

Applied Theatre, Applied Cinema, and Community Engagement for Climate Action in Cameroon

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Abstract

*Both applied theatre and applied cinema start by identifying a social issue in the community, organising a brainstorming/training workshop with community members and leaders, and then developing a script based on the salient, solution-oriented issues highlighted during the workshop. While applied theatre ends with a community performance created by, and featuring community members, applied cinema ends with a community film, also featuring community members. The participation of community members in the workshop, scripting, production, and performance processes is essential, as it helps the activity transcend from a mere event in the community to a collective community experience that lingers in the community's consciousness for a long time. Over the past three decades, environmental issues have preoccupied applied theatre/cinema practitioners in Cameroon, with several projects yielding excellent results as evidenced by the projects analysed. This paper examines two Cinema for Development (CfD) projects - *Alien in my Land* (Butake & Doho, 2000) and *Bush Meat go Finish* (Butake, 2004), and one Theatre for Development (TfD) project- *Combating the Monster* (Fai, 2012). The objective is to highlight processes used, key environmental issues tackled, and the level of awareness raised; in an effort to highlight the contributions of applied drama to the fight against climate change and environmental disasters in Cameroon.*

Key Words: Theatre for Development, Film for Development, Conscientisation, Climate action, Climate change.

Introduction

This study reflects on select theatrical practices in Cameroon that take the actors and audience (or spec-actors) out of the normal contexts of mainstream theatre. The term “theatrical practices” is

preferred here in order to create a broader context that also encompasses Applied Cinema (an offshoot of Applied Theatre), with the common denominator being that they are both a response to problems from communities with real life stories (Prentki, 2013). Specific variants brought into focus here are Theatre for Development (TfD) and Film for Development (FfD), especially as practiced in Cameroon. It should be recalled that the TfD and FfD methodologies start off in the same way: identification of a social, political, economic, or environmental challenge, community mobilisation, brainstorming workshop, resolutions, and scripting. While TfD ends with a stage performance, FfD ends with a community film. In both methodologies, the community members are the principal actors, with the initiator serving as facilitator. In an effort to examine TfD and FfD activities in Cameroon that have attempted to tackle climate change issues, both terms will be understood as “a transformational process, and an empowerment process of a people to identify and confront the challenges of their development” (Mlama 2023, p67). This is why TfD and FfD projects analysed in this paper were all designed to educate participants on the causes, effects and mitigation strategies for climate change-related disasters, while empowering them to take charge of their own destiny through collective climate action.

It suffices to mention that Theatre for Development has evolved into a resource for participatory research, advocacy, sensitization, education, empowerment, and development in both urban and rural communities. The major reason for this exponential growth is its sensitisation and advocacy capacities, which make the practice a suitable option for NGOs, diplomatic services, and even the government of Cameroon, which has become weary of conventional methods of development communication. Further proof that TfD had since seduced major sociopolitical stakeholders in Cameroon can be found in Samba (2023)’s account of the AWICO women workshops in Ndop and Batibo, all in the North West Region of Cameroon. She reports that:

...the idea of a TfD workshop did not come from the practitioners but from NGOs (Helvetas Cameroon, A Swiss Organization for Technical Assistance), and AWICO (Association of Women’s Information and Coordination Offices), who, having watched Bole Butake’s play, *Shoes and Four Men in Arms*, a play on social justice, oppression and the misuse of power, requested him to run three workshops on women’s empowerment in the North West Province of Cameroon (p151).

Here, Samba clearly indicates that in Cameroon, TfD had already captured the attention of major social actors as a more engaging and effective grassroots communication strategy than

conventional media campaigns as early as 1996. This is evident from the fact that practitioners were approached by NGOs rather than the other way around, as is usually the case. The success of Tfd in attracting public institutions and governments seems to prevail across Africa as a whole, as Oga (2023) asserts:

Tfd (known as Popular Theatre at the time), began its journey in an invited space. It was the government development space; and this occurred due to the frustration and inability of government to devise a development plan that was acceptable or participatory. Thirdly, it had no understanding of the horizontal means of communication other than the top-down strategy that it knew and was used to. Once Tfd was invited into the development space, academic institutions needed to analyse the context, the discursive strategies and a corresponding approach that would be inclusive. In both Botswana (Laedza Batanani) and Zambia (Chikwakwa), the ideological position of Paulo Freire regarding dialogics, which challenged top-down approaches (which he characterised as banking system of education), was seductive. (p.38)

From the foregoing, Oga emphasizes that some African governments have played a major role in popularising Tfd because of its participatory nature, which enables the formulation of development plans that are more inclusive of the masses. By adopting a bottom-top instead of the top-bottom approach as is often the case with institutional communication strategies, these governments shun the ‘banking system’ as Freire put it, in favour of horizontal communication systems that give communities more room to voice out context-specific challenges. The Tfd process thus brings to the limelight unresearched and unanalysed issues in communities, whether rural or urban, that hinder people from living fulfilled lives. This peculiar approach, perhaps, throws considerable light on its appellation “Theatre for Development”. Suggestive of a bridge between theatre and development, Tfd has proven that it understands development better than many disciplines that focus on developmental studies. Across Africa, Tfd has shifted thinking and understanding of what development means by drawing attention to the importance of the voice. Unless people are allowed to articulate their problems, issues, and feelings, development interventions will not yield the expected results.

In the domain of climate change activism and environmental protection in Cameroon, a good number of Tfd and Ffd practitioners have entered into the scene. Practitioners like Bole Butake, Caroline Kilo Bara, Kwasen Ngwangwa’a, Donatus Fai Tangem and Emelda Ngufor Samba have respectively contributed their piece towards environmental protection and the fight

against climate change. As mentioned earlier, TfD and FfD projects are usually sponsored by governments and NGOs in form of projects. Given that in TfD and FfD projects, the animateur's role is to help the members of the community to "better understand the nature and power of the forces of their domination and exploitation, and to gain the confidence to confront such forces" (Mlama, 2023, pp. 66-67), getting funding from government sources is bound to generate paradoxes. With clear interests behind every funding opportunity, will TfD and FfD's 'subversive' stance not be compromised by government funding? What is the likelihood that discussions generated by TfD and FfD will not hurt government interests and sensibilities, especially as the government is quite often accused of being one of the forces of domination and exploitation in African countries? These questions explain why Mlama suggests that government funding should be avoided as much as possible. Given the existence of government regulatory bodies established to censor critical artistic productions and promote propaganda and praise-singing, government funding would attract even more censorship, reducing the capacity of TfD and FfD to critically examine community issues, which more often arise from inappropriate policies or government inertia.

These worries, as expressed above, are observable in applied theatre practices in Cameroon. For example, Samba (2023) reports that the first TfD project in Cameroon was conducted in 1986, with Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh as coordinator, and involved 18 other facilitators from 13 countries, who were part of the Murewa (Zimbabwe) workshop. The government of Cameroon agreed to sponsor the project on the condition that all the discussions were to be apolitical. To her, this is ironic "for the essence of Theatre for Development as Augusto Boal states, is to break the culture of silence of the oppressed" (p.149)

However, when it comes to projects related to climate change, these worries dissipate considerably, as funding is mostly foreign and interests mostly always align. This explains why all of the TfD and FfD projects examined in this paper were funded by international NGOs and western diplomatic services in Cameroon. Because of its participatory approach which makes it an effective grassroots communication and empowerment strategy, and the near apolitical context of environmental protection leading to a multi-stakeholder conjugation of efforts; this author agrees with Prentki (2023) when he posits that:

Theatre for Development in Africa must be recruited as one of these 'progressive forces' because it has the methodologies through which the lived experiences of communities can be harnessed in the search for

environmentally friendly, sustainable ways of being. Specifically, TfD has a crucial role to play (the pun is intentional) in bridging the gap between climate scientists and the general public because it communicates on an affective level, engaging bodies, minds and emotions in ways that create empathic bonds amongst people and between people and their environment. TfD can support scientists in communicating evidence as opposed to fake news to the public. Equally important, it can also communicate real experiences of climate emergency back to the scientists in order that they have a felt understanding of what is at stake. (p.24)

TfD is a participatory process whereby there is active participation of all the stakeholders. Prentki highlights yet another set of stakeholders in Climate action TfD projects, hitherto not taken into consideration by TfD practitioners –climate scientists. This suggestion, if implemented, will position climate scientists as experts and informants during community workshops, greatly improving the accuracy of messages conveyed by eventual performances. This will also bridge the gap between TfD experts and climate scientists, who tend to work more with governments following a top-down approach to sensitisation on climate action.

Applied Cinema and Environmental Action in Cameroon

It is important here to note that the cases examined in this work are neither the first nor the last carried out in Cameroon as part of civil society efforts to fight against environmental degradation and climate change. They were chosen based on the availability of resource persons who masterminded or participated in the projects. For example, in 1996/97, HELVETAS Cameroon (INGO) co-organised and sponsored a land-use management theatre workshop with AWICO women (Association of Women's Information and Coordination Offices). This workshop brought together farmers in Batibo, Ndop and Esu, all in the North West Region of Cameroon. The objective was to provide farmers with technical assistance on better farming methods, while at the same time, there was a workshop on theatre for environmental education run by George Mofor as part of the Mount Cameroon Project (Samba, 2019). Some of the projects on environmental protection targeted children, as it was noticed that farmers had a lot of farming habits they found difficult to change. As Samba (2023) reports:

In the case of the Northwest Region, working with adults did not seem to create enough impact on the agricultural sector, for the same farmers would, after the workshops continue with their traditional farming methods. This led to the shift to children's theatre for environmental education where primary school pupils of class four to six from six primary schools in the

Bamenda-Nkwe Upper Zone of the Northwest Region were engaged in creating and performing plays on environmental education in their communities, palaces, church yards, school fields, marketplaces, and other venues. The protection of water catchments, the planting of fruit trees, farmer grazer conflicts, and sustainable farming methods, among others, were at the centre of these workshops. Elements of popular culture; songs, dance, theatre games, and story-telling sessions characterised the collective play creation process and facilitated the appropriation of the solutions proposed and the entire process not only by the workshop participants but by the community members who watched the plays and participated in the discussions. (p.152)

From the foregoing, it becomes apparent that applied drama had taken root in Cameroon since the late 90s, especially in the fight against environmental degradation and climate change. In Cameroon, just like elsewhere in Africa, environmental education usually targets farmers and herders. However, having been accustomed to certain professional habits over the years, these groups go back to their old practices right after the workshops. Targeting schoolchildren could therefore be more efficient, as they are yet to fully immerse themselves in farming and herding activities, hence have not developed resistant habits. When elements of the local culture like song and dance are adopted - a favourite among youths, there is hope for more sensitisation taking place.

Alien in my Land (Butake & Doho, 2000)

This project was planned and executed by Bole Butake and Gilbert Doho, both lecturers at the Department of Arts and Archeology of the University of Yaoundé I. The motivation for this project was rapid deforestation in the East Region of Cameroon, which hosts the majority of the Baka (Pygmy) population of the country. The Baka are a Bantu ethnic group characterised by individuals of short stature, averaging 1 meter in height. They often live in dense forests, cut off from all forms of civilisation, and depend on forest products for their daily subsistence. Intensive and extensive deforestation therefore leads to the loss of their natural habitat and source of livelihood, as non-timber forest products like wild animals, herbs, and other food sources disappear. Some are forced out of the forest to live in resettlement camps, where they struggle to cope with new social behaviours, food, language and health methods. This constitutes a whole new civilisation to them, and compounding these challenges, they are severely stigmatised by their taller and more “civilised” neighbours.

Butake and Doho decided to conceive and carry out a Film for Development project that could address this problem, and the title “Alien in my Land” was chosen to highlight the fact that the pygmy population suddenly find themselves in a different habitat and different civilisation, though not up to five kilometers from their natural habitat, and spend the rest of their lives struggling to adapt to new realities.

The Process

Bole Butake and Gilbert Doho designed the project and submitted it for funding to the Human Rights and Democracy Fund of the Embassy of the United States in Yaoundé, and got funding to the tune of 2,500 000frs (\$4000). The two facilitators set out with a team composed of Kwasen Ngwangwa’a, a director from the Cameroon Radio Television Corporation, four technicians and a white male serving with the American Peace Corps in Cameroon. The film was originally intended to be shot in Yakodouma, which is more than 600km from Yaoundé. However, halfway to the location, they found a Baka camping at Messamena, with the same conditions as in Yokadouma, with a timber exploitation plant nearby known as Ets. PALLISCO. They thus decided to make the film with the Baka of Mekong in Messamena. With the help of Ngeke, one of the Baka who could understand and speak French, they started data collection with Ngeke serving as mediator between the crew and the Baka. The Bakas of Mekong gladly welcomed the project and the data collection workshop started.

As mentioned earlier, Film for Development (FfD) evolved from Theatre for Development (TfD). The Messamena project thus followed steps as outlined by Samba (2005):

...selecting the participants, breaking the ice, information gathering, data analysis, problem identification and prioritisation, story (re)creation and improvisation, performances, post-performance discussions and follow up
(p.38)

In light of the above, participants were selected randomly through a prior announcement to the community. The idea was to get as many community members as possible without any demographic distinctions. The data gathering, data analysis, problem identification and prioritisation were easy because all community members present were unanimous about the precarity of their living conditions and united by a nostalgia for their natural habitat, which is the

forest. At the end of the workshop, the facilitators worked with the community to craft a story that best articulates their problems and proposes solutions.

Story Outline

The Bakas of Mekong in Messamena in the Eastern region of Cameroon live in perfect harmony in one of their temporary camps in the forest, threatened by the rapid disappearance of the forest, which may soon lead to their annihilation. It is an ordinary day in the camp and the Baka are going about their daily activities. Ngeke, one of the Bakas is at the camp watching a game of cards. Hurtler, a white forest exploiter asks Ngeke to guide him into the forest to mark trees, and Ngeke accepts. As Ngeke and Hurtler are in the forest marking trees, Ando'o, one of the Bakas from the camp is in the forest with other Baka youths setting traps. Ando'o and the others see Ngeke and Hurtler, then rush and report to their leader. Their leader immediately summons a meeting of all the Bakas in the neighbouring camps in the main camp. At this meeting, the Bakas decide to call on Moukundji (their god) to bring Ngeke back to them, as they believe that he has been led astray by the white man. Ngeke finally comes back to them and begs for forgiveness, which is readily granted. Together, the Bakas chase Hurtler out of their camp.

It should be noted that the above story outline is entirely fictional, though conceived to highlight the most recurrent problems raised during the workshop, and proposed solutions. From the story outline, it becomes clear that the fast disappearance of the forest is the principal problem, catalysed by other Bakas who offer their expertise and knowledge of the forest to timber exploiters. From the level of community participation observed in this project, it could be concluded that the methodology falls in line with the “theatre with the people” approach, as outlined earlier by Mwansa (2023); given that the community actively participated in the brainstorming, story creation and principal photography. The whole process from data collection to principal photography took 5 days. Two days were dedicated to the workshop, story creation, casting and rehearsals, while principal photography took another two days. The last day was dedicated to further discussions with the Bakas on their experiences with the shooting so far.

Bush Meat go Finish oh! (Butake, 2004)

The processes that led to the initiation of this project are quite unusual, detached from the usual methodology that includes the facilitator designing a project, looking for a sympathetic funder before going ahead to execute. The initial script of *Bush Meat go Finish oh!* (Wild Animals will soon be extinct!) was a conventional stage script that won first prize during a competition organised by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Cameroon. From then, WWF contracted Bole Butake to adapt it into a Film for Development format for greater impact, and also contracted Caroline Kilo Bara of the Cameroon Radio Television to direct the film. So, there was no project written and no funding request but rather, it was a film on command. This also affected the way the project was executed, especially the level of participation of the target community.

Story Outline

In a small village in the South West Region of Cameroon, a minister meets Ajebs, a palm wine retailer; and places a command for a huge quantity of bush meat. Ajebs meets Wunzi, a popular village hunter to supply the meat. Unfortunately, the meat supply cannot be executed because there is not enough bush meat left in the forests due to poaching and indiscriminate hunting. To escape the minister, Ajebs takes refuge at the Chief's palace where a party is ongoing. The minister follows him there, but it turns out the party is part of a sensitisation campaign against indiscriminate hunting, and most of the messages in the speeches point an accusing finger at the minister. There is a general resolve to stop poaching and indiscriminate hunting which may lead to the extinction of some rare animal species.

The above story was not created by the community as mentioned earlier, but was provided by WWF Cameroon after a script contest. Consequently, the usual TfD process of meeting the affected community, carrying out discussions and data collection, story creation and casting was not respected, as was the case in *Alien in my Land*. The screen adaptation, main cast and rehearsals were done in Yaoundé before moving to Batoke in the South West Region of Cameroon where principal photography took place. The main cast were semi-professional actors, selected from the Yaoundé University Theatre. The community was quickly brought up to speed about the overall intention of the project, and minor roles then filled by some of the community members. The community also helped in selecting locations and constituting crowds where needed. This approach falls in line with the concept of “theatre for the people”, which is very close to conventional theatre, as the play is almost entirely pre-prepared and presented to the target

community for commentary. This approach was also more costly because actors had to be transported from Yaoundé to Batoke, lodged and fed for the duration of the shooting. With the limited budget, the director had to rush many things. Shooting took only four days, and it took a toll on the overall aesthetics of the film. However, the sensitisation potential of the film is not overly affected as the shooting itself attracted a lot of attention from the community, thus becoming a lifetime event that will not be quickly forgotten.

Theatre for Development and Environmental Action in Cameroon

TfD is widely accepted in Africa and other parts of the developing world as a great sensitisation tool among the ordinary people; “used to address their own problems, in their own terms, from their own perspectives and from within their own art forms (Mukumula, 2013, 110). TfD interventions, especially as shall be seen in subsequent sections of this paper, are therefore fundamentally playful and inclusive, taking into account local means of creating meaning like language, song and dance. This aligns with Prentki (2013), as he explains the participatory theatre process:

Firstly, participants enter into a process where they play together, creating and improvising back to a lost childhood or perhaps a childhood never experienced. Secondly, the process typically leads to the making of plays either within the closed space of a drama workshop or as a public theatrical event with a target audience. Thirdly, there is play in the process in the sense of movement, flexibility, changes of position as when we speak of materials having ‘play’ in them. The playful drama requires fluidity of a kind that opens up an opportunity for empathy, for exploring the self in the other and the other in the self. This happens when we take on a character who appears initially antithetical to us or beyond our experience and when the gap is opened between the actor and the character even when we are dramatising our own story. The retelling, structured into the drama, creates a distance between the actor and the character into which critical reflection on the relationship between ourselves and the wider world can occur. (p21)

Prentki here highlights the most salient characteristics of TfD such as games, self-exploration, and collective playmaking. Works analysed in this paper do not closely follow these processes for some reasons, and the above is highlighted here as an ideal from which the projects analysed can be framed.

***Combatting the Monster* (Fai, 2012)**

The Tfd project *Combatting the Monster* was initiated by the British High Commission in Yaoundé. The British diplomatic service was interested in contributing to the fight against climate change in Cameroon, especially given that Cameroon is one of the four countries that share the Congo rainforest, the second-largest in the world after the Amazon. The British High Commission was also convinced that there was a need to go beyond the usual communication and sensitisation strategies that focus on different media, and to embrace communication approaches that are more participatory and focus on Cameroon's local populations. Following some recommendations from Cameroonian staff of the British High Commission in Yaounde, Dr. Donatus Fai Tangem of the University of Yaoundé I, was contacted by the US Embassy. Dr Fai is a playwright, scenic director, actor and a Tfd practitioner who has studied and worked with the forerunners of the practice in Cameroon, such as Hansel Ndumbe Eyoh and Bole Butake.

The Process

When Dr. Fai accepted to do the project, there was no script yet. The British High Commission subjected him to a two-week training in the hands of contracted experts. The idea was to get him fully acquainted with the causes, consequences, potential solutions, and coping strategies related to climate change action. He was to use the knowledge from the training to write a community-oriented script. When he finally wrote the script, he submitted it to the British High Commission for validation, and after a few rounds of back-and-forth corrections, it was validated. Rehearsals began at the Department of Arts and Archaeology rehearsal hall at the University of Yaoundé I, where Dr. Donatus Fai was working. It should be noted that the British High Commission disbursed money gradually as the project evolved. For the rehearsal phase, they disbursed a lump sum for taxi fares to the cast and crew. When rehearsals were well advanced, an inventory of costumes and props, along with a cost estimate, was sent to them. Once the funds were made available, the costumes and props were fabricated. The final dress rehearsal was supervised and vetted by a delegation from the British High Commission. Note be taken that this author was one of the principal cast (narrator) in the project.

The main objective of the project was to sensitise local populations about individual actions that contribute to the depletion of the ozone layer, increase UV radiation, and cause climate change. Focus was also on activities such as indiscriminate hunting, overfishing and deforestation; which degrade the environment or lead to the extinction of plant and animal species. Since the play was

pre-prepared, it had to undergo a tour of selected localities across the country's different ecological zones, with the texts slightly modified in each to suit their realities. It is from this logic that Garoua was selected for the northern arid regions, Kribi for the forest areas, Limbe for the coastal mangrove areas and Santa for the northwestern grassland areas. In the grassland areas, messages focused on practices such as the effects of bush fires, deforestation, alternative sources of energy other than wood, and the negative indiscriminate hunting. In the northern arid regions, the focus was on planting trees, alternatives to fuelwood, and indiscriminate hunting. In the forest areas, messages focused on deforestation, indiscriminate hunting and reafforestation. In coastal areas, the focus was on preserving mangrove forests, sustainable fishing methods, and alternatives to fuelwood.

The fundamental question here is: how participatory were the performances, given that the play was prepared in Yaoundé without involving the target communities? To address this question. Emissaries of the theatre troupe were dispatched to the target communities, as rehearsals were ongoing, to do some groundwork, including securing performance venues, informing and inviting local authorities to the event, and inviting local community associations, mostly farmers. This was because community engagement was mostly centred on pre- and post-performance discussions.

The Performance

Although there was a backstage area during the performance from which actors entered and exited, the play would begin with many actors sitting among the audience, pretending to be spectators. The idea was that when they got up, started delivering their lines from the audience, got on stage to participate in the drama, and then got back to the audience, it gave the audience a sense of participation. Also, the play featured a narrator who served more like an impresario of a ceremony, interacting freely with the audience and giving several members a chance to participate through questions and answers as he moved among them.

After the performances, audience participation was heightened through post-performance discussions with community members, characterized by questions and answers between the cast and crew on the one hand, and the community members and leaders on the other. It was during these sessions that the team assessed how well the community members assimilated the messages, understood in more detail the specific needs of the community, learned more approaches to solving environmental issues in the community and perspectives for follow-up. In the Limbe community,

there was a guided tour of a fishing village in Idenau before the performance. The cast and crew were led to a dumping site where fish that were too small for consumption were dumped to rot. The fishermen were advised to look for nets with bigger holes so that the young fish can be spared, ensuring sustainability.

In light of Mwansa's classification of TfD approaches earlier, according to the degree of community participation, Donatus Fai's TfD project, *Combatting the Monster*, as outlined above, can be classified as Theatre for the people. Despite the entrance and exit techniques that enhance a feeling of participation in the audience, and the interactive role of the narrator with the audience, the fact still remains that the play was prepared in Yaoundé, and that no community member played an active role in the cast and crew. However, joint field activities between the community and the crew before the performance drew significant attention from the community. The caravan going round the community with songs and orchestration before the performance, coupled with elaborate post-performance discussions, left lasting memories in the consciousness of the community, making the messages linger in the community for a longer time.

Conclusion

From the different projects analysed in this paper, it is evident that the practice of both TfD and FfD in Cameroon varies greatly depending on the methodologies of the practitioner, availability of funds, exigencies of funders and challenges encountered in the field. These variations in field approaches have been amply demonstrated, from projects with intense community engagement such as *Alien in My Land* (2000) to selective participation such as in *Bush Meat Go Finish oh!* (2004), to pre-prepared performances like *Combatting the Monster* (2012) that relied on pre-and post-performance interactions for any form of community engagement and participation. These variations substantiate the views of Freebody F. et al (2018) that posit that applied theatre is not one thing, since there is little agreement in the field regarding the specifics of what is or is not applied theatre. Quoting Thompson (2012), they further insist that the term applied theatre is imperfect, as:

....it is a term cast in different places, and therefore it will catch different practices according to the theatre histories of the places from which it is thrown. It is therefore used at different times by different people to refer to a specific set of

practices, a general set of practices, a collection of different practices, practices from a shared history, and/or an epistemological or ontological perspective of drama work. (p.1-2)

The TfD projects in Cameroon examined in this work thus exemplify the above assertions in their diversity of methodologies, media (theatre/film) and degrees of audience involvement.

From an ethical perspective, it can also be safely concluded that the three projects analysed in this paper respected the three basic principles of Applied Drama ethics, which are presence, service and care (Sadeghi-Yekta, K. & Prendergast, M. (2022)). This is because the teams effectively spent some time and conducted some shared activities within the target communities, which signifies physical presence and emotional support. This was followed by brainstorming and performances on issues that affect the daily lives of the communities. These performances, film projects and brainstorming effectively sensitised the communities on issues affecting them, such as deforestation, soil degradation, extinction of endangered plant and animal species, harmful farming practices, as well as coping strategies against recurrent effects of climate change. This led to changes in mindset and lifestyle in relation to environmental protection. This clearly indicates service, commitment and care on the part of the project teams, as their interventions could be likened to those of other service providers such as doctors and teachers in the communities.

Finally, it can be further concluded that applied theatre projects in Cameroon depend heavily on donor funds. This is even more true when it comes to issues relating to climate change and environmental protection- issues that benefit from enormous interest from international organisations and Western governments. However, such funds are not always guaranteed beyond the short lifespan of the projects, giving little room for follow-up activities. Sometimes, the execution time of the project is so short that quality is compromised, especially in FfD projects. It can also be observed that Applied Drama in Cameroon has succeeded in capturing the attention of the government, NGOs and Western diplomatic services as an effective, grassroots participatory communication model, especially when it comes to sensitisation projects that need to change mindsets, empower, and drill on coping strategies. This is evident from the fact that the TfD landscape in Cameroon has reached a level where donors move towards practitioners, instead of the other way round. This is a clear indication of the level of sensitisation of sociopolitical stakeholders in the country about the potential of TfD as an instrument for social intervention,

which is also reflective of the quality and quantity of work that the forerunners of various forms of applied drama have carried out in Cameroon over the years.

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