, genocide, rebellion, or lack of education, Rwandans found it difficult to address social change and to transition into a more peaceful and developed state. In Community Theater, people from the co-operatives of farmers played the roles of the artists or actors, and they were stretched and challenged to become the leaders of their communities to improve the lives of their generation and

generations to follow (Pichanick, 2011). Because of its proved success, Community Theater brought with itself a certain level of credibility and legitimacy and the strategy that could improve the livelihoods of the people of Rwanda.

The purpose of this research was to provide a holistic narrative, explaining how and why performance-based arts had been utilized as a delivery strategy in communicating, educating and improving livelihoods in Rwandan communities and the procedures, impacts and implications of using the same. The archival documents had been prepared from data collection from the Borlaug Advisory Group and respondents of SPREAD, analysis by qualitative methods, participant feedbacks via member checking, which ensured conformability and triangulation- a very similar approach undertaken in this study as well.

The research questions with this case study to be addressed were:

1. What were the needs, procedures and impacts of using performance-based artistic strategy in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum communities?
2. What type of arts-based research techniques did they use?
3. What were the perceptions of the farmers, communities and international development workers involved in SPREAD, on the impacts of their strategies and which were the fields of application of the strategy?
4. What were the perceptions of the respondents on using performance-based arts as a research method or a data dissemination method?

Lessons learned, potential project recommendations and strategies following the report were based on technical expertise and assessment/gap analysis by the team of

SPREAD prior 2010. The documents consisted of the Annual Report (2012-2013) and the SPREAD field notes (Pichanick, 2011), which explained, in details, the demonstration methods, impacts of the roles and responsibilities of the actors on improving the livelihoods of Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum co-operatives. Hence, the credibility and dependability of the transcribed data and the audit trails were ensured by the documents and subsequent interviews.

### **Emerging categories as a model**

Multiple *themes* emerged from this case study by the process of explanation building, constant comparison and inductive analysis. These *themes* were categorized into key constructs that led to important conclusions and implications. The data was classified systematically and was developed into a schema consisting of coded categories or *themes*. The categories described and interpreted the data (Merriam, 1998).

A conceptual model was developed to make inferences by induction, using the inter-relationships between the *themes*, which enabled to visualize, theorize and conceptualize the interactions and relatedness of the findings (Merriam, 1998).

According to the framework in Figure 2, *community theater* was the delivery strategy for communication and transference of knowledge, and was used to implement and improve categories (purposes, set II) such as *capacity building* or *community engagement, empowerment, education* and *communication* and *identifying problems* and *implementing solutions*, which, as a result were factors established as the purpose or objectives to be achieved in the SPREAD project.

The outer categories (needs or causes, set I) of *Rwandan history* or *background*, *gender/ roles*, *coffee* and *pyrethrum production* and *socio-economic/ health issues* surrounded the previous categories as pre-existing, powerful factors, which modulated and regulated Rwandan livelihoods.

Intersected with the systems, planning and infrastructure of factors associated with the origin or causes of crisis, socio-political unrest, non-governance, lack of agribusiness and production, lack of education, so on and so forth, which were categories (domain of work implementation, set III) to be studied, fell under the central circle overlapping with smaller circles which represented the different segments of Rwandan society, involved in this case study- *family*, *community*, *agricultural co-operatives* and *national entities*.

Hence, Figure 2 represented the model for conceptualizing the findings from the emergent *themes*.

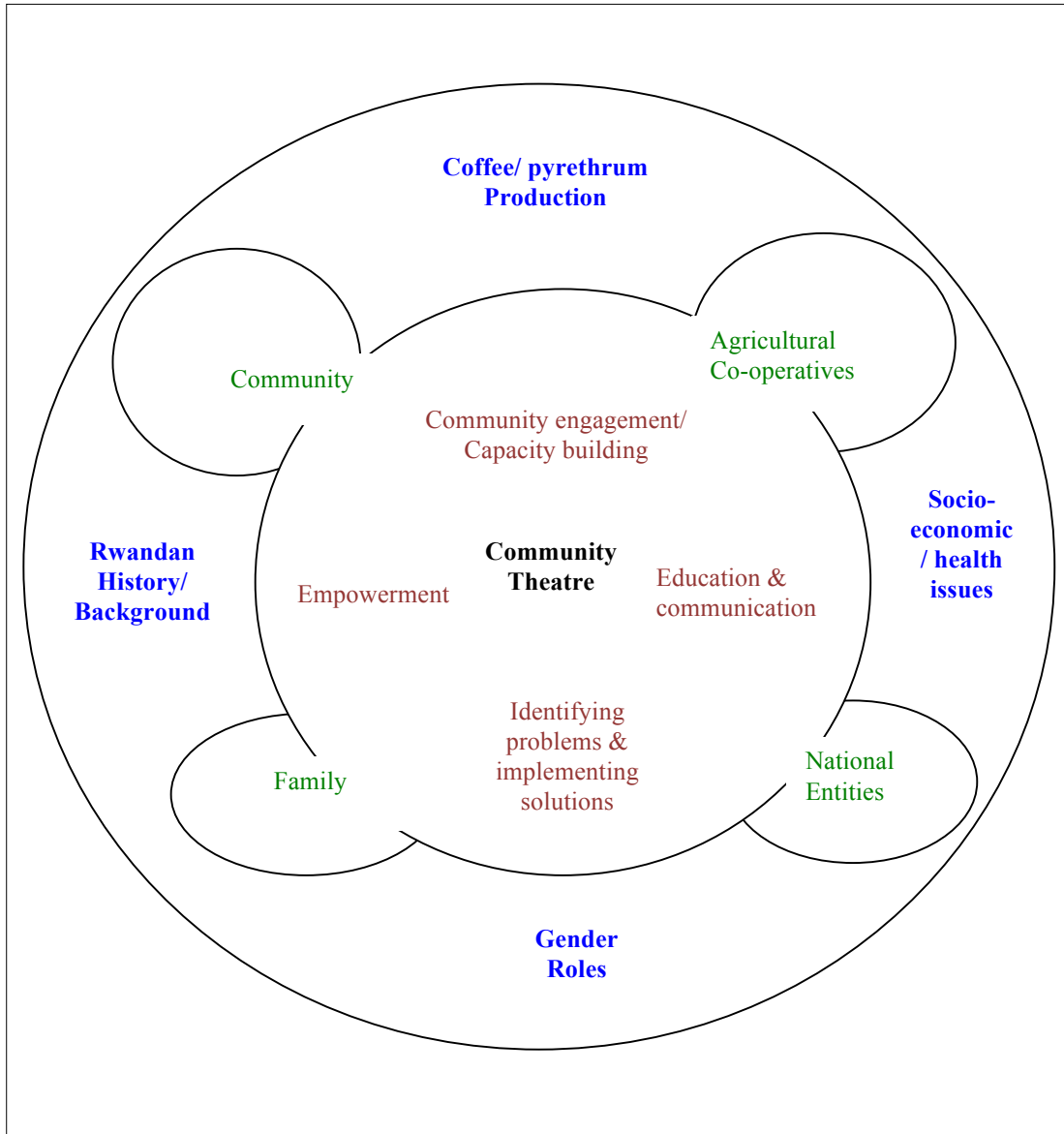


Figure 2. Linking categories and concepts in a model comprised of causes, process and impact zones of using Community Theater as a delivery strategy in Rwandan SPREAD project.

### **Findings from categories set I**

As substantiated by the SPREAD Pichanick (2011) and the archival Annual Report, (2012-2013) the *Rwandan history/ background* traces back to Rwanda's past of devastating genocide in 1994. Post-genocide, people of Rwanda were reluctant, lost self-confidence, became silent observers than speakers for their own needs. Post-conflict Rwanda was more challenging to work in and USAID initiated the SPREAD project to implement reconstruction although it was difficult to transform and change livelihoods (R2, R3, R4).

Theater thus emanated well in such uprising communities, to primarily introduce the process of peace building in a zone of social unrest as Rwandan cooperatives, agricultural *coffee/ pyrethrum production* being one of the prime factors, which was affected at large. While exploring delivery strategies suiting each different circumstance, each different post-conflict condition and audience, theater came into play, owing to Rwanda's history of theater usage and popularity among communities through radio broadcasting. The director of the home office (R4) shared the reason to choose theater.

After the genocide, the rural sectors needed a lot of post-conflict reconstruction as agriculture was the first to be affected. It seemed theater was the best fit in terms of linking farmers to markets, resources, people in general. Some of the best opportunities also were present as radio drama was popular already and many theater-trained persons were involved. (R4)

One of the home office project supervisors (R3) mentioned, "after genocide, they had no paper or coin money in rural areas and only barter system was popular. So the

initial projects were to generate income and improve quality of coffee as everyone had coffee trees.” The SPREAD project additionally came into action to remove poverty, increase livelihoods, and assess the agricultural value chain and to explore how professional components linked production to market

Literature reflected Rwandan communities had used theater as a mode of communication as well as entertainment from post-colonial period of time. Majority of the respondents cited this as a reason for choosing theater as opposed to other traditional, non-performance based artistic strategies for international development.

Community Theater was used as a unique methodology for identifying and resolving concerns or issues in the community hampering agricultural production in the cooperatives.

This was an innovative strategy and a much more active, successful one. How performers developed dialogues, scripts, and how they engaged the community proved valuable for them in real life and hence the use of such strategy over other scientific ones. Adults could relate to actions in the theater much easily than patiently listening to lectures/demonstrations, expressed one of the international student leaders. (R2)

Theater was thus chosen as the delivery tool to model behaviors by selecting topics of problems in the Rwandan community. One of the respondents (R3), a home office project supervisor, reflected, “Community Theater grew out of radio lifeline program. Battery or solar operated radios were available and something called radio drama was popular which discussed health related soap operas in local language.”

Therefore, there seemed to be a pre-disposition towards creativity, situations to depict community problems, and how community people thought and analyzed. The SPREAD community theater project involved health and agricultural production concerns as well.

There were radio shows and drama broadcasting already and Rwandans seemed to be very art loving. My strong belief was working with farmers through theater would prove to be the most effective given their familiarity to music, dance, theater, drama. This was my impetus to create plays and so was for all those who acted. People from the community were also made much more intimately involved through theater, expressed one of the international team theater experts.

(R5)

As explained and recorded in Pichanick (2011), *socio-economic/ health problems* were identified and given solutions for, through using Community Theater. Loss in agricultural *coffee/ pyrethrum production* trickled down to the causes identified by needs assessment by SPREAD international reconstruction team, which were mainly socio-economic in nature during phase II.

According to Pichanick (2011), while phase I of SPREAD involved reconstruction and agribusiness development and agricultural development, the following factors of social and health problems were observed during phase II of the SPREAD project in the summer of 2011.

Sixty-eight skits were set up, of which most skits had multiple problems displayed (HIV/ AIDS or Malaria, lack of family planning, school fees, education, domestic violence, land disputes, alcoholism, gender inequality, teen pregnancy/



abortion, polygamy, malnutrition, hunger, stealing/ addiction, community dishonesty, poor leadership, incest, conflict, and so on) and some skits had both problems and solutions paraphrasing Pichanick (2011), for addressing the issues appearing in the agricultural co-operatives.

According to Pichanick (2011), twenty-nine solutions appeared through the skits for addressing social and health problems. They reflected ways and needs to arrange community meetings for addressing accountability and communication, to teach to take their problems to higher levels of authority (Village/District/Province), to introduce parent-to-child sex education, to test for HIV/Pregnancy, to invite community Health Officials for health education, to teach abstinence, to encourage forgiveness for reconciliation, etc.

One of the respondents, a facilitator in Community Theater for development program and a local team leader (R13) who had worked in the project in both phases, (one from October 2010 to February 2011 and the second and last one in the summer of 2011, from the months of May to July), narrated concerned,

I was a theater person, I have directed many plays and at that time I was the leader of Theatre group/company of the National University of Rwanda denominated Les Stars Du Theater. During this project I participated in all cooperatives in both Southern and Northern Province of Rwanda- in South: Huye and Nyamagabe (with Koakaka, Bufcoffee, and Maraba Coffee Cooperatives) and in North, in Musanze, Burera, Nyabihu and Rubavu as districts, there are many cooperatives. I don't remember names of stories but

mainly stories were about showing and resolving social and health problems.

(R13)

Drawing from the analysis, Community Theater dealt with primarily identification and solutions of problems at grass-roots level. The *socio-economic/ health problems* were related to gender-based violence, attendance in community meetings, lack of accountability and communication, learning to take problems to different levels of authority, lack of parent-to-child sex education, lack of awareness to reach out to the hospital for testing of HIV/Pregnancy and inviting Community Health Officials into home for health education, knowledge about abstinence and condom use, forgiveness and reconciliation, alcohol and drug abuse etc.

Needles were shared among members; no preventions were used during consummation, whether legal or illegal.

Coffee growers in the South and pyrethrum growers in the North were victims and as a part of value chains, affected tremendously. There was not enough secondary education, lack of opportunities, lack of value of education, lack of school fees due to low income as money was wasted in prostitution, child labor was huge as only two per family could be afforded to reach school. Yet most kids dropped out due to lack of money to pay fees. (R2)

Culturally defined *gender roles* appeared to be biased in the society. Community Theater found its way to address the challenges uprising from the gender bias. One of the international student leaders (R2) informed that the project director of the SPREAD program together with co-operative specialists, health specialists, gender specialists,

collaborated with researchers, students and staff according to the mandate given by the Government of Rwanda to expand community engagement aiming at agricultural extension work.

According to the respondent (R2) among five days of workshops on Community Theater, the community was very active from the third day and issues were discussed and heard, of which there were found to be miscommunication between age groups and gender. Men would not let women lead and would not take care of school fees and farm raise.

It was a common phenomenon that women were the ones who were almost compelled to learn proper health practices, women were the ones who must teach the children, women were responsible to use and be aware of protection, and women were the ones who must provide for the needs of the family. Men had an apathy that needed to be constantly addressed in order that gender inequality might be minimized and men began understanding and taking the lead on health practices and education.

In the Kinige cooperative we asked the groups, after they showed us a problem on sex protection that is sometimes harmful to women's health, to come up with a solution. One of the women turned to us saying, 'that problem is *impossible* to solve, I do not know where to begin'. Her statement was implying that due to men's lack of education and their unwillingness to practice these health practices, women many times suffer greatly having only a limited amount of solutions that are sometimes harmful to their health. (R2)

*Gender roles*, which are major concerns, in Rwandan culture, have limited the effects of the best health practices and need to be addressed.

### **Findings from categories set II**

According to the conceptual framework, *community theater* was the delivery strategy for communication and transference of knowledge, and was used to implement and improve categories (set II) such as *capacity building* or *community engagement*, *empowerment*, *identifying problems* or inhibitions and *implementing solutions*, which, as a result were factors established as the purpose or objectives to be achieved in the SPREAD project.

Community Theater developed several teams in the Rwandan cooperatives through *empowerment*. *Empowerment*, providing the power, authority or enabling an individual to gain self-confidence, was an aim or objective at the heart of development. It gave the people of the communities, a sense of ownership, leadership and freedom in their lives, especially in the case of Rwanda after the 1994 genocide. *Empowerment* through involving in acting and taking the stage as actors encouraged, motivated, transformed and educated the people of the cooperatives to pursue better lives, by being responsible for all actions they executed, through storytelling, publicly on stage and by understanding the impacts of their real-life behavioral problems or attitudes towards their livelihoods.

Once the individual or farmer, as an actor understood that a better life was attainable by adapting and transforming, he/she was motivated and empowered to relentlessly pursue a better livelihood. Thus, theater provided the opportunities to people

of Rwanda of realizing that they themselves had the power and ability to change their own lives and the lives of their communities. One of the international study abroad students, also the team leader and trainer (R2) with a pre-existing experience and expertise in theater and plays, mentioned, “I helped the actors realize emotions, helped in character development, forced men to take lead, speak up and raise voices. The audience comprised of not only farmers but also actors sometimes.”

The two main objectives of SPREAD were *education* and *communication*. Theater was used as a means of training, teaching adults, women and youths and was thus a mode of *education* and *communication* within the Rwandan society. Almost all of the problems could be solved through educating the community health officials by SPREAD, who in turn was expected to teach the respective communities.

The workshops essentially followed the same outline in order that there may be consistency in the outcomes as well as to compare problems/solutions between cooperatives and between provinces. The aim of SPREAD was to raise awareness about social and health problems through educating and improvising lessons on communicating effectively to solve problems at the grassroots level.

Problem abandonment, which seemed to be a basic concern in the coffee / pyrethrum cooperatives, was addressed through theater plays, which enabled communities to realize that if members avoided discussing their problems, problems will merely escalate into larger community issues, restricting and hindering the growth and development of the communities as such.

In addition, a majority of the roots or causes were assessed through *identifying problems* or inhibitions and *implementing solutions*. The major problem identified was walking away from concerns and be ignorant about the solutions due to lack of education. As a developing nation, Rwanda lacked resources for post-conflict resolution and hence, due to lack of awareness, people usually walked away from issues hoping they would disappear.

Pichanick (2011) documented that a lot of times in the skits it was observed that sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers abandoned their families because problems seemed too large to handle. The roots of this were lack of education and health awareness.

For instance, the community did not know that one could live with HIV/AIDS with proper medical attention and that it was not contagious. A majority of issues arose when they were not addressed and left for the children or affected individuals to deal with the problem. Problem abandonment was a very common theme during phase II. Overall, the foundation of all problems was due to lack of education and communication skills, culturally defined gender roles, and problem abandonment (Pichanick, 2011).

The other problems identified were health concerns and social abuse. There were interventions by issues such as HIV awareness, family planning, conflicts in schools, prostitution, etc. “These problems were not imaginary. They very much existed in the respective communities, which showed them through theater,” shared one of the local respondents (R7) a part-time trainer for the project who trained the community theater groups and provided both technical and practical support to theater groups. He also participated in preparing the fields for showcasing the performances.

Misunderstandings within family members due to misuse of income, lack of female leadership, lack of money for school fees, were major concerns. One of the sample respondents (R8) working at the Department of Performance studies at the National University of Rwanda, who used to manage artistic projects on dramaturgy, acted as a trainer in the SPREAD theater project. While training students and staff who went out to the fields and trained their farmers in dramatic ways, she showed how to use arts to identify the problems or inhibitions towards development. Her work was to supervise artistically the theater training and execution process.

One of the major problems was alcoholism. Farmers' families had alcoholic, abusive husbands corrupt with the practice of prostitution rather than concentrating on coffee growth. Hence farming was not productive. Another big challenge was having many children in one family due to lack of family planning. (R8)

The respondent (R9) a local theater trainer, in the SPREAD program, working as one of the program leaders of a team in North Rwanda, coordinated workshops and trainings in the North province. The training project mainly dealt with Community Theater being used as a delivery tool for passing on important solutions of problems, linked to less production of pyrethrum in the co-operatives. While he was teaching ways to utilize theater in summer programs and to come up with solutions through drama, he trained the farmers to act actively to come up with their problems and solutions. As a theater director, he had to come up with scripts.

In the north Rwanda, there were lack of communication and knowledge. HIV was the biggest threat as they lived on with HIV without treatments and without any prevention or care.

They complained about teen pregnancies, drug abuses and HIV within farmers, in huge numbers, slowing down coffee production. One of the plays shows a guy in mid-twenties, feeling really sick, and his whole family comes on stage for a huge concern about his pain. 'I do not feel good as I am HIV positive'- within a few seconds of hearing this, his blanket is ripped off and they push him to a corner and throw him down the stage! Hence he is abandoned and so are all those patients who need help but help is disregarded due to the feeling of HIV being contagious. The effect on the audience is huge, just unimaginable, shared respondent. (R2)

Other issues were land use, and how the president had taken the farmers' money and land. Solutions were acted out to introduce new ways of using land, solving land disputes, how to prep lands, grazing etc. Another major issue was the lack of family planning. Rwandan communities had several children in one family, not by choice but due to lack of preventive measures. This caused huge expenditure in the family for buying health insurance that proved more important over sending children to schools and paying fees.

The children in the families were sick due to lack of nutrition with only one earning member. Theater showed them to go to health centers and make proper family planning solutions- usage of protection, birth control, etc. This helped as



in large families, financial capacity was low, and no birth control were used, shared one of the local trainers. (R7)

Theater thus increased the sustainability of families, in terms of food, clothing, education, etc.; people reached out to health centers for preventive measures and treatments- HIV and family planning being extremely positively impacted.

Working to address such problems, and *implementing solutions*, through Community Theater, the farmers showed by dramatizing the effects on work due to alcoholism, family abuse, and prostitution and acted out the impacts of having so many children in a family on any farming or business activities. Theater scripts revealed ways to identify and act out their community and family problems.

The most important for the audience (comprised of women, children, youths, farmers) was to understand what they could do to move on and solve problems, to get a good life, to remove misunderstandings within the families and with the leaders or stakeholders in the community who would be resources of help for them.

We used a lot of role reversal- men acting as wives and wives acting as husbands to make them feel what each other felt. We identified and helped them identify problems such as lack of income generation, malnutrition, HIV (spread of the disease, prevention and treatment or awareness), lack of or zero family planning, etc. The main aim was transmission of messages through acting and involving everyone. (R9)

The ways of *implementing solutions* initiated with workshops training about how theater creates a forum to tell a story to the audience, reiterating this simple concept that the

stage was an empty space used to tell a personal story, problem or solution to a community where the audience could learn and benefit from their performance.

*Capacity building or community engagement* was the other category or *theme* significant to communicate to the communities at large, an area of impact of theater. Motivating the farmers and their families to attend the theater plays and actively be a part of the same was challenging. It was SPREAD's aim to make them believe that their stories could invoke change in them resulting in team building.

In post-genocide Rwanda, the cooperatives did not have tangible concepts of working as a team or working together for a common goal due to distrust, lack of confidence in others, and a traumatic history. As observed by the facilitators, in the workshops in Rwanda, due to the 1994 Genocide, many members had lost the motivation or trust to work as a team. They cared only to work for themselves and their own families attempting to take control of their lives, not trusting, or reaching out to other members of their community, as a whole, unified nation.

The goal was thus engaging communities for *capacity building* to provide an environment to openly work with self-confidence and establishing trust. The trainers would strive to teach members about unity, communication, and trust to let the members grow into a sustainable environment over time.

According to Pichanick (2011), Forum Theater, Image Theater and Open Theater were examples of types of Community Theater used to identify problems and solutions. All of these forms had been used previously in Community Theater workshops and these were used depending on the dynamic, size, and learning style of the cooperatives.

Forum Theater was originally designed by Augusto Boal, with the idea of bringing the audience into the realm of theater by requesting them to participate in a play between a protagonist and antagonist by yelling *stop* at the moment they felt was the defining moment of fate for the protagonist, after which they joined the other actors on stage to depict a different outcome than the original.

The goal was to get the audience to watch the play or problem from different perspectives and point of views to determine the best solution. In a few cooperatives the members were asked about alternate methods by which they would have changed the outcome of another group's skit and solved the problem in a different approach. It deviated into a more open discussion forum theater than Boal's original creation, but it still produced beneficial results (Pichanick, 2011).

Image Theater was used when certain cooperatives were less in number for participation and hesitated to discuss openly. Sometimes groups were limited in their voices, so action was more appropriate. There were two types of Image Theater. In the first one, the members were asked to provide a still shot of a problem. A member of the scene was asked to step away, while the others were still frozen. Another member was asked to come and create an entirely new emotion or action in contrast to the current situation.

The other members of the previous scene were thereby allowed to create a totally new scene centered on the new member's action. This process continued multiple times creating many scenes and many real life situations and problems. The scenes moved on

to an open discussion with the members, performers and the audience speaking about the problems displayed, solutions possibly used and how it applied to them.

The second form of Image Theater involved cooperative members to select any type of problem that they would like to explain using themselves and any other members. The rest were asked to create a beat with their arms, legs, or voices. As the beat progressed or a song was sung, the member with the problem began expressing it through various images and body motions with anyone he/she liked. Once completed, the community members in the audience were asked if they could tell what the problem was and how they could possibly build a solution (Pichanick, 2011).

There was only one cooperative forming a play without words and with only actions. Thus the facilitators trained about the possibility of members teaching and impacting their communities without words. The international study abroad student respondent shared, “usually groups must exhibit profound theatrical skills to convey to the audience a message without words; only one of our cooperatives had reached that theatrical level.” (R2)

According to Pichanick (2011) open theater was the type where facilitators usually would experiment with each group to tell a story about a problem they encountered in their community, they not being professionally trained in actual storytelling and script writing.

The cooperative was divided into two/ three/ four groups, and were asked to come up with a problem that was plaguing their community. After the problem was expressed in a skit, each group solved the problem of the other group, causing them to

pay attention as an audience and teaching them to work as a team for a problem they did not originally have. At the end, all groups discussed about the problems and solutions displayed during the workshop.

### **Findings from categories set III**

The goal of SPREAD was to use theater as a platform and an alternative strategy to teach proper health and social practices to the members of Rwanda. Theater allowed this platform to grow and develop within the domain of *family, community, agricultural cooperatives* and *national entities*. *Communities* and rural *agricultural cooperatives* served as actors as well as the spectators. After each group presented the facilitators with a solution, they encouraged discussions on alternate solutions and ways of looking at a particular problem.

After the budget approval process, the first four years of implementation was on agricultural extension work, followed by phase II, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> years which were dedicated to health and social problems and their solutions to make coffee growth sustainable and stable after the international reconstruction team left.

In the soft years as I call them, I lived in Butali and Kigali- two main cities and Ruhengeri. There were six *cooperatives* in the south and five in North Rwanda. Kigali was the main office. There were chief of parties and translators and drivers and of course the stars of theater at the NUR- two in the north and two in the south. There were health specialists and HIV specialists working on each *family*. Rwandans were very individualistic, stuck to the concept of *family* and hence had non-familiar relationship outside at work. (R2)

There were huge problems in the coffee-pyrethrum financial matters and payment methods, as they could not work with each other- the farmers and the *national* entities, such as the government, bank etc. In order to compliment the government strategies by *community* involvement, Theater of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal was used to refer to as the principle of Community Theater.

Members of the *community* and *agricultural cooperatives* were the ones to be educated, trained and hence formed the nucleus of the reconstruction work. As obvious from the conceptual framework of relationships, the entities within the domain of work were intricately tied and inter-related with each other. Members came to watch the theater plays of all age groups- farmers, actors, community people, men, women, kids, etc.

Theater used to be on school grounds during recess. Youths and kids, who will lead the society watched with interest. They raised hands to ask questions. Scenes were changed. Leaders of the community also watched and felt the corruption. One of Augusto Boal's principles was to stop the play, ask the audience how they will solve similar problems. (R5)

Increased coffee production and agricultural production were apparent when each *family* and *community* of farmers was healthier, sanitation was better, diseases were prevented and proper measures were taken. The audience composition was interesting- farmers, community people, women, widows, children, actors, leaders, etc.

A young mother came with a child on a sling. People stopped to watch and when they could relate the scripts, you could see how it impacted them and they

showed up again the next day. Cute school kids of the neighboring village showed up and men working around the fields were boisterous, certainly had a good time watching, asking questions. Each play was twenty minutes long and during the day, under the sun, sometimes staged in valleys, mountains, gorges and other times in school fields in the open. In the north, three kilometers from Uganda, kids from schools with vocational education appeared. Some plays were dedicated to children. A kid actor broke out into a song in my honor- was sensational. (R5)

Community Theater tied all entities of the framework as justified by the respondents and the impacts of the use of theater. All farmers were actors. All farmers were the audience as well. Women were also present along with widows, along with other female survivors of genocide, drummers, dancers who also performed. Children took part in the plays. The Rwandans reversed their roles when needed. They were themselves script writers. They were trained to choose their problems and show them the solutions through theater in their own *community* and villages. This is how Community Theater got popular and helped bring a concept of unified work ethic.

They taught us constitutional modules for how to create the theater scripts and how to present and how to form and collect groups. We learnt how to improve our scripts so that more groups are formed in the co-ops. We also learnt to prepare scripts on health topics, which were the major problems behind decreased production leading to hunger and poverty, rooting back to behavioral

problems of farmers; poor family planning- many kids and no food to feed; lack of school fees money etc. (R6)

(R6), one of the program coordinators for SPREAD, who had prior experience in worked in a private NGO, a part of the Rwanda *family* planning organization. Her role was assessing the needs to address health issues, family planning and social awareness. “In Butani, in the north lava lands, one of the issues was unavailability of clean potable water. They did not want to talk about it as they thought theirs was an advanced village.” (R5)

The farmers were the actors, sometimes the audience, and sometimes the creators of the scripts. They were not professional theater actors. Community Theater was used as a strategy for development and not for presenting a play professionally for entertainment purposes in SPREAD. There was a certain target or aim to use theater as opposed to getting entertained.

We were training them with basic lines of acting but the main idea was to access their problems that were posing a threat to sustainable development and agricultural production. We helped them identify problems such as lack of income generation, malnutrition, HIV (spread of the disease, prevention and treatment or awareness), lack of family planning, etc. The farmers were trained and in turn they showed to the audience through acting, ‘this is how things are done, this is what you do to your wife and this is how we feel...how you feel about it? How would you have felt if the same was done to you?’ (R9)



To ensure participation, the local facilitators advertised the events in the community through media, videos, posters, radio, music, etc. on the fields. People from all sectors of the domain of reconstruction, watched, listened and got to the stage (R6). The main aim of Community Theater being used as a delivery strategy was the transmission of messages through acting and involving everyone in the *family* and *community* of the *agricultural cooperatives*. With self-evaluators like the scripts in action, theater made them realize the problems and the solutions. Another major area of problem was lack of *family* planning. The farmers had huge families and did not think what they will do in the following years to come.

In the plays, trainers would tell them, "...so group yourselves...in 4 corners... one group does not want to have any child...other group wants a lot of children." They were told to think for one minute about which group they were happy to be with and after a minute, told them to move to that group. Then they were asked to disclose the reason why they chose that group. Most attendees were young people. There were big numbers of attendees- women, mixed population, farmers' families, boarding school children, uneducated farmers and individuals, etc. (R6)

The plays would base on an open stage, in the fields and the audience, comprised of *family*, *community*, *agricultural cooperative* and *national entity* members would be asked to assess the problems of both groups such as one with less or no children would end up with more income, more nutrition, more resources, etc. (R2, R9)

### **Setting the stage; Building the actors**

In Community Theater, students and staff from NUR, local NGOs, Governmental entities and international staff and students from Texas A&M University, working as facilitators, coordinated the theater related activities. Leadership was reserved by the representatives of families, communities and cooperatives, especially in educating, communicating and implementing solutions through the allocation of theater activities while members of all such entities were the audience as well as the theater actors. Particular questions and circumstances which posed as problems in the society, were the reasons there were discussions even after the plays so the community health officials might be well equipped and trained as resources of education and answers, ensuring they could continue to live a sustainable life after the teams left.

After the discussions the facilitators changed the tone of the workshops or demonstrations into a more theatrical tone rather than mere problems and solutions. The facilitators began corrections on various stage or acting errors that the members committed. As documented by Pichanick (2011), these stage errors were usually easily fixable and very elementary. “Every cooperative member had the potential to be incredible actors and actresses; they simply must be encouraged, worked with consistently, and given time to practice; however some are already terrific actors and actresses.” (R2)

All workshops essentially followed the same outline in order that there might be consistency in the expected outcomes as well as making it easier to compare problems/solutions between cooperatives and between provinces. The outline was based

on steps such as introduction, team building, problem identification/ solution building, and obstacles to solution implementation and final challenges to each purpose.

Every workshop initiated with a welcoming group prayer. Following the introduction of every member and the reasons why facilitators were meeting them, the workshops continued with various questions to determine their previous theater experience, and also to judge the willingness of each group to participate. Before the members could ponder that they had just entered into another series of uninteresting health lectures, warm-ups like running, stretching, and breathing were introduced.

The next series of actions, as described by Pichanick (2011), and one of the student trainers, respondent (R2), followed several exercises. In one called *no empty space*, at the clap of the facilitator's hands, the members began running around in a pre-defined space. They could run freely, in any direction, at any pace. The pre-defined space resembled a stage. When the facilitator shouted to stop, all members stopped at once to ensure any unoccupied space. The goal of this exercise was to learn how to utilize all parts of the stage during a skit. There were many incidents when skits were in a very small, confined space when there was a whole stage to explore.

In another game, named *action imitation*, in a circle, an actor walked to the center making a simple gesture, or action with their body. The next person in the circle imitated the previous action and created a new of his own. This game taught to focus and was entertaining for large and small groups, as it taught the usage of emotional expressions through body actions. In the *voice projection* game, members who had fear of public speaking or were introverts stood in two lines facing each other about one foot

apart; two facilitators practiced whispering in each other's ears the opposite person's name and slowly walked away from each other in opposite direction. The members then took turns shouting their partner's name. The purpose of this game was to practice proper breathing techniques when raising one's voice to several levels as well as to learn to use each level on stage (Pichanick, 2011).

In the *name game*, in order to make the community members communicate more effectively, their attention was gauged by simple questions like "Who are you, why are you here, what do you expect to gain from this experience, how do you expect to grow from meeting with us." (R2)

Its second purpose was to practice voice projection and emotional expression by saying names loud and with passion.

We explained why we were not colonized and that we were there to help them create, motivate, facilitate and not to give them spoon-fed solutions. The name game turned into a competition energetic, fun, and hilarious to watch. The name game primarily teaches familiarity with fellow cooperative members and teaches members to raise their voices to express themselves in ways they will use on stage. (R2)

With continuous exchange of problems, feedbacks and solutions, from community members, members were motivated and turned up in greater numbers in following workshops on time, and came to work hard. These steps thus produced excellent results. (R2, R5)

The facilitators helped the actors realize emotions, in character development, forced men to take lead, speak up and raise voices. The audience comprised of not only farmers but also professional actors sometimes. Older men played young women, women played donkeys and hence they taught role reversal techniques as well. Malnutrition was because of low income, low socio-economic conditions, which formed a lot of the scripts. Before and after the members assessed the impacts and ways to improve enactment of plots. Most actors, farmers on site were not trained and did not use full voices. Training sessions were needed from a new set of eyes judging them.

There were beautiful gorges where they performed. We assessed a lot of needs to improve their acting and reaching out to people, engaging people. It was a sensational experience and a valuable piece of work. I improved on their performance techniques, mostly on the principles by Augusto Boal. We helped them engage the audience and changed the script writing patterns- let more audience feedbacks within dialogues- stopping actors and asking questions to audience about their feedbacks. (R5)

The respondent (R5) who trained farmers formed a part of SPREAD international team. The facilitators helped them realize speaking to the audience was the key to engage and make the community aware of its shortcomings and the solutions.

The identification of problems and projecting solutions through theater followed several steps while training and in building the actors through multiple workshops, as documented in Pichanick (2011).

The most common training imparted to the members was to position their whole body to the audience to tell the full story, mainly to avoid their backs to the audience causing their voices to decrease, making it difficult for the audience to understand. Showing them the difference between a real-life and a stage conversation was useful.

They were trained to tell the story, projecting their voices, to make them aware that the story was not for the other actors on stage, rather to address their fellow community members. They were trained to limit open stages using rocks, clothing, wood, etc. without which it was disorganized and difficult to hold multiple scenes, multiple actors, and multiple audience members (Pichanick, 2011).

They were also trained to work in groups using the whole stage, establishing fraternal connections and to avoid squeezing tightly together to fit multiple scenes that could be spaced out. During monologues it was taught to explore the stage and talk to the audience. They were trained by facilitators to portray on their faces emotions related to the actions on stage, so that the audience would feel the same. They were taught to act out a story containing fear, grief, anger, mirth, etc., through their facial expressions and body language, for the audience to grasp and be touched or transformed (Pichanick, 2011).

The best examples were international facilitators, who did not speak Kinyarwanda (Rwandan language), could understand the messages without a translator because the members exhibited their stories through proper emotional expression. (R2) Trainings were also provided to get rid of the fear of public speaking, lack of confidence of facing the audience; to manage multiple scenes occurring at the same time while

multiple, simultaneous conversations overlapped with one another; to imitate real life in skits as realistically and convincingly as possible. For example: if a father, fed up with his family's situation, was leaving to go out, it was not expected for him to immediately return within the same scene.

Community Theater's goal was to reflect the concerns as realistically as possible to ensure the audience applying the lesson to their lives. Open Theater in Community Theater was to teach proper health practices to the audience to create a structured learning environment for the audience. Facilitators asked a member of the cooperative to introduce their problem/solution/story to the audience through the play. At the end of the skit, so that the audience completely grasped the problem, the member concluded by telling the audience what message the cooperative wanted to portray during that session (Pichanick, 2011).

Building the stage and forming the actors were thus conducive to an interesting and effective learning environment and formed the basis of structured training and workshops formulated for the project.

### **Scripts in action**

Scripts formed the basis of messages conveyed through theater. The formation, writing and enactment of scripts were very important and worked on by facilitators to make them stronger, detailed, impactful and realistic. One of the Community Theater trainers of a pyrethrum cooperative at Nyabihu and Rubavu districts in Northern Rwanda, (R10), shared the technique of Les stars du Theater, the theater company associated with SPREAD, where during rehearsals the director gave them topics so that they could develop them and make a play of five minutes, and that the play was to be appealing, clear and emotional.

I was acting in scripts showing the period of 1994 Genocide commemoration. I and my husband were genocide perpetrators and we adopted a young girl who called Karara, her family was killed by my husband and my husband uses the farm of Karara for our benefits, I hated that girl until I tell her to abandon the school and become baby-sitter of my kids. Another was a theater called Ijigija Ryigize Ashwi, about National University of Rwanda (NUR) daily life. I was a mother of two kids and my husband was a teacher in primary school and one day I get the scholarship and I go to study in NUR. After getting there I haven't returned back home and I enjoyed life with a football player until I get pregnant and he rejects me. When I go back home my kids hated me so much, and my husband put me out of the house. (R10)

According to (R10), a local respondent who served as an actor in SPREAD, Les Stars du Theater played the reality, following a Rwandan principle of life- Guhanura (to



make things clear so that people could change their bad habits). Days three, four and five of phase II, were action days. The stage was set with rocks. “They were directed to put up stories, bent on their problems rather than solutions. Men played women and women played men. It was hilarious and at the same time giving the correct messages to the community.” (R2) There were interesting plots, storylines and characters. Some had previous experience of acting and some were students of theater department of NUR.

The audience played a crucial role in Community Theater while both the audience and the actors worked together to identify and solve their own problems by showing the mistake and its consequences. “As a director or a coach, I was looking at the mistakes and conveying messages of my actors for an impact on the audience. I was a trainer to help the planters to have their own creativity based on what they know in their daily life,” stated one of the local respondents (R11), a student at the National University of Rwanda (NUR), involved in its theater troupe, and worked in SPREAD because of a partnership within NUR and the troupe.

During this project, scripts were developed around issues on gender based violence, accountability, communication, conveying a problem to different levels of authority, parent-to-child sex education, testing of HIV/pregnancy and solving problems at grass-roots level. Solutions ranged from inviting community health officials into home for health education, maintaining abstinence, forgiveness and reconciliation, to preventing alcohol and drug abuse.

“Their plays help me to identify problems that they have in their community. In normal life it is difficult to know someone’s problems because of silence that

characterizes many Rwandans but using Community Theater they came to speak out,” (R13) explained one of the team facilitators, who participated in all cooperatives in both Southern (Huye, Nyamagabe with Koakaka, Bufcoffee and Maraba coffee cooperatives) and in Northern (Musanze, Burera, Nyabihu and Rubavu) Rwanda.

Scripts came into action keeping in mind certain aims or purposes to be fulfilled by SPREAD project expectations. Scripts were centered on the problems or concerns of health and social welfare identified and implementing or figuring out the solutions to transform the communities of the agricultural cooperatives. Scripts, rather than entertaining, mainly aimed at educating, communicating and compelling the audience, actors and facilitators and every individual associated with the reconstruction of post-genocide Rwanda, to not abandon problems but address them with confidence, trust and integrity. This section brings forth examples of such scripts acted out to express a picture of reality and to move the readers towards a direction of understanding the basis and procedures of reconstruction improvised by SPREAD Community Theater.

Multiple skits were on families who were uneducated on how to treat diseases, unprotected sex prevention, drug abuse and HIV, which were slowing down coffee/pyrethrum production. Many farmers went to witch doctors and magicians instead of hospitals. Many husbands in families believed that diseases were temporary and sick family members ended up not being hospitalized. One of the stories in a cooperative was centered on the spread of a disease, the effects of which the farmers did not understand.

They thought witches did it, due to lack of knowledge and education. It was actually a disease called Kwashiorkw, caused due to malnutrition. It was because of

ignorance that they were trying to go to witches for the solution. One of the health program leaders of the cooperative complained that when he reached out to them explaining what it was actually, they attacked him thinking he was the witch.

He told them, ‘...let me show you...give me two months...give me two children who are victims...let me show you the medicine’. So he was given two children and food and after two months of continuous feeding and treatments, the children were better. This was shown in the theater to other community members and hence that problem was removed. (R9)

In the play they would act, stop to ask questions. The play showed to prepare food and acted out to feed children. “Then they asked to the audience, ‘...do you think you can do something better than these actors?’ Immediately there was voluntary acting through which they would act and learn.” (R9)

Most of the teen pregnancy/ HIV problems arose from lack of parent-to-child education. In almost all family planning skits, the husband and/or wife was uneducated on family planning practices and left the offspring without provision or protection. When a son/ daughter became affected with HIV/AIDS, the family most of the times would abandon the issue, leaving or discarding the family member. Many skits depicted children afraid to tell their parents about their situation, sometimes lying about their disease, in order to prevent the parents from leaving them. A student intern (R2) shared what he witnessed.

One of the plays shows a guy in mid-twenties- feeling really sick, and his whole family comes on stage for a huge concern about his pain. He says, ‘I do not feel

good as I am HIV positive'. Within a few seconds of hearing this, his blanket is ripped off and they push him to a corner and throw him down the stage! Hence he is abandoned and so are all those patients who need help but help is disregarded due to the feeling of HIV being contagious. (R2)

Most of the problems listed above could be solved with proper communication and teaching skills. The concept of SPREAD phase II of the project was to deliver proper health practices and social awareness in addition to increasing agricultural production, instead of only listening to follow-ups and trainings. The SPREAD facilitators and in turn the Rwandan members were responsible for *teaching* and working as a community to *communicate* effectively, thereby educating the entire community and not just themselves. There were numerous skits that depicted multiple problems about alcoholism, creeping into prostitution, family abuse and problem abandonment.

“One script showed, in the cooperative of Cyanika, that the problems escalated so quickly that other neighbors had to adopt and take care of a family’s children because their parents abandoned them.” (R2)

Lack of problem-solving skills and alcoholism were at the heart of many such issues. Alcoholism prevented development and growth in a family and community. There was another story of a family where the husband and wife were suffering from not understanding each other.

The children were supporting them separately- boys supported the father as they will go out to drinking and after getting back home, they would beat the other kids and the wife. Only one kid went to school in that family as all the money

earned from agricultural plantations was spent in drinking and prostitution. Such a theater was being played in the radio with the message that everything must go back to the family. Hearing this, one farmer told ‘I saw a similar family like mine!’ (R9)

Thus they went to get help in the health centers and learnt from the plays, how to save money, how to use their logic and feelings to help each other in the family. The message was that if they had little, which was not the problem; the problem was how and where it was spent. Another script was about land disputes, about land laws, which showed, a farmer taking his neighbor, infringing on his farm-land, to the local police and the police had been bribed and there was no other form of accountability and authority. The solution showed that they had to get rid of the root problems, which were lack of proper communication and proper problem-solving skills (Pichanick, 2011).

Yet another interesting script was the impact of lack of resources to pay school fees. The root problem was lack of self-control and family planning on the part of the earning member and not an actual lack of money. A script showed the story of a girl who studied at NUR but she never studied.

One day during the exam she cheats on the class representative paper and NUR throws her out; when she went back home, she looked back at NUR and she said at herself, ‘is that Harvard?’, chuckled the woman who studied at NUR and rejected her husband and kids.” (R10)

## **Games for purpose**

The strength of the SPREAD Community Theater project lay a solid foundation for ensuring future participation in theater, by setting definite purposes such as team or capacity building, empowerment and problem solutions by encouraging more attendance attracting the communities and agricultural cooperatives into fun-filled, exciting games. These were games designed to attain SPREAD objectives, which arose from the awareness during the reconstruction work to improve agribusiness and agricultural production in phase I, when SPREAD needs assessment revealed that problems or hindrances towards betterment were rooted to social and health awareness problems, more than actual lack of agricultural resources. So games and techniques were used to ensure participation in phase II.

For instance, after identifying problems on team building in their respective cooperatives, some team building games were introduced to show ways they could work in teams (R13). Facilitators educated the farmers and were well accepted in the communities for which the attendance at the games turned out to be successful (R6). According to the student intern (R2) within the first two weeks of phase II, farmers were not focused, lacked motivation, following which, five day camps, fifteen to twenty in number, were set up in nine co-operatives. Diverse age groups, elders, youths, kids showed up. It was a cross-generational study setting to identify community problems according to the principles of Augusto Boal's work in Greece. Name games were used to help them create, motivate, facilitate yet not to give them solutions.

The next day was aimed thus at team building. Five to six teams were set to create trust and dependability. There was increased attendance out of guilt or mainly curiosity. The community was active that day; issues were discussed of which there were found to be miscommunications between age groups and gender. Men would not let women lead; women took care of school fees and farm. The fourth and fifth were theater days. There were visible increases in number of attendees in all co-ops. I led them to the improvement of writing clearer scripts to express issues better. We helped them realize importance of vocal projection and how intensity of voices can make more impacts of those watching; performance aspects to make them look and sound better. (R2)

Some of the games designed, as documented in Pichanick (2011), were:

(a) flipping a blanket- six to eight people were requested to stand on a blanket or any flat, flexible material, where the blanket was laid in the center of the circle. They flipped the blanket over so that the entire group using any ways would end up standing on the opposite side of the blanket, without stepping on the floor. After success, facilitators increased the number of people on the blanket

In order to enhance the team building experience and to address biased cultural/gender roles, all the women on the blanket were asked to close their eyes, to teach the men to lead and help the women to accomplish the task. This closed eyes symbolized the weak or special needs, who needed help from community members to accomplish the task. The game taught unity, communication, and to establish relationships;

(b) knot formation- the members were requested to stand in a very tight circle with each other and hold the opposite person's hands. The goal for the members was to untangle to reach a continuous circle without letting go of anyone's hands. To achieve this, members often stepped over members, twisted bodies in different ways, to form a complete circle. The competitive aspect between men vs. women, youngsters vs. elders, etc. encouraged unity, communication, and entertainment, teaching members to look at the problems differently, yielding beneficial results (Pichanick, 2011).

The facilitators witnessed improvement and could identify individuals with potential leadership characteristics in the group. For instance, the winner group was allowed to perform a play on any subject of their choice- love, drama, action, fear, comedy, dance, etc. The group falling behind performed a skit on a topic chosen by the facilitators, keeping in mind to address sections they were weak at (Pichanick, 2011);

(c) fall in trust- this game taught to establish trust and dependability between members. In order to solve magnanimous problems, the members learnt to trust and fall on their communities for support. A window ledge, truck bed, or a similar elevated structure, no more than five feet, was chosen.

Facilitators then asked the members to form two lines facing each other next to the edge of the elevated structure, no more than two feet apart. They then held on to the outstretched arms of the person opposite, usually holding firm the forearms of the person opposite to them, to form a flat bed of arms. A facilitator prepared himself on the edge, and said, "I trust you," and falls (Pichanick, 2011).



It was for the members to ensure to keep their arms closed across their chest to prevent injury to other members when they fall. Results showed that some who did not completely trust their community bent their legs before they fell attempting to protect themselves. Out of the nine cooperatives, only one dropped a facilitator (Pichanick, 2011) etc.

### **Summary**

The significance of setting the stage, building the actors and introducing these games was the achievement of the peaceful and developed state of being involved and engaged. As learning outcomes, farmers were open in judgment and decision-making or problem solving, ready to talk about problems in their communities and began thinking about a self-sustainable yet cooperative environment.

Farmers started a concept of unified pattern of thinking, an independent attitude and working towards identification and solution of problems in their own lives and finally learnt to think about how to share those problems in the form of a story on stage to communicate and connect throughout the nation.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative, unique case study was to explore and describe the perceptions of purposively sampled International agricultural development workers who had experienced using performance-based arts as a delivery method in agricultural development in Rwanda.

More specifically, the aim of this case study was to present a holistic, descriptive narrative on the needs assessment, research paradigms and impacts of using Community Theater, a performance-based art, as perceived by the case study respondents. The case study explores the use of Community Theater as a delivery strategy for communication, education and development to eradicate health and social constraints, for resolving related issues posing a threat to the net agricultural production of the co-operatives during the phase II of the SPREAD project, thereby attempting to helping the people of Rwanda attain agriculturally self-sustainable and healthy livelihoods within the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum co-operatives.

To accomplish this purpose, the guiding set of research questions in the Rwandan case study were sought as:

1. Research question I: what were the needs, procedures and impacts of using performance-based artistic strategy in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum communities?

2. Research question II: what type of arts-based research techniques did they use?

3. Research question III: what were the perceptions of the farmers, communities and international development workers on the impacts of their strategies and which were the fields of application of the strategy?

4. Research question IV: what were the perceptions of the respondents on using performance-based arts as a research method or a data dissemination method?

Figure 3 represents the horizontal process of thinking, assessing and analyzing the perceptions of the SPREAD project case study respondents on the impacts of Community Theater on local farmers' families, communities and agricultural cooperatives of Rwanda.

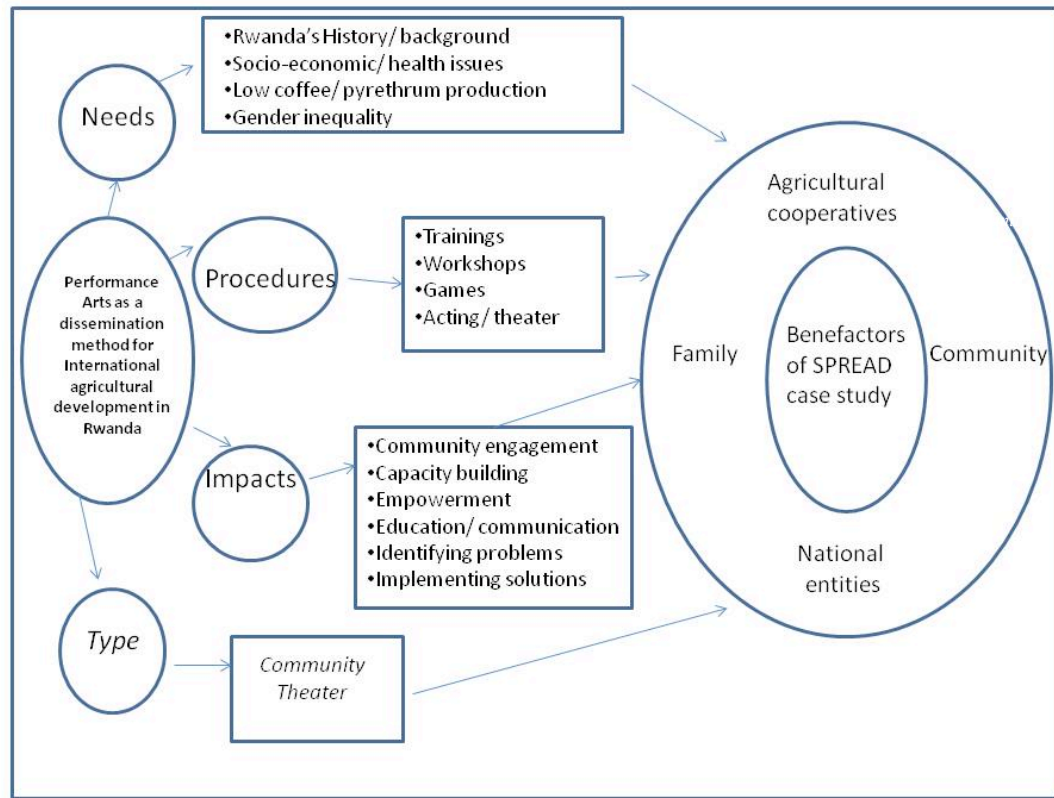


Figure 3. Summary of the themes, strategies and analysis of SPREAD project case study to explore the perceptions of the SPREAD project respondents on using Community Theater as a delivery tool for International agricultural development in Rwanda.

A qualitative case study design explored the needs, procedures and impacts in the SPREAD project phase II, of using Community Theater as a performance-based strategy for educating and communicating within the Rwandan coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives. A purposive sample of respondents, using the process of snowballing, was selected based on the criterion of using Community Theater, a performance-based artistic strategy for international agricultural development in Rwanda.

Open-ended, semi-structured interviews were conducted through telephone, electronic emails and face-to-face means. Data collected were transcribed using open coding and categorized into themes using highlighting method and constant comparison. Data was further analyzed by inductive method using researcher's perspectives, the archival Annual Report, (2012-2013) and Pichanick (2011). Using multiple of sources of data and member checking, triangulation was ensured.

The findings from the rich data analyzed (see Figure 3), revealed that *Community Theater*, used in the SPREAD project as a delivery strategy, aimed at communication, transference of knowledge and important messages, concerning health and social problems amongst the Rwandan farmers, their *families* and the *communities* associated with the *agricultural cooperatives*. Community Theater was found to be successful in implementing and improving categories such as *capacity building* or *community engagement, empowerment, education and communication*, and *identifying problems and implementing solutions*, which, incidentally were factors predetermined as the purpose or objectives to be achieved in the SPREAD project.

The need for reconstruction and development for increasing sustainability and agricultural production for the betterment of the *national entities* as a whole, traced back to the post-genocidal aftermaths of the traumatic *Rwandan history or background*, culturally biased *gender/ roles*, decreased or non-sustainable *coffee and pyrethrum production* and critical *socio-economic/ health issues*. Community Theater development program helped to address all these categories as pre-existing, powerful factors, which modulated and regulated Rwandan livelihoods.

Connected with the systems, planning and infrastructure of factors associated with the origin or causes of crisis, socio-political unrest, non-governance, lack of agribusiness and production, lack of education, so on and so forth, the domain of work implementation, which represented the different segments of Rwandan society, involved in this case study- *family, community, agricultural co-operatives* and *national entities*, were found to be directly impacted by the use of Community Theater, especially the fact that performance-based strategy was used over traditional methods of lectures, demonstrations or meetings.

As perceived by the respondents, entitlement, encouragement through acting and understanding the actions were observed as impacts, which were important means of achieving the objectives of SPREAD. Taking into consideration the fact that these members, most of their lives, had been titled farmers, through the SPREAD theater project, had now become leaders or actors. Rewarding and empowering them with the title of a leader was very significant which established and infused in them a sense of responsibility, accountability, dependability and obligation to lead their communities in the right path.

The theater scripts succeeded at producing the strongest emotional expressions, teaching the most advanced stage techniques, exploring the most effective and representative plot summaries, and inducing a realistic scale of improvement in building trust and relationships amongst the Rwandans. The theater or plays were extremely beneficial for the facilitators, to provide and gain experience and field work expertise (in case of international respondents). As shared by respondents, they trained and

empowered future potential facilitators (local respondents), as well as farmers and the community members to identify, solve and move on with concerns of the socio-economic and agricultural infrastructure of Rwanda.

The domain of reconstruction- families, communities, cooperatives and national entities portrayed a huge potential for facing and overcoming challenges inhibiting growth, development, and agricultural production through continued rectifications, compassion, artistic strategies by continuing to apply theater and to teach and effect change within and outside their domain. Conclusions about using performance arts for international agricultural development in Rwanda were drawn as shown in Figure 3.

### **Conclusions to research question I**

#### *Needs*

The SPREAD project aimed at helping Rwandans to increase farmer incomes and uplift the overall standard of living through development of value chain. The main SPREAD program objectives aimed at off-farm development, market linkages, capacity building in management, quality control and improvement, better marketing of products, coffee and pyrethrum research and production, access to credit, and health awareness.

The Dean of the National University of Rwanda was the project director of SPREAD program, and together with co-operative specialists, health specialists, and gender specialists, collaborated with researchers, students and staff of the Texas A&M University according to the mandate given by the government of Rwanda, to expand community engagement aiming at agricultural extension work (R2). The fourth and fifth years of SPREAD were when the Community Theater project came into play and seek

active participation from the respondents of this study (unit of analysis) and the Rwandan farmers and communities. After the budget approval process of USAID, the first four years of implementation were based on agricultural extension and agribusiness development. The fourth and fifth years were dedicated to health and social problems and their solutions to make coffee growth sustainable and stable.

The initial projects in phase I (the first three years of SPREAD) was to generate income and improve quality of coffee as every farmer grew coffee trees. The projects were also to remove poverty, increase livelihoods, and assess the agricultural value chain and improve professional components, which linked production to market (R3). USAID started the SPREAD project to enlarge the footprint of international agricultural development in Africa.

I was chosen to visit Rwanda for the first time in summer of 2010. I still remember the meetings at NUR- monkeys were all over the campus! We assessed the needs for Community Theater. With expertise on theater projects, I was chosen as one of the team leaders to work on this project. We looked at different theater companies already existing in Rwanda. (R5)

Post-genocide, small scale farmers in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum fields built cooperatives and were open to organize themselves to attain better access, improved coordination, and manage enormous lands, since a single farmer was struggling for ensuring agricultural production. Yet, there was need for capacity building, learning to work with each other and a lot of hindrances towards sustainable development due to lack of education and communication within Rwandans.



The SPREAD project was initially for promoting agricultural production, technology and extension; mainly coffee and pyrethrum. Later problems arose that were the roots of the decrease in coffee production or loss of capacity building. Hence came in the necessity of eradicating such social issues in the community. The SPREAD project's extended work was on communicating to the farmers or coffee growers through drama or Community Theater with an aim to eradicate social issues, which were causes for decrease in agricultural production.

Some projects within the first three years of SPREAD looked into aspects of transformation of agricultural products to make them sellable like avocado oil, etc., towards promoting entrepreneurship through supporting and growing value chains, towards setting up small scale business from cooperatives to grow logistical access to markets and connect to buyers, helping to professionalize a company owning multiple cooperatives (formed by the farmers themselves). The projects also worked towards formation of potential cooperatives.

While developing these initial projects, funding was dispersed towards health programs to implement health related solutions, since health and socio-economic issues were identified during phase I, as factors affecting the lives of farmers and coffee/pyrethrum growth (R3). Figure 3 helps to model the needs of using Community Theater for development according to the perceptions of respondents of this study, tracing back to the traumatic *Rwandan history or background*, culturally biased *gender inequality* or roles, decreased or non-sustainable *coffee and pyrethrum production* and critical *socio-economic/ health issues*.

Lack of healthy living conditions implied decreasing income and agricultural production leading to lack of basic nutrition. Hence there was an inherent need to incorporate health issues and solutions and couple the health program with the agricultural development programs with the help of resources provided by local NGOs, NUR and the Government of Rwanda.

The needs assessment called for a delivery strategy which fitted into the category of being familiar, commonly used, easily communicating, appealing and established as a universal language reaching out to diverse populations of Rwandans was to be chosen as a method of educating, communicating and empowering the Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives. Hence the Community Theater, a performance-based artistic strategy was selected as Radio life and theater were common in Rwanda and already been used by various groups previously (R5).

### **Type of arts-based delivery**

#### *Why Community Theater*

There were radio shows and drama broadcasting already pre-existing in Rwanda, through Radio Life and Rwandans, being very art-loving, could potentially and very intimately get involved through theater. Theater was a performance-based artistic strategy and hence had an audio-visual effect, which engaged everyone- actors, audience, and spaces around, resources around. Theater was a mode of active participation and communication, lively and funny at times. People related to the actions, stories, and scripts and reacted back. Community Theater proved to be the most

optimized solution to acquire the attention of the domain of farmers, families, communities, cooperatives and national entities needed and targeted (R5).

Theater was a pre-existing effective communication tool and enriched the experiences of the audience and actors and every individual associated with it. Community Theater was obviously effective in teaching farmers with actions, with what they could witness with their own eyes- the body part which a human being trusts the most, cognitively and consciously (R6). Theater helped to enact a life problem and speak it, taught an individual to share each other's problems. One was compelled to be concerned with a problem of another individual, being acted out, even if the same problem might be absent in his or her life. This was a strategy to bring the community together, through which people could relate easily to incidents in their own lives and their effects of those problems affecting their families and in turn, the community.

### **Procedures**

Figure 3 integrates the procedures of implementing the Community Theater program into SPREAD through *trainings, games, workshops* and *theater* or *acting*. Implementation began by explaining the members how theater created a forum to tell a story to the audience. A large part of the *workshops* were used to reiterate the concept that the stage was an empty space used to share or act out a personal story, problem or solution to a community. *Theater* or plays were means by which the audience were educated and benefitted from the performances. As documented by the Annual Report, 2012-2013, the facilitators of SPREAD motivated the members to believe that their stories had the potential to invoke transformation in their communities, following which

they willfully initiated acting out their stories, revealing some of the most crucial problems of their community.

Problems were chosen after discussions. A lot of concerns leading to decrease agricultural production and sustainable development were found to be issues of HIV, lack of family planning, lack of education about healing diseases, reaching out to hospitals, vaccination, needles shared, no preventions used during consummation, whether legal or illegal, alcoholism and its dreadful effects. “Coffee growers in the south and pyrethrum growers in the north were victims and as a part of value chains, affected tremendously.” (R2)

There was not enough secondary education, lack of opportunities, lack of value of education, lack of school fees due to low income as money was wasted in prostitution, huge child labor as only two per family could be afforded to reach school. Yet most kids dropped out due to lack of money to pay fees.

After discussions, the facilitators changed the tone of the workshop into a more theatrical tone rather than a discussion of problems and solutions. The facilitators began correction of various stage errors that the members commit. These stage errors are usually easily fixable and very elementary. Every single one of the members of the cooperatives had the potential to be incredible actors and actresses if encouraged, worked with consistently, and given time to practice.

Corrections were mainly based on: body positioning, voice projection, formation of a stage, use of entire stage, roles of those farmers offstage/entrance to stage,

emotional expression, shuffling-feet syndrome, practicality, presenting/concluding the play.

The implementation initiated with community meetings to assess the conditions at the farms within the cooperatives, while some drying technologies at a central location in town were going on, where the health staff got trained (R2). They helped in turn to train actors as peer educators to deliver information, instructing solutions such as disease prevention mechanisms, use of preventive measures, etc. “Interesting fact was that men and women chuckled,” (R3) yet, targeted information was passed on through theater. The community became much aware of the problems and the solutions were actually followed by them. “Women started bringing sick children to health clinics, men with HIV got tested and most were buying preventive measures to avoid HIV. Yet a lot more awareness and continued impact assessment is necessary.” (R3)

The most important learning outcome of the procedures of using Community Theater on the society through trainings, games, workshops and theater scripts, was to face, improve and overcome the challenges that echoed with all performances. The workshops instilled confidence, reminded the members of the lessons learned, empowered them to achieve more, unified families, communities and cooperatives to work hand in hand, and challenged them to retain and sustain their reconstructed strategies in future.

Emphasizing to these members and convincing them that the results or outcomes of their work through theater possessed the potential to change and impact their lives at large, was one of the objectives of the project. Workshops and theater taught them to

believe that their abilities, leadership and commitment could effect change in their communities. It was significant for them to realize the need for continuing Community Theater even after the facilitators were gone, and be self-sustainable, and take charge to be the ultimate teachers or change agents.

### **Impacts**

The direct impacts of Community Theater, as modeled in Figure 3, were in the fields of as *capacity building* or *community engagement, empowerment, education and communication, and identifying problems and implementing solutions*. Community Theater had direct impact on curriculum, students' interest to hold theater stages in the community for social awareness, community engagement, so on and so forth through this project. After evaluating the effects of Community Theater by measuring increase in capacity, attendees, awareness in the community, we would like to continue the process of training and executing theater.

I think people relate their personal lives with the scripts and also while learning and becoming aware to implement solutions, people need to add events to enjoy, which can only be done through performance, or theater, which is lacking in traditional methods. They do not touch the hearts. (R6)

Theater in Rwanda improved agricultural research, extension and education and helped in creating or establishing a connection between these. Distribution channels were developed through theater. Isolated women also got involved and engaged. Radio equipment cost for delivery systems was cut down. It was fun and entertaining at the same time. So youths, women, farmers used this strategy as the approach was very

innovative, free, open, welcoming and non-expensive as well as expressive. Messages about drinking, hygiene, sanitation, unprotected sex, health services offered in clinics, capacity of mobile testing for HIV confidentially etc. were depicted through community theatre. “Community Theater showed how to repay loans; if it is a cooperative, then how to request loans from bank, how and why to plant crops in time, etc.” (R3)

They were losing potential, capacity and production due to behavioral problems. Theater restored all. The farmers are active in attention to trainings as they could see how they can be connected to survive better. Theater scripts succeeded at teaching members to be patient and address one problem at a time, usually the most epidemic problem, as it was observed in subsequent plays how effectively farmers were able to communicate their problems with lucidity (R2). Theater and plays stimulated their creativity and enhanced the levels of conversation outside their frame of family, thus improving the conditions of their livelihoods.

Theater enabled the members to learn to address the root of their problems and display that on stage. Encouragement and confidence building were simultaneously achieved by substantially using theater to resolve a multitude of problems. The goal of the SPREAD project phase II was achieved by making the coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives sustainable in their theatrical skills, performances leading to problem-solving and increased agricultural production.

Community Theater specifically was successful due to the fact that inherently and fundamentally it was based on, but not limited to simple entertainment. Pichanick (2011), accounted for joy, laughter, and smiles flowing limitlessly each day in the

workshops, trainings, games and plays in the community and on a larger scale, the Community Theater development aiming for each cooperative to create and form a theater company within their respective villages.

Results showed consistent sustainability developing in these cooperatives and members striving to *consistently* put up plays to teach their community members in their timely health meetings. Community Theater also produced creativity, allowing the actor or farmer to think outside of the box contemplating different solutions and alternatives to their current problem. It brought together many communities involving diverse age, gender, culture, under one setting for the cause of development and improved livelihoods, for reduced conflict and eventual strengthening of Rwandan nation.

### **Conclusions to research question II**

Community Theater was used as the performance-based artistic methodology for identifying and solving topics or issues in the community hampering or inhibiting growth, development and agricultural production in the coffee and pyrethrum cooperatives. This was an innovative strategy and a much more active, successful one. “How performers developed dialogues, scripts, and how they engaged the community proved valuable for them in real life and hence the use of such strategy over other scientific ones.” (R2)

Adults could relate to actions in the theater much easily than patiently listening to lectures/demonstrations. Theater was chosen as the delivery tool to model behaviors of the farmers and the people from the cooperatives by choosing topics of problems in the Rwandan community.



Gradually radio drama broadcasting with scripts were developed by facilitators to engage variety of people, from a pre-existing radio station with facilities to extend out agricultural extension information following which leaders and actors emerged out of the cooperatives after training and workshops. “Till date theater is continuing and there were programs to call in the experts as well to explore community theater impacts and outcomes. Awards went out to best acting groups for incentives.” (R3)

Scripts emerged out of issues at particular locations. Impacts were after seeing positive or negative behaviors modeled. People who wanted to project important information suddenly wanted to engage in Community Theater. Thus theater succeeded in capacity building and engagement and provided a feeling that they were respected and recognized by individuals of the community.

This project was primarily ended in June 2012. NGOs had representation towards community. There were sensitizing messages, examples had been set through theater and success of methodology was documented (field report archival data). Theatre engaged everyone- actors, audience, spaces around, and resources around. Theater was a mode of communication, which was lively, funny at times. People related to the actions, stories, and scripts and reacted back. Theater or arts-based research was the best way to get the attention of everyone needed, targeted.

Community Theater scripts or depictions consisted of the constraints, identifying the problems and were used to convey feasible solutions to be considered and undertaken by the audience and actors. Scripts were built developing positive/negative characters aiming towards character transformation and development working from the

level of one's conscience, using dialogue about such problems, speaking lines about how to execute a certain piece of work in the correct way and what is its potential outcome. "For instance, 'you did not plant in time so coffee production is less; look at my coffee plants- they are protected and bug free; I go to the Agricultural fair and know whom to talk to', etc.'" (R3)

The application of theater in the project faced a lot of obstacles during the process of solution implementation. Starting to deal with problems that had multiple variables, problems that grew out of each family, more intrinsic, more complicated, was a challenge for facilitators as often, community members attempted to solve these problems at once in their own time frame, due to lack of education and farsightedness. Many problems took days, months, and even years to get resolved; many problems members were deep-rooted and would not see results immediately. In the South, for example, the members were asked to jot down on slips of paper, their greatest problem on one side and their dream on the other. This exercise helped SPREAD to assess what needed to be addressed (Pichanick, 2011).

### **Conclusions to research question III**

The perceptions of the SPREAD Community Theater program respondents (from data collection) coupled with the perceptions of shared feedback (from archival documents) from impacted farmers, communities and cooperatives were twofold- one directing at the positive aspects of using theater as a performance-based artistic communication strategy and the other pointing towards the negative aspects of the same with respect to the fields of impacts shared by them. Findings revealed that the

Community Theater program implementation and impacts faced a lot of challenges to establish trust and to build dependable relationships, as the Rwandan farming communities were very reserved, confined and restricted, owing to their traumatic history.

In 1994 the government initiated post-conflict reconstruction efforts and disaster management practices. Hence with the initiation by USAID, active and consistent contribution from the national entity such as the government was achieved. One of the international student interns (R2) trained the Rwandans as a facilitator.

A development worker, who was a young girl, had twelve family members before genocide...it went down to five due to the devastating effects- nothing like Kenya, Uganda, Nairobi. There was not a single moment when I felt safe. The challenge of theater use was to make people realize why we were there...to provide incentives to come out of mere history and actively work. (R2)

Another significant aspect of using Community Theater and assessing its impacts was that, since art-based strategy use was innovative and dormant, there were no proper measures or an evaluation strategy to quantitatively measure the impacts, although qualitatively, the achievements were very apparent and significant. Post-project impact assessment strategies, in case of Rwandan SPREAD project were definitely needed to ensure long-term effects of using theater/dance/music and for retention of learning. “This is why we do it, us the stake holders or purposive gatekeepers. This is how it is perceived- if I am the player. This is how we solve it- audience perspective,” (R5) explained the several roles and perspectives in which theater played its impacts.

The positive impacts as witnessed by the respondents, facilitators and farmers were that the government intervention was significantly high, farmer attendance and participation of community increased, trust and the accepting nature of people improved. There was a lot of feedback from the audience- the whole farming community.

We laughed at scripts, applauded when we loved it! Men played women and the role reversal techniques impacted a lot of families. I watched two plays in the north and one in the south besides training them. A woman, who had to go see a prostitute, played a drunken husband and a muscular young man played his wife. It was hilarious! Audience just burst into laughter besides getting the message of how this was a problem in behavior. (R5)

The scripts thus empowered women actors. It was a social benefit to the culturally biased gender issues present.

The second play was very weak. The actors did not engage the audience. The actors stood in a closed circle; no rocking humor and this was my work in progress to improve their performance so that they could get the targeted messages well through the minds of the farmers...a young man was trying to get away from the family. The issue was an abusive father and a strong mother, drinking issues, health issues, spousal abuse issues, STD from prostitution for not using proper preventive measures. (R5)

Introducing Community Theater to farmers was one of greatest ideas that SPREAD introduced into its project strategies. Seemingly maintained better health conditions guaranteed better agricultural production and increased income, as production

from farming was only possible when they were healthy (R13). Women, children, sick youths, addicted and affected farmers were observed to attend hospitals, use sanitized needles, treat ailments rather than consult magicians or witch-doctors, so on and so forth (R2).

An interesting and positive perception towards Community Theater was that on one hand, community theater practice was perceived as an entertainment for the farmers, local communities, women and children at the initial stages, yet on the other hand, the embedded aim of theater being used solely for development, educational and communicative purposes was evident. Hence, it helped bringing everyone together- the whole community and messages were transferred to educate at the same time.

Apparently each workshop the number of farmers or individuals attending grew and thus, all aims of using theater- entertainment, socialization, sharing information, were achieved (R12). However, in many plays, when they portrayed a negative character, individuals were embarrassed and theater made them feel guilty of their unwanted habits or behavior, which often turned out to discourage their conscience.

Theater was perceived to be easily conceivable, which every individual could try and be actors and they could easily compose a play or script from their daily lives (R11), however, plays were complicated to design and execute clearly and the director or facilitator often faced a lot of turbulence to reach a conclusion after showing the climax.

The most important shortcoming of using Community Theater was that the farmers were not professional actors, not trained, and hence they were shy and could not impact on the audience as much as expected. “Sometimes even cameras were obstacles”

(R9). Moreover, facilitators from outside of Rwanda, who could not possibly have an authentic and clear understanding of Rwanda's history and circumstances in the cooperatives of Rwanda, were training them. Some facilitators could not teach well due to unfamiliarity with post-conflict situations of leaders, and hence there were lots of spaces to improve. Again, sometimes theater scripts or plays were misinterpreted and misunderstood if performed by amateurs. As a result messages, which got conveyed, were partial or unintentional.

A positive perception was that the communities and cooperatives enjoyed acting, watching plays and sharing and resolving issues through dramaturgy, hence almost everyone possible got involved with SPREAD. They related very easily to scripts in action, and they knew what needed to be rectified or reconstructed, as they watched individuals or even themselves acting out their problems with their own eyes. "When we collected their feedbacks, they said they felt what the outcomes were, how the problems had crept into their lives." (R9)

The most important impact was the fact that observing and feeling the messages transferred through the plays; theater had a levy to control their psychological and emotional memory residues, implying that information conveyed were going to stay in minds for long terms. Another positive perception was that Community Theater had provided Rwandans with a strong, happy, supportive family feeling, a feeling of how to promote togetherness, unity and responsibility for others within the families and the cooperatives. Theater not only strengthened the cultural environment of every community through actors and the audience involvement but also provided an emotional

channel for those performing and watching. Theater was a means of working at the roots of the problems from the hearts and minds of people, it was a haven for those who were not accepted for their differences and talents elsewhere.

Community Theater was an extremely rewarding activity even for those who were exposed as actors with tremendous potential. Working with Rwanda's people with a variety of background and experiences created new inquiries and challenges daily. "Their energy, interest, excitement and passion made me actively working every day, and while working together, every hardship is made easier knowing the same goal, a new opening, a new show." (R10)

#### **Conclusions to research question IV**

The perceptions of the SPREAD Community Theater program respondents (from data collection for this case) amalgamated with the perceptions of shared feedback (from archival reports or documents) from impacted farmers, communities and cooperatives on using Community Theater, a performance-based artistic strategy as a delivery method or a dissemination method were manifold.

During the project implementation, Community Theater demanded for the audience to be concentrating, observing and analyzing the scripts in action, following the stories told, emotions expressed, while developing and executing through extension delivery systems, such as the arts-based method in agriculture. "This culture was also found in Uganda and Ethiopia and has been proven to be effective in changing behaviors." (R3)

Each character models a person from the family and there is a high chance of probable familiarity- synergy or count of familiarity, for example, while observing a certain play being enacted, a farmer spurts out, “Oh this character is exactly like my brother!” (R3)

Farmers recognized and internalized the solutions after they found and matched cases with their own lives. Hence to explore the capacity of Community Theater, the aim was to use arts to its fullest and utilize the combination of strategies- at first pertaining to the agricultural production and later to health programs. Theater got more popular and was effective in incorporating agricultural messages.

Rwandans were very used to drumming, music, dancing, in general a very art-loving culture. “They had been trained in the art forms from ancestral times and related to storytelling and dramaturgy more than any other community. Theatre for them was thus a way of expression and communication, not in archives, cut and dry.” (R2)

Theater or the arts-based delivery created environments where Rwandans did not feel judged; by putting on roles, masks, they were not exposed directly. Thus Community Theater was the fastest, productive way of opening oneself, to let go for people who disliked travel, could not trust, and foresaw more genocide coming due to differences and socio-political unrest.

Improvising scripts according to the needs and solutions was the most important advantage of using performance arts-based delivery methods- the freedom of speech, actions and getting up there on the stage, expressing without embarrassment, not having



to worry about being judged. Using indigenous language in remote villages was another advantage.

The French sold them out during the genocide. They are shifting to speaking English. They have so many threats- the Chinese may be looking at Rwanda for spreading business, there are a billion plus people, no food security, huge social issues for lack of education, awareness, access to resources, depression from the genocide, lack of trust and communication. (R5)

Another advantage was theater touched their hearts- the victims of genocide. “Do you think anything else will impact when one has gone through tremendous trauma other than a way which speaks to them, brings up issues without embarrassing them, without pointing at them, with a universal language of expression?” (R5)

Theater was thus a strategically optimized platform for storytelling and hence they could communicate and express the need for more international communication and collaboration through theater, although few spoke English. Theater is a non-traditional method of delivery where restrictions are less and freedom to express, understand and interpret is more. For instance, from the researcher’s perspective, the comfort of playing a negative character, perceived critically by the audience, is most in theater than any other delivery strategy.

Theater or arts for Rwandans was a means to solve problems and attain sustainability, coordination and congregation. “People could have chosen to solve the problems in a different way, while watching a problem being acted out; sometimes they had a contrary decision, a different opinion about the solution taken.” (R11)

Theater or arts-based dissemination was the platform, a good way to discuss exchange and share ideas, even though theater took a long time to come to one singular judgment. Elsewhere there could have been violent reactions, disagreements could have been expressed aggressively or a singular judgment might not have been achieved altogether due to lack of proper mediation between two individuals proposing two different solutions for one problem. The arts gave the leeway to resolve issues peacefully and artistically.

In most cases, the audience was comprised of farmers and villagers from the cooperatives. The advantage of using arts-based dissemination was particularly observed in case of dealing with culturally biased gender issues. “Women took up roles of men and hence staging actual stories was easier as no one was being pointed out. They could feel what is memorable, vivid, impactful, and emotional to change mindsets than using lectures.” (R8)

Community Theater as an arts-based dissemination was unique in that it benefitted the viewers as well as the artists, and promoted teamwork comprised of diverse talents. It was an undoubtedly rewarding pursuit that would be enjoyed throughout their lives. The beauty of performance-based arts was that it belonged to everyone- Community Theater became the people's theater, sharing a passion for work.

Theater or the arts through performances thus appealed to the minds and hearts of Rwandans, while extended lectures or monotonous meetings did not impact the same way. Artistic processes of dissemination therefore could override the use of traditional techniques of delivery of knowledge and transformation. Theater left behind a vivid

image in their minds. A disadvantage was that “some people just took it for fun. They thought that it was a joke.” (R8)

On the contrary, an advantage was that real nurses, real bank managers, real farmers, etc. acted during the plays, attended the questions answers sessions and hence the audience and anyone involved knew and could feel that everything was real. Theater invented the pathway for them to think it as a process of self-reflection for farmers and at the same time, a friendly approach towards pointing out, resolving and transforming delicate mistakes or issues with sensitivity and creativity.

### **Summary**

The findings, conclusions, from multiple resources such as researcher’s reflexive experiences, respondents’ perceptions, archival reports and field notes revealed several valuable conclusions about using Community Theater as a performance-based arts strategy for education, communication and development of farming communities, in Rwanda, a nation with traumatic history, socio-cultural or socio-economic or socio-political issues, which demanded artistic, peaceful transfer of knowledge for transformation, reconstruction or reconciliation.

The case study findings concluded that empowering, educating, communicating, transforming and development at the grassroots level were primarily the most successful agendas encompassed by SPREAD, to extend the use of radio drama into Community Theater in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives. “Radio equipment cost was cut down. It was fun and entertaining at the same time.” (R3)

From the point of view of respondents (project supervisors, international student interns, theater experts, team leaders), who formed the international reconstruction team, transformation, innovation, technology and effective approaches, were the key factors leading to the success of using theater in developing nations like Rwanda, as reflected in literature as well. “Theater in Rwanda helped in research, extension and education and creating or establishing a connection between these. Distribution channels were developed through theater.” (R3)

Augusto Boal, in his Theater of the Oppressed, had accounted for using principles of intensive training in theater in Greece and Brazil. Theater unlike other artistic strategies for implementation is tangible, sustainable and technique oriented. Augusto Boal named it Theater of the Oppressed moving beyond its use in Brazil and introducing Community Theater for developing nations (Boal, 1985).

From the perceptions of local respondents, leaders and farmers, the findings concluded that theater was a successful tool of delivery, message transfer and spreading social or cultural awareness in coffee/ pyrethrum plantations of Rwanda, as evident from the respondent validation, archival documents and the field notes. “This is because after we saw the impacts, we still use theater communication in the current pyrethrum project.” (R6)

Conclusions from analyzed data revealed a positive feedback from majority of the key informants and field notes, being involved to witness theater usage and there seemed to be future expectations of using the same. However, responses implied the call for resourceful Governmental and Foreign Aid Agencies to address the expectations of

developing agriculture-based post-conflict nations, to a greater extent from a humanitarian, supportive point and treating the shortcomings with empathy, time, patience and compassion.

Definitely the Community Theater project was successful, yet it could have been better with more seriousness, more funding, and more resources. People could not afford to intensify what they were doing. If these resources are available, it would be more effective, more investment towards this form of communication is needed to continue using it and much more hard work to intensify the impacts are required. (R8)

Children took part in the plays, responded, laughed, enjoyed (R2, R5), and therefore they learned to realize their capacities that shaped their culture, cultivated their aptitudes, sharpened their cognitive development from an educational point of view. Youths were part of the plays, portrayed the capacity of becoming leaders of the nation, implying Community Theater to be an ideal form of representation, which impacted the perceptions, beliefs and values of the youths. “Youths used and will use this strategy as the approach is very innovative, free, open, welcoming and non-expensive as well as expressive.” (R3)

Theater provided them the freedom of speech, actions and getting up there, expressing without embarrassment, not having to worry about being judged. Using indigenous language in remote villages was another advantage. The French sold them out during the genocide. They are shifting to speaking English. (R5)

Theater was definitely an impactful strategy for introducing development in its true sense, initiated with the SPREAD project, aiming at increasing sustainable living from increased coffee/ pyrethrum production and erasing social and health problems to improve agricultural extension, communication and agri-business. “Community Theater showed farmers how to repay loans, if it is a cooperative, how to request agricultural loans from the bank, how and why to plant crops in time, etc. They were losing potential, capacity and production due to behavioral problems which were addressed by theater.” (R3)

From post-colonial era, theater had already been a major success for development in Rwanda, given the adverse conditions present at the time of genocide, thereby theater already establishing its value and significance as a delivery tool; SPREAD was merely an endeavor to continue building the nation.

Major problems such as lack of family planning (R6, R7, R8, R9), school fees (R2, R5, R6, R9), HIV prevention and cure awareness (R2, R3, R6, R7, R9, R10, R13), awareness about avoidance of prostitution (R2, R5, R7, R8, R9), alcoholism (R3, R5, R8, R9, R13), gender-based violence and gender inequality (R5, R8, R9, R10) and wastage of farm raise, knowledge about reaching out to leading entities like health clinics (R2, R3), community leaders or stakeholders, timely planting, adult and child education (R2, R5, R6, R9), so on and so forth were areas encompassed by SPREAD Community Theater scripts, plays and messages conveyed.

Appreciating publicly demonstrating the contents of the issues of the members in the cooperatives, empowered and broadened the vision of the youths and others too, as reflected by diverse solutions they could present at the end of the trainings (R2, R5, R9).

Farmers in the audience enjoyed, understood. Some women would stop the play and then replace the husbands who are beating. They said ‘...we want to replace that man!’ Anyone carrying out similar actions in the family felt embarrassed and unaccepted and hence would learn to change their roles in actual lives. (R9)

Theater was definitely successful to an extent, which could be realized and recognized through evaluating the effects by measuring increase in capacity, attendees, and awareness in the community (as perceived by respondents). “We would like to continue the process of training and executing theater.” (R6)

Theater contributed towards reconstruction of Rwandan farming. This delivery strategy attempted to make the farmers independent in thinking, creative in displaying and compassionate in treating, working and feeling for other members of their family, community and cooperative as it was impossible to attain agricultural sustainability without forming relationships, work together for a cause.

Speakers acted in open grounds without any boundaries. Most successful fact is that we learnt a lot to identify our own problems. We learnt dependence is not needed as no outsider can solve your problems. You can solve your own problems yourself, as only you know the roots. (R9)

The case study concluded that Community Theater was useful for teaching abstinence (R2, R9), forgiveness (R3, R9), reconciliation (R2, R3, R5, R9), raising

social awareness, identifying problems for giving solutions (R2, R3, R6, R7, R8), and recognize them. Theater was a new approach, an alternative to traditional methods, which bonded the whole community. “People get bored in trainings, meetings, demonstrations. When you call them to watch a theater, they think that they are just going to enjoy. Yet, they learn at the same time knowingly or unknowingly. So theater is very interactive.” (R7)

However, SPREAD and using theater had its constraints shared by the respondents and farmers or the community members (Pichanick, 2011) such as lack of impact assessment, lack of sustenance of funding, resources and international leaders, lack of cooperation of stakeholders.

Managers were not really good at complimenting each other. It would be much better if they treated everyone equally; it would be much better with better planning, which is necessary. Funding was a problem as they were stopping things whenever. Only part time workers came from abroad. As this is a new method of development, it needs time to transform, to introduce innovative approaches. One has to spend more time and be committed. It was not enough and could have been more effective. Only coming for three to four days from abroad was not enough. Once you want to raise the issue and express these feedbacks, people get more non-cooperative and defensive. (R9)

This calls for a hand of consistent help from developed nations to provide the warmth and resources that the nations with need for reconstruction expected, which might be addressed by the former, watching out for not parrot-feeding the latter though.



A limitation of using theater or any performance-based strategy was the high probability of misinterpretation of the messages on the part of the audience whose transformation and responses were based mainly on the skill to evaluate acts, lack of professionally trained actors to portray the story visually, and lack of man power in developing nations, for imparting theater training to citizens when the reconstruction team left even if they performed well during their stay (R5, R8, R9).

They were being trained by directors who did not have good understanding of the history and circumstances in the cooperatives of Rwanda; mostly people who could not teach well always and hence there were lots of spaces to improve. All were not very comfortable outcomes. Sometimes drama or plays were misinterpreted and misunderstood if done by amateurs. (R9)

Hence, it may be concluded that foreign reconstruction teams would always bear the limitation of not practically being attached to the history, culture and societal details of a nation, thereby in any reconstructing strategy; a completely satisfactory result might only be expected over time.

A sturdy woman, who had to go see a prostitute, played a drunken husband and a muscular young man played his wife. It was hilarious! Audience just burst into laughter besides getting the message of how this was a problem in integral behavior. The script empowered women actors. It was a social benefit to the gender issues present. (R5)

“Men would not let women lead, women took care of school fees and farm. Men played women and women played men. It was hilarious!” (R2) Theater strongly

strengthened the environment against gender bias or violence, spotted from the plays and actions.

When we were training people about Community Theater, one day we had asked men to act as women and reverse. Here in Rwanda men use to be violent but this play had changed their minds and attitudes because they saw what they said or did to their wives...the actions were painful. (R10)

The composition of actors, audience, leaders was diverse and the audience was given time to ask questions, share their comments, even permitted to come up and act and they came to know things that they connected with their life problems, concluding that the SPREAD project continued to benefit the community in a creative, artistic way. Theater proved to be an awakening artistry in the midst of traditional, stagnant methods (R9, R10, R11, R12). “Community Theater is unique as it benefits the audience and the performer.” (R11)

Community Theater use was non-interfering and non-political, a tool which could be employed even in the face of traumatic circumstances, being expressive and peaceful in Rwanda. “The actors, audience and the involved communities comprised of a variety of age, culture, life experience, and revealed an honest and committed appreciation of the importance of the performance arts.” (R10)

Theater in this case, transcended the barriers of race, religion, social differences and the whole community came together to build capacity, witnessed by the increased attendance in plays, health clinics, schools, etc., thereby reflecting theater as a useful strategy of team building, ensuring fraternity and building integrity. “In theater, the

audio you listen to is together with what you also see happening. When people see it is theater, they come more often now. Audience has got bigger now.” (R7)

On this note, one of the respondents mentioned “women started bringing sick children to health clinics, men with HIV got tested more and most were buying preventive measures to avoid HIV. Yet a lot more awareness and continued impact assessment is necessary,” (R3). Community Theater was very popular within coffee producing families in Rwanda. From the perceptions of the respondents, the SPREAD project members were very productive, committed, concentrated and accountable.

Community Theater attempted to be a powerful tool for team building, actively engaging members of the communities and cooperatives, and ensured participation from professionals and amateurs through plays, writing and acting out scripts, dialogue exchange, and conversation with the audience, speech delivery and movements / gestures / expressions.

When you act they enjoy. You know things as you see them, as you feel them.

You apply what you want to versus what you have to. You think about life rather than a task. Apart from instructional modes, theater shows you in the emotional mood, in an active participation method. You feel the pain, the happiness associated, so you understand with emotions rather than instructions.” (R9)

Theater had proved to be a means which Rwandan individuals could preserve, cherish and apply their learning experiences from videos, photos, images in the memory and recollection that they accumulated, especially what they could not attain from traditional meetings, lectures, demonstrations. “Community Theater enriches the life

experiences of actors, performers, volunteers, audience who are an active part of the theater production.” (R10)

Farmers could be educated, trained artistically to nurture their instincts, valuable agricultural resources and empower Rwandan livelihoods through being exposed to new pieces of information they required to identify and solve their problems to live reconciled, reconstructed, unified lives of honor, respect and integrity.

### **Implications**

The research on the SPREAD case study implied that Community Theater use, a self-evaluator, has an innovative method of appeal as well as mere entertainment and enjoyment involved; a method of bringing people by touching and impacting their hearts and minds, their senses, as they are able to visualize, feel, form their conscience and use a reflexive approach. This implied that basically theater could directly impact an individual’s instincts and conscience, acting from the roots, to access problems, which are the roots of compromised growth and development.

Community Theater undoubtedly is a good communication tool being the most neutral, active and general approach to building a relationship, to resist or remove all interventions within a conflict-laden society or a community with socio-economic or health or political issues.

The findings imply that solutions can be given out very detailed and impacts/effects can be studied while acting or showing, working as a self-evaluator in plays. Theater, extended to use of any such performance-based artistic strategy thus is a very innovative approach. Henceforth, performance-based artistic strategies are feasible,

effective and express a high potential in terms of the power to engage families, communities, cooperatives and the nation as a whole.

Another important implication from using Community Theater is that any such performance-based art proves to bear the potential as an effective delivery method for imparting education and creativity in youths. Community Theater can potentially address multilingualism, multiculturalism and helps learn languages, to communicate across diverse languages through a universal, body language or expression.

In addition to social issues, creating scripts and songs within theater imply to be creative ways and help individuals practicing them, recognize the value of rationally analyzing issues at hand, therefore growing problem-solving skills and the skills to interpret, learn and correct reflectively. This reflexive approach in performance arts helps to understand ways to utilize socio-economic resources, enhancing growth and development.

From a researcher's perspective and reflecting on my collective experiences and expertise about using a performance-based artistic strategy for communication, my study implies theater as a means of developing socially, culturally, environmentally, economically and politically for long-term, longstanding and permanent effects, as it works from the cognitive and sensory roots of a human.

Performance-based artistic strategies imply to be potential means of liberating souls, a means by which individuals could feel and see their mistakes, understand and solve their constraints through expression, action and speech, far more effective than

lectures or demonstrations, as they may successfully model human lives as well as attempt to mold them.

## **Recommendations**

### *Recommendations for future research*

Community Theater, a major part of SPREAD in Rwanda, and international development in general, produced immense growth in many developed and developing nations around the world, as reflected by literature, the case study findings, perceptions of communities, perceptions of facilitators. Potential outcomes of using Community Theater in SPREAD call for a necessity of evaluation Community Theater, reaching the hearts of the individuals associated with it, promise scores to improve the success of the SPREAD project and Rwanda as a whole. Community Theater, as a performance-based artistic strategy reflected immediate, midrange, and long term goals, and implications could be accomplished and achieved with proper tools, resources, time, perseverance, and adequate funding.

Workshops established, the acts displayed, plays watched, lessons learnt and the improvement witnessed, theater, a human imperative, and promises to build a sense of identity in farmers. The strategy highly recommends replicating this incredible, life-changing experience to grow as a country, as cooperatives, and as individuals, for any nation whose overall mission and goals are of sustainability forming the groundwork for future research.

Theater to the audience was like a mirror; it involved many individuals at the same time frame looking at the plays with different feelings, grasping diverse

information and forming judgments within to transform, being less of a strict format or open, involving no cost; everybody could identify him/herself in the play and he/she could extract information on how to go about their respective problems. “I would become guilty if I was the bad guy, or proud if the play was reflecting my experience to overcome the challenges” (R12).

To not limit the success of using theater as a strategy for education and communication in SPREAD for the members of Rwanda, the hard work and sincere improvement seen by the members, needed to be evaluated or measured, which, in my opinion, recommends future research opportunity through professional evaluation, necessary for the facilitators who would love and enjoy seeing the growth of grass-roots development in a visual, tangible way. This case study postulates that performance-based arts as a communication or delivery tool, with incarcerated populations offers a powerful effort to induce international development, primarily focusing on agricultural extension. Therefore, evaluating the long-term impacts over time through a longitudinal study for a nation beyond anecdotal evidence is the next step to track progress or effects.

Definitely growth of plantations increased from perceptions of respondents, field notes and reports, which recommend theater productions to be useful in future as well. Using arts, it was easy to read minds. Hence it is recommended to incorporate and promote arts-based strategy in processes to forward international development. Theater or performing arts is a very good tool, where everyone can actively take part and empower.

An evaluation strategy may have been more effective to judge how positively successful Theater use was, including its constraints, although in artistic qualitative strategies, quantitative evaluation may not depict a true picture of the reality. Only over time, one may feel or witness a considerable change or outcome. Additional research documenting the effectiveness of using performance-based artistic strategy for agricultural development is strongly recommended.

#### *Recommendations for practice*

Depending upon the use, observations, impacts and outcomes of the case study findings in Rwanda and after researching the perceptions of respondents in addition to archival documents, here are some of the recommendations for potential practice addressing issues of international development, using performance-based artistic strategies- dance, music or theater, which may resolve or attempt to resolve conflicting issues:

Public/ agricultural policy, administration and resolving conflicts around national/ international borders: Conquergood (1995) used *kinesis* to explain how performance strategies could break or make oppressive policies or aggressive acts. Building upon the concept of performance studies as an interactive, revolutionary tool by Conquergood (1995), theater is a potential tool for rendering policy making, erasing national borders between conflicting nations and other sociopolitical processes. It may serve as a socio-cultural or socio-political change indicator as it illuminates issues, insinuates awareness and sets a stage for dialogue (Howard, 2004). The SPREAD case implications reflect



that use of theater facilitates decision-making or problem solving in farming communities.

Howard (2004) highlighted Augusto Boal's public policy and infrastructural administration agendas through the performer–audience relationship in Community Theater use— the Rainbow of Desire (Boal, 1985) and Legislative Theater (Boal, 1998). Garlough (2008) coined the term Eclecticism, defining performance-based arts strategy to be eclectic in nature, implying they possess the ability to perceive and create new understandings of reality, of a shared meaning. Garlough (2008) described how during 1930, performances were strategically created to cater to the communities at a grassroots level to effect social change by India People's Theater Association.

In India or other developing nations, where various elements of caste/ racial discrimination, communalism, health care, political corruption, law and order, and agricultural policies need to be revisited and re-designed, performance-based arts is recommended to be used to raise critiques and awareness (Garlough, 2008).

Critical pedagogy: The SPREAD case study implied that Community Theater empowers the learning community, supports critical problem solving, which in turn, transforms the society. Following the critical pedagogical and interactive performance procedures of Augusto Boal, Howard (2004) described how interactive drama explored body language and related social pressures; participants introduced cultural critiques of social values, and how arts-based education could be a kinetic activity. It is recommended to introduce arts-based strategies in educational curricula to encourage

youths to think critically, to reflect on social problems, to evaluate messages and make behavioral modifications.

As a result, through critical pedagogy, dialogue and movement based performance may empower students, which may help them to articulate their understandings in critically grounded ways. Moreover, students may use performance-based arts in an educational setting, to learn to perceive, express, critique, and transform themselves, their communities, and their culture in various settings and broader perspectives.

Gender Inequality/ violence: Women's organizations in India used street theater to create a space in the patriarchal society, to raise a critique on the existing gender discriminations and violence in caste, class, and social issues and also put forward alternate opinions. The stage is where new meanings, interpretations and possibilities are explored (Garlough, 2008). It is recommended from past studies and the SPREAD implications, that resistive interventions through performance should be introduced for new perspectives, to lay the initial political framework to foreground grassroots activism (Garlough, 2008; Chatterjea, 2004).

Garlough (2008) described Indian street theater performers in the play, *Women in search of their history*, in indigenous clothes, representing village women, urban women workers, and tribal women with different caste, class, and religion, who had no training.

It was their personal experiences and political convictions that drew them to the play... in this performance; these women... possessed an intimate and perhaps traumatic knowledge, due to their experiences with these problems. Yet,

interestingly, the eclectic form of the play also helped the performers to admit to a certain passion for ignorance about knowing the truth of women's suffering and oppression. (Garlough, 2008, p. 178)

This implies recommendations for using this eclectic form to have both performers and audience members engaged in issues of paramount importance in developing or under-developed nations, like property rights, human rights and domestic violence.

Post-conflict reconciliation: *The Rainbow of Desire* by Boal (1995) recognized that his theater techniques were proving to be useful in developing countries, dealing with a more individualized (vs. social) transformation by addressing oppressing emotional or psychological factors (Howard, 2004). Milliken (2002) promoted the theatrical social work of IPTA in India, spreading messages of singularity and universality, after the war of independence: "their movements, gestures, expressions and speech had no theatricality; it was as real as the street scenes we experience daily... they mirrored Indian life, the poverty and suffering under the heel of a foreign power." (p.86)

Following the implications, it is highly recommended to use performance-based artistic strategies to promote equality, focus on individual skills, promote self-regulation and organization in post-conflict nations. Theater emphasizes on the audience or participants, ways to collaborate to build teams and problem-solve in a peaceful, conflict-free environment (Milliken, 2002). McConachie (2003) brought forth the epilogue of cold-war atomic bomb fears during 1990s, focusing on Martha Graham's *Night Journey* initiated to reform. The theater traced the origin of "postwar anxiety over national security expressed in personal, family- oriented terms that left adult men with

untenable responsibilities. The woman... a threat to male initiative and authority. In this light, the *Crucible* becomes a reaction to nuclearism.” (p. 343)

This exploration of performance based art in relation to societal issues, post-conflict awareness, moving across cultures through playwrights, is recommended to be used in future in nations such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, etc. where leadership roles are needed to give voice to the people, in the process of peace-building, through which people independently learn to analyze, articulate, and transform their situations. Herein, lays the usefulness of using performance-based arts for international development.

Arts therapy of prisoners: In 2005, the Bureau of Justice Statistics accounted for prisons which held over 2 million inmates in America, for drug use during crimes (Milliken, 2008). Such statistical results expressed a need towards rehabilitation approaches. The addicted prisoner, with a history of violence and self-destructive behavior, refrains from drinking or using drugs. Yet, they are caught up in the terrible loop of addiction, violence, and shame for being convicted. To rehabilitate and free prisoners of life-long shame, performance-based strategies may be recommended as a therapeutic process for a positive change in the environment.

Milliken (2002) and Milliken (2008), accounted for the dance/movement therapy program at one of the prisons, piloted in 2001, in a jail addictions program. Issues like addiction; including violence, trauma, and shame were treated using a kinesthetic empathetic approach. Outcomes of the therapy were decreased tension, increased vocational skills and exploration of new and safe behaviors and activities, helping to quit

old destructive ones. Thus, it is recommended to use in any scenarios in prison or within army personnel, where arts-based therapy can provide an arena for understanding and communication, through the mimetic reflection by the therapist of the client's posture, gesture, or movement (Milliken, 2002).

Resolution of issues of color, religion, culture and race: Garlough (2008) mentions the Chipko movement, in 1976, by which in India, issues of concern, like the "notorious Madhura rape; Lata Mittal's challenge of the Hindu code concerning property rights; Mary Roy's fight against Christian property laws; Shahnaz Sheik's rally against the Shariat law; and Laroojoko, Buribai, and Dagbai's protest against native land rights that exclude women" were explored through theater scenes in *Women in search of their history*, to protest against discrimination of race, gender and violence (p. 179).

Drawing from the examples and real life instances, it is recommended to use unique plots, significant characters, and relevant settings, contextualizing real events popularly known to the mass, each instance serving to model issues of class, caste, and religion. The use of performance-based strategies has continued to create a shared environment in that victims can dissent and discover probable links within the society, to diffuse differences in caste, class, religion, region, and is recommended to do so in future. The SPREAD case study implications reflect flexibility, participatory, familiarity, and entertaining aspects of Community Theater, for instance, for intervention and social change, yet, other forms of arts-based performances may also be used for a reassertion of progressive social and cultural values.

Griffin (2003) narrated how complex history of women of color, a major British

performance movement has been portrayed by variety of performance texts, in diverse languages, ethnicities, and religions, in the form of intercultural world theater. Boon and Plastow (2004) in their essay explained how worldwide theatre projects engaged concerned communities. The use of performance-based arts, is recommended to be used to address flexible, open-ended and democratic learning environment and create one, embracing diverse communities, issues, and practices.

Resisting adolescent problems: Adolescence is a sensitive phase in the lives of all youths in all nations, going through physical, cognitive and psychological transformations. Emunah (1985) discussed a drama therapy program for disturbed adolescents at a hospital and youth center, and accounted for impacts like stabilizing and channelizing idealistic goals, out of dysfunctional families, suicidal behavior, anger towards parents and helplessness in actions, resulting into loss of good leaders for nations.

Performance-based artistic therapy is highly recommended for treating adolescent resistances, paradoxes and dilemmas associated with their contradicting sense of expecting to be treated and protected as a child, yet receive all privileges and benefits of the freedom enjoyed by adulthood, bypassing the responsibilities though (Emunah, 1985). Drama specially may model their behaviors, and attempt to engage them in realizing their self-identities through acting, treating indirectly their fears, frustration and anxiety.

Multi-literacy and trans-mediation: youth development & education: On the path of Eisner's (1997) campaign for art education, explicit ways of fostering critical thinking

in youths initiated. Eisner (1997) contended, “the forms we use to represent how we think have an impact on what we think about.” (p. 350)

According to Eisner (1997) youth educational curriculum, inclusive of arts, was recommended, to voice all forms of representations. In this context, McCormick (2011) introduced a term, Trans-mediation- translating a linguistic structure into a choreographic one, using signs as a communication system to convey meaning, which dealt with youths, translating performance texts to convey salient concepts in a new medium; for instance, sixth graders in a school in America, translated a poem into movements with the help of a professional dancer, thus comprehending and reviewing the content and the artistic emoticons of the poem. Trans-mediation, an extension of performance-based arts strategy for adult education and pedagogy, is recommended to provide these young children and youths with the opportunity to build their analytical skills and “enhance their ability to engage in a complex language function central to academic discourse.” (p. 579)

Goodwin et al. (2011) mentioned in Bangladesh, to respond to extremely low literacy, puppetry was used to educate children as well as spreading information about preventing AIDS and boosting child development from a weekly children’s program from 1965. The authors vouched for multiple forms of literacy or education for youths and children through performance-based arts which connected them to objects and policies in the society, dependent on the socio-cultural practices, and mentioned learning could be achieved through other modes of literacy like singing, dancing, acting or mime, enhancing communication, visual perception and spatial or temporal gestures as means

of representation.

### **Conclusion**

The SPREAD case study brought to light the multiple advantages and disadvantages of using performance-based artistic strategies for education, communication and international development. Goodwin et al. (2011) mentioned, performance-based strategy may be applied to several aspects of the society- social, cultural or political, as a form of an alternative literacy method, to critically explore significant causes, impacts and relationships involved in language, culture and basic resources such as agriculture, policy making, democracy, and education of a nation. As SPREAD used Community Theater, as a unique form or strategy to resolve issues hindering agricultural growth in Rwandan coffee/ pyrethrum cooperatives, similarly, other performance-based artistic gestures, non-verbal and non-linguistic such as dance, song, or drama, may be attempted as a form of communication to meet the goal of teaching, protesting for socio-political justice, or delivering messages to the community.

Without sounding didactic or educational, performance-based strategies may prove to be hugely successful to spread messages to targeted masses, be it in any field- to eradicate addiction in prisoners, abolish intercultural, racial, religious, caste, and linguistic barriers, introduce literacy for youth development, pedagogy, post-conflict reconciliation in developing nations, resolve adolescent issues or road safety problems, remove gender violence or bias, etc., keeping in mind the principle focus to be mainly enhancing empowerment, socio-environmental awareness, problem-solving and decision-making skills, superficially and seemingly through mere entertainment, yet at



its core, by attaining an equality in communication, deciphering transformational information and ultimately gaining one's individual freedom.

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## APPENDIX A

Recruitment letter:

Dear Sir/madam,

My name is Aparupa Chatterjee, a PhD student at the department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications at the Texas A&M University, College Station. My advisors are Kim Dooley and James Lindner. I am conducting a case study on how performance-based arts, (like community theatre) are being used as educational delivery methods in international development (SPREAD project case study, assessment and impacts).

As you have been a part of the SPREAD community theater project, I would like for you to consider participating in my study. Please feel free to forward this to those individuals so they may consider participation. As you have already agreed (by phone or email or in person) to answer my questions in the following interviews, here are my questions.

Please try to write them with question numbers, and send them to me by a week. Please email me back if you cannot understand any question. Also, if you have pictures or papers or documents, please share with me. They will be really valuable to the report.

Thank you,  
Aparupa Chatterjee  
Doctoral Candidate  
Texas A&M University  
Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications  
[Aparupa.Chatterjee@tamu.edu](mailto:Aparupa.Chatterjee@tamu.edu)

## APPENDIX B

Interview questions:

- 1) a) How did you know about SPREAD project in Rwanda?  
b) How were you selected for the project?  
c) Who selected you?
  
- 2) a) What were your required qualifications or what was the reason for you to be selected?  
b) What was your role in the community theatre program?
  
- 3) a) How long did you work in the project (dates and time)?  
b) Where or what co-operatives did you work in?
  
- 4) a) Were you actors in the theatre?  
b) If yes, what role did you play?  
c) Who wrote the scripts?  
d) What story did you show in the theatre?
  
- 5) Was theatre an effective communication tool? Why?
  
- 6) a) What were the impacts on the audience?  
b) If you were in the audience or if you were watching someone else act, what impact or effect did it have on you?
  
- 7) a) How did the community theatre help?  
b) What were some positive and negative points about community theatre and its effects on the community?
  
- 8) Why is community theatre the most important than other traditional methods?
  
- 9) Please share 10 examples of stories you played or saw in the theatre.
  
- 10) a) Who took part in theatre, in leadership and in the audience?  
b) Name them like farmers, children, etc.
  
- 11) What are the strengths, weaknesses, and threats, opportunities associated with community theatre?
  
- 12) Do you have any final comments you would like to add about the use of theatre as a communication or teaching tool?



## APPENDIX C

### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM

#### INFORMATION SHEET

##### Using Performance-Based Arts as a Delivery Strategy in International Agricultural Development

I would like you to take part in a research study being conducted by Aparupa Chatterjee, a doctoral candidate from Texas A&M University. Her committee chairs are James Lindner and Kim Dooley. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

The purpose of this study is to describe how performance-based arts are being used as educational delivery methods in international development. You have been asked to participate because you have been identified as an educator who uses performance-based art in international development.

If you choose to participate in this study you will be joining up to 15 other people who will be invited to join in this study. The alternative to being in the study is not to participate. If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to participate in a maximum of two semi-structured interviews lasting no longer than one hour each.

The risks associated with this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. Although the study involves minimal risks, you may feel that some questions that are asked of you will be stressful. You do not have to answer anything you do not want to. Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study and you will not be paid for your participation.

The records of this study will be kept private and only Aparupa Chatterjee, James Lindner, and Kim Dooley will have access to your data. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. With your approval interviews will be recorded and transcribed within a month. After the interview is transcribed the recording will be destroyed. Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and researcher. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

If you have questions about this study you may contact Aparupa Chatterjee <Aparupa.chatterjee@tamu.edu>, James Lindner <j-lindner@tamu.edu>, or Kim Dooley <k-dooley@tamu.edu> at 979-458-2701. For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or [irb@tamu.edu](mailto:irb@tamu.edu).

Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with Texas A&M being affected.

IRB NUMBER: IRB2012-0758

IRB APPROVAL DATE: 03/28/2013

Version Date: March 1, 2013

IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 03/15/2014

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION PROGRAM  
INFORMATION SHEET

To insure the accuracy of data collected we want to record and transcribe interviews and would like for you to agree to these audio recordings. Please indicate your permission to record your interview by initialing below.

----- I **give** my permission for audio recordings to be made of my interview during this study

----- I **do not give** my permission for audio recordings to be made of my interview during this study

**STATEMENT OF CONSENT**

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available, unless I wish to not participate in the study at any time, and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want. A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:**

I have carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

IRB NUMBER: IRB2012-0758

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