DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 178 740 CE 023 041

AUTHOR Kidd, Ross; Byram, Martin
TITLE Popular Theatre: A Technique for Participatory Research. Participatory Research Project. Working Paper No. 5.
INSTITUTION International Council for Adult Education, Toronto (Ontario).
SPONS AGENCY Hazen Foundation, New Haven, Conn.
PUB DATE Jul 79
NOTE 41p.; For related documents see CE 023 040

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adult Education; Adult Literacy; Change Strategies; Citizen Participation; Community Cooperation; Community Development; *Community Involvement; Cooperative Planning; Group Activities; Local Issues; Outdoor Theaters; *Outreach Programs; *Problem Solving; Production Techniques; Research; *Social Action; Social Change; *Theater Arts
IDENTIFIERS Botswana; Freire (Paulo); Participatory Research

ABSTRACT

Popular theatre that speaks to the common man in his own language and deals with directly relevant problems can be an effective adult education tool in the process Paulo Freire calls conscientization--a process aiming to radically transform social reality and improve people's lives. It can also serve as a medium for participatory research. Popular theatre offers a methodology for massive scale application which is manageable by village-level animateurs because (1) it can create awareness of people's own resources and mobilize them; (2) it provides continuity in definition, analysis, and solution of community problems; (4) as entertainment, it attracts and holds interest; (5) the researcher is a committed participant and learner--not a detached outsider; (6) as collective expression, it fosters cooperative thinking and action. Important features include the discussion after every performance, when people share ideas and identify problems, and participation, since everyone can manage theatre, given a predetermined plot line for dialog improvisation; actors are already familiar with issues and situations. Furthermore, this already familiar medium defuses feelings of educational inferiority arising from social prejudice or illiteracy. Adult educators in Botswana have used popular theatre in community education campaigns, resettlement education, Freirean literacy work using theatrical story-telling instead of pictures, and as part of extension work in choosing appropriate technology for rural development. Descriptions of these four examples are included in the paper as each moved through problem identification to action while demonstrating popular theatre's role in social transformation programs. (CP)

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH PROJECT

WORKING PAPERS

PRINTED IN A UNION SHOP

WORKING PAPER NO. 5

POPULAR THEATRE:

A TECHNIQUE FOR PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram

29 Prince Arthur · Toronto · Ontario · Canada · M5R 1B2

About the PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH Working Papers

These papers represent ideas and work in progress. They have been stimulated or supported by the work of the Participatory Research Project. The project, within the International Council for Adult Education, has as its goal the study and dissemination of information about research processes which focus on popular groups in the exploration and transformation of their own reality.

These papers are supported by The Edward W. Hazen Foundation.

We invite your suggestions, contributions, and critique. Please duplicate and distribute these papers at will. We would be interested to know if you do.

Popular Theatre: A Technique for Participatory Research

by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram

Introduction

We are very pleased to be able to make the Working Paper of Ross Kidd and Martin Byram available. Their contribution, based as it is on years of engagement and reflection, provides an exciting and stimulating model for us all. We are very pleased also to be introducing this paper as the first of many which will deal with methods and approaches.

July, 1978 Participatory Research Project

ISSN 0010-8146

Popular Theatre: A Technique for Participatory Research

by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram

INTRODUCTION TO PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Adult educators need practical tools to do their work. Often they are good at philosophical statements, but not very good at designing the tools needed to transform philosophical principles into practical action. One often feels that this is a major block to progressive practices in this field. Adult educators are given a thorough understanding of the ideological flaws in traditional teaching practices, but are not provided with clear examples of how to make adult education work well.

The writers feel that this may be equally true of 'participatory research'. The ideological implications of this approach were clear when Freire first pulled these concepts together back in the mid-60s:

a) participation as both goal and method

b) learning as a dynamic, two-way transaction rather than as a one-way banking operation

c) the researcher as participant and animateur

d) research as a tool for critical consciousness and social transformation.

But what is now needed are clear and manageable tools which can be used by the large number of adult educators in making Freire's philosophy operational.

Participatory research has been defined as 'a three-pronged activity: a method of social investigation involving the full participation of the community; an educational process; a means of taking action for development' (Hall, 1978). It has also been described as 'working with the poorest groups in the analysis of their own needs' (Hall, 1978). One implication of both of these definitions is that techniques need to be developed which can be used on a massive scale. The alternative options are mass media or techniques

which can be used by village-level development workers and animateurs. Radio, the most effective mass medium, tends to be a 'top-down' medium, and one which has difficulty in responding to the unique concerns of various parts of the country. At best, it can provide a high-quality discussion 'code' on a common national problme in the form of a 'problem-drama' - but by itself it cannot organize an active response by its listening audience. For this, it needs to rely on development workers and local leaders operating on the front line.

The task then is to work out a methodology which can be managed by village-level animateurs and development workers and to train them to use these methods. These workers need more than an ideological grounding in Freire's educational philosophy. They need techniques which:

1) are clear and manageable, and
2) reflect the philosophy of participatory research.

What are the requirements of such a methodology? The following list has been suggested:

1) the problem originates in the community itself and the problem is defined, analyzed and solved by the community;
2) the ultimate goal of research is the radical transformation of social reality and the improvement of the lives of people involved. The beneficiaries of the research are the members of the community itself;
3) participatory research involves the full and active participation of the community in the entire research process;
4) participatory research involves a whole range of powerless groups of people - the exploited, the poor, the oppressed, the marginal, etc.;
5) the process of participatory research can create a greater awareness in the people of their own resources and mobilizes them for self-reliant development;

6) it is a more scientific method of research in that the participation of the community in the research process facilitates a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality;

7) the researcher is a committed participant and learner in the process of research, militant rather than detached' (Hall, 1978).

In operational terms, this would require:

1) ways of bringing people together - since many of the poorest groups are currently turned off by or excluded from development programmes;

2) some type of problem identification and priority-setting process;

3) a codification process which is both participatory and manageable;

4) ways of getting people to respond to the "code" in an active way.

Popular Theatre and Participatory Research

One method that fulfills these requirements is popular and participatory theatre used as a tool for conscientization.

'But what is popular theatre? We have chosen to define it as "people's theatre speaking to the common man in his language and idiom and dealing with problems of direct relevance to this situation". It is 'popular' because it attempts to involve the whole community, not just a small elite determined by class or education. But it is more than 'high art occasionally toured around the boondocks bringing culture to the deprived masses' (Brookes, 1974). Its use of local languages and participatory style and its attempt to reflect the audience's own situation from their perspective makes it their theatre rather than an imposition.

Popular theatre can be an effective tool in conscientization programmes:

1) as entertainment, it can attract and hold the interest of large numbers of people;

2) as an oral medium in local languages, it can involve the poorest

groups and classes who are often left out of development activities because of their illiteracy or lack of understanding of English;

3) as dramatic representation of local problems, it provides a codification of reality which can be used by the participants in analyzing their situation;

4) as a collective expression and a communal activity, it creates the context for co-operative rather than individual thinking and action - it creates the possibility for horizontal communication or peer learning, rather than top-down one-way communication.

The most important feature of popular theatre is its representation of local situations and problems (codification). It is this which makes it a powerful tool for education. People see themselves and their situation in a fresh way and want to talk about these problems with others. Through discussion (which follows every performance), people can share their ideas about these problems and see what can be done about them. Often this leads to practical action. It is this combination of performance and discussion which characterizes the use of popular theatre in conscientization programmes.

Another important feature is that it is participatory. The theatre form used is one that everyone can manage. It operates on the principle that anyone can learn to play a role, improvise dialogue, or handle a puppet. Extensive rehearsals or memorized lines would discourage participation. So instead of a heavily scripted approach, the performances are based on improvization, enthusiasm, and a plot line which is worked out by the actors themselves. This approach works well precisely because the actors are familiar with the issues and the situations they are presenting (since they are their issues) and develop their dialogue, gesture, and action in response to each other and the audience, rather than having to remember a fixed script. By

keeping the form rough and simple, popular theatre can be kept within the control and use of local people and it can therefore be used on a mass scale.

As a medium for codification, drama is much more manageable in a grass roots programme than pictures. It can be produced locally whereas pictures often require specialist artistic skills which are not available in every community. (In Freire's programmes in Brazil and Chile, the pictures were centrally produced rather than developed by each study circle.) Drama also has the capacity for a multi-dimensional and dynamic representation of reality in contrast with pictures which can only represent a static situation and are often incapable of reflecting complex issues. Finally, by using drama the group is involved not only in studying the code but in creating it - and this process itself involves an element of analysis. Also as a collective activity it helps in producing group solidarity and the potential for collective thinking and action.

Film and videotape have also been used as 'codes' for conscientization programmes. (Canadian National Film Board, 1970-1978; Belkin, 1971-1972). However, both of these tools involve expensive equipment, technical skills, or a maintenance capacity which prevents them from being used by village-level development workers on a massive scale (Mbughuni, 1977). Drama is a much more appropriate technology for mass social transformation programmes since:

a) everyone can handle it

b) it is inexpensive and has no technical limitations

c) as an already familiar medium (drawing on indigenous creative expression) it provides an acceptable means of bringing development issues into the community.

This latter aspect of drawing on local cultural experssion is very important.

> In many communities of limited literacy, the habitual response is "We can't speak, we have no education". There is a belief in educational inferiority and there seems to be almost a compulsion for self-denigration before the mystique of education. Yet many people in these communities, because they are not influenced or inhibited by extensive schooling, have a great oral tradition of story-telling, versifying, singing and so on. They can be witty and colourful and the language is sometimes richer than the homogenized textbook variety. Making use of this talent can change attitudes toward the educational mystique. (Low, 1974, p.24)

Low's point is very important. Folk media enthusiasts have emphasized the familiarity of the medium (UNESCO, 1972). What is more important is that people are good at it. This makes it immediately useful as a force for increasing self-confidence. By neglecting indigenous creative expression, we "inhibit people from active participation in the process of modernization, because an abrupt denigration of traditional forms of culture means denial of access to a kind of literacy to which they have been used" (Mathur, 1968). On the other hand, by using a popular theatre which makes use of local forms of cultural expression, "the creative forces that reside in the people are being brought to bear on the development process" (Sherlock, 1975).

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the popular theatre performance is not the whole experience.[1] It is the initial catalyst for a programme of education and action.[2] It is used in a deliberately functional sense, not as

---

[1] This is true in the second case study where discussion becomes part of the performances - performance and discussion become an integrated whole.

[2] Bro Russell and his Ghanaian colleagues have experimented with the use of performance not only in the initial motivation stage but also in the follow-up action programme. In the latter case performances are used to provoke discussion on some of the problems in implementing the action programme.

an end in itself but as a medium of social transformation. In this way art becomes socially relevant and part of a larger concern for the creation of a more humane and justly ordered society.

Since 1974, adult educators in Botswana have been experimenting with popular theatre as a tool for participatory research and programming. The initial experiment called Laedza Batanani, was a community education programme in northern Botswana involving heavy community participation. Its success encouraged other groups of development workers in Botswana to experiment with this approach. To promote this work and provide suitable training a national inter-agency committee was formed under the leadership of the University's Institute of Adult Education.

We have selected four different examples of this work to illustrate the range of objectives, subject matter, techniques, research and organizing methods, and contexts in which popular theatre has been used.

CASE STUDY A: COMMUNITY EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

The first case is the community education campaign. This is best exemplified by Laedza Batanani, the first experiment in popular-theatre-based participatory programming.[3]

Laedza means "wake up - it's time to get moving!"; Batanani means "let's come together and work together". The notion of Laedza Batanani then, is to provide an occasion where the community is drawn together, is 'woken up' to their situation, and discusses what might be done about it.

The venue for this annual event is the Kgotla - the village meeting place. In the past, the kgotla was a powerful medium for community decision-making and a major part of village life. It was a vehicle par excellence for educating a community as a community. Since Independence, with the declining role of traditional leaders, it has lost its influence and no longer draws large participation. Laedza Batanani chose to resurrect its community education function by providing:

1) a stimulus for attending such a meeting

2) a medium for presenting community issues in a powerful way, so that people would want to talk about them

3) a new, more participatory, means of organizing discussion within the kgotla, i.e., small group discussion.

---

[3]For a detailed description of the Laedza Batanani community education campaigns, see "Laedza Batanani: Popular Theatre and Development - A Botswana Case Study" by Ross Kidd and Martin Byram, in Convergence, Vol.10, No.2, October, 1977.

Each campaign is a community-organized effort: community representatives attend a pre-campaign planning workshop (in which priority issues are identified), and participate in back-up support for the festival and in the actual festival performances. Two local Councillors provide the overall leadership for each campaign. The University's Institute of Adult Education was largely responsible for initiating this programme. Each campaign also involved the extension workers in the area, either as local organizers (of community participation), or as members of the mobile team of actor-animateurs.

Each year the campaign team tours the five major villages in the area. In each village, the campaing team puts on a one and one-half hour performance, including drama, puppetry, dancing, singing, and drumbeat poetry. After each performance, the actors and other extension workers in the area divide the audience into groups and organize discussion of the problems presented. Discussion is organized in a "Freirean" manner, starting with an 'objective' look at the problems presented in the performance, and then moving to a discussion of the problems as they affect members of the audience and what might be done about them. A recent innovation is a post-campaign follow-up programme of practical demonstrations and other forms of support (e.g., seed distribution for vegetable gardens), organized by the development workers to help people move from discussion to action.

The issues presented through drama, puppetry, songs and dances are determined in a precampaign workshop of community leaders and extension workers. In the first four years of Laedza Batanani, they have included concerns about cattle theft, inflation and unemployment, the effect on community and family of migrant labour and the drift to the towns, conflict between modern and traditional practices, the school-leaver probelms, and family and health problems.

Issue identification at the community workshops starts with an initial

'brainstorming' session in small groups in which all possible issues are listed quickly on newsprint. (One of these lists produced at the first workshop is given in Appendix A.) Later, working again in small groups, participants select those issues which they feel are the most pressing and which they feel people are willing to do something about. Criteria for this choice includes;

a) small tasks which people can easily achieve (e.g., clean-up campaigns rather than a large infrastructural project);

b) problems which require a local response rather than government action;

c) problems whose solutions can easily be supported by regular extension work.

Once the campaign issues are agreed, some of the participants are selected to attend an actors' workshop where detailed analysis of each of the issues in made in turn. This involves:

a) listing people's knowledge, attitudes and practice with respect to each problem;

b) identifying from this list the key constraints (e.g., misbeliefs, lack of resources);

c) deciding which of these constraints might be successfully challenged and which current practices should be built on and supported.

Through this analysis, participants work out a clear set of objectives and problems to be presented as a preliminary step to 'scriptin' the drama, puppet play, dance, and song.

In all of these discussions the final yardstick is realism. Important constraints are identified but only those that are considered to be amenable to change are introduced. For example, many people get ineffective treatment for VD from the traditional doctor, yet to discourage the use of traditional medecine would only antagonize people. In this situation, the actors chose

as the main message men's responsibility for telling their lovers (since VD is difficult to detect in women). Similarly in the discussions on sanitation, the actors decided that the promotion of toilets at this stage would be unrealistic. Very few families have the resources or the motivation to build a toilet. As an alternative, the festival promoted the digging of a trench by each family and the practice of taking a shovel to cover one's excreta.

The object of all these sessions is to clarify how the villagers perceive a problem before dramatizing it. Considerable care is taken to avoid being 'propagandistic', i.e., promoting government solutions and packaged answers in a direct and mechanical way, without first presenting the problems as perceived by local people. The role of the performance is to create an awareness of the problem and the motivation to do something about it. It is the field workers' job in the follow-up programme to provide any techniques needed to solve the problem.

Evaluation studies to date have revealed the following:

1) the campaigns have been successful in attracting large numbers of people, many of whom have not participated before in development activities.
2) spectators recognize the relevance of the popular theatre performances and their value as a stimulus for discussion. Local people have also praised the festival for making it possible to discuss issues which otherwise could not be discussed. "It is an interesting way of bringing social pressure to bear on people - easier than wives on their own trying to argue with their husbands. The drama helps to show men what women don't like."
3) the campaigns have stimulated active participation of local people in a range of activities, including the planning and running of the Festival;
4) the campaings have been particularly responsible for some changes: harsher

cattle theft laws, better attendances at village meetings, and increased clinic attendance for VD treatment. It also seems apparent that campaign messages have spread to many people who didn't attend the campaign.

5) Laedza Batanani has provided a model for cooperative programming and has helped develop a sense of teamwork among development workers in the area.

This programme of popular theatre has not only provided development workers with a new technique. It has also helped in challenging 'top-down' overly technical approaches to non-formal education. By giving field workers a 'non-prescriptive' teaching approach, popular theatre has helped them start to see themselves in a new role - not as mere links between centrally determined technical information and rural families, but as catalysts in motivating people to look at the problems themselves, analyze constraints, and examine alternative solutions. This demonstration of the potential in participatory programming constitutes an important change in non-formal education practice in Botswana.

The involvement of village-level development workers as performers is the significant feature of Botswana's theatre-based NFE programme. By virtue of their participation the programme is no longer a one-off event as it would tend to be if organized by theatre professionals. The performance is one part of an education/action programme, including post-performance discussion and other ways of promoting an active response to the performance. This involvement of field staff works well. Most extension workers can combine their understanding of the local situation with a flair for acting. Having tried out popular theatre, they become very excited about its potential as a way of challenging people's response to problems. Their relative success in using this apporach has given them lot of self-confidence and encourages them to use popular theatre in their regular work. One immediate implication

is that there is no problem in integrating popular theatre work with regular extension work since the same people are doing both jobs.

Laedza Batanani started as an experiment run by government extension workers but has blossomed into a community movement whose chief principles are participation and self-reliance. It has demonstrated that it is possible to mobilize local people to volunteer their time and effort in planning and running their own educational programme. Local participation and leadership has become a reality, not only in performance but also in planning and organization. People are also beginning to accept the principle of 'self-reliance' - of not waiting for government to do everything. Laedza Batanani provides a clear example of the potential in harnessing local energies and initiative for adult education and development. This community movement could become a powerful local institution, providing in cooperation with the extension agencies a wide range of local initiatives within the area.

CASE STUDY B: POPULAR THEATRE AND RESETTLEMENT EDUCATION

Basarwa[1] have lived as cattle-workers and squatters on cattle ranches in western Botswana for the last 50 years. A recent government survey revealed that they had a strong desire to get their own land in order to escape the exploitation of the farms. Government has allocated land and provided bore-holes for four new communities. These new settlements will be given other basic services (e.g., primary school and health post) but beyond that, the Basarwa must find their own resources to develop their communities as they see fit.

---

[1] In the past, "Basarwa" were more popularly referred to as "bushmen".

Government has been organizing a series of workshops for each new group of settlers before they move to the new communities. The purpose of each meeting is to give the new settlers an opportunity to meet with each other (since they come from different farms and often don't know one another), and to start talking about the problems and issues related to life on the new settlement.

The background to these meetings is dependence. As employees on these large cattle-ranches, the Basarwa rely not only on the food rations they are given, but also on the milk of cattle they are tending. They have been conditioned to depend on these meagre yet regular wages, in the form of rations, and many have lost their traditional skills in hunting. In the past, they have also been dependent on water sources owned by the cattle ranchers and have had no access to land for ploughing or grazing their own cattle. They are not allowed to keep livestock or plant crops on the ranches where they work. But now that they have their own land and water on the new settlement, they can no longer count on rations from the ranches. They have to overcome this hand-out conditioning, and rediscover their original habits of self-reliance.

Various methods were tried out to make these community meetings work well. Lectures and question-and-answer sessions tended to reinforce the passivity and dependence of the participants. It made them sit back and listen to government representatives tell them what to do, rather than provoking them to tackle the problems themselves. Small group discussions seemed too academic, requiring an academic response only; they failed to generate the necessary enthusiasm and involvement.

In this situation, we turned to participatory drama as a much more dynamic tool. Drama stimulates not only an analytical response, but also an emotional or spiritual response. It is a much more organic and integrated medium -

the issues become alive because the participants are no longer talking academically about a future situation; they are in that situation and responding in an imaginative and creative way to the pressures and problems of that situation.

It is more atuned to the organic way in which Basarwa relate to life. Their own forms of drama - story-telling and dance-dramas - are woven into the fabric of everyday life. By using this already familiar medium, Basarwa can use their own cultural tools to understand and deal with the rapid change in their situation.

For each workshop, the meeting place is set up as a theatre-in-the-round, with easy access for the participants in the outer circle to join the original set of actors (about ten men and women in the middle).

The drama starts according to an agreed plot worked out beforehand. The new settlers are gathered around a fire at the new community. They are talking about the borehole and how they can afford to run and maintain it. Then conversation shifts to subsistence. Each gives his or her proposal. One gets angry and threatens to back to the farms. The group tells him to wait and hear what government says. Several say they should ask government for rations and diesel for the borehole engine.

Then two government officers arrive. The Basarwa act submissive and servile. The senior government officer (talking in Setswana) paints a pretty picture, praising government's contribution (land, borehole, school, health post), and exhorting them to work hard and build their own communities. "Remember, self-reliance is a national principle and we expect everyone to support it." He continues in this vague and indirect but diplomatic way. Then it is the translator's turn. Speaking in Sesarwa, he is very short and blunt: "What he is saying is - no rations, no petrol for your borehole engine. You're on your own. We're giving you nothing!" The Basarwa ask a few questions

to confirm this view. When they realize they can get nothing more out of government, the questioning stops. The government officers leave.

This background context is very carefully demonstrated so that everyone understands and begins to identify immediately with this imaginary yet realistic situation. Government's unwillingness to provide "everything" for the settlers is hammered home with lots of repetition so that people's expectations become adjusted to the real situation right from the beginning.

The rest of the drama is built around this basic situation - a group discussion around a fire. Other events come along to disrupt this, but group returns each time to this core situation, in which the implications of each new event are discussed or presented in mime.

Once the actors catch the spirit and start to feel themselves realistically in that situation, the "play" takes off. New situations and issues develop as people start to deal in an imaginative way with each other and their new situation. These are fed into the drama from the 'inside' or 'outside'. Actors create new situations themselves or participants in the outer circle join the drama bringing in new problems. The organizers feed in issues where necessary, by briefing certain participants in the outer circle to take a problem into the drama of joining the drama themselves in the role of government officers.

At the first workshop where this technique was used, the actors started to improvise their reaction to the opening situation entirely spontaneously. They started to mime how they would use their hunting and collecting skills to give them food and how they would make leather goods and handicrafts for sale. They sent a delegation to see the government about handicraft production. A few men returned to the farms to work on behalf of the group. One man from the 'audience' played the role of a Boer coming to hire men as trackers - the men refused to go, saying he first had to get clearance from the District Council.

Other problem situations which have come up in these workshops have included:

a) a man returning sick from the farms

b) game scouts chasing poachers

c) police investigating cattle theft

d) report that borehole has borken down

e) men complaining about the difficulty of getting supplies from the nearest town

f) farm worker complaining aobut life on the farms

g) a Mosarwa from a different 'tribe' coming to join the settlement

h) arrival of a government officer.

It becomes a type of simulation game without documents and role cards. It is less structured than the typical simulation game - the events are not pre-packaged or scripted. There is room for participants to choose the issues and situations which are important for them. It gives them the opportunity to paint their own future in an imaginative yet realistic way. Instead of the learning experience being structured for them (by government officials), they choose what is important, they determine what is possible. And because of the sense of community, of collective expression that is found in Basarwa life, the statements and actions of the acting group become in one sense collective statements for the whole group. The actors (who change throughout this continuous play) are speaking for all the participants.

The role-playing provides an opportunity for participants to explore their new situation, to experience working with a new group of people, to escape from passivity and dependence, and even to test out agressive behaviour (e.g., demanding their rights from government, employers, etc.). It is a way of testing out behaviour without being threatened by the real life consequences of the action. A Mosarwa who strikes back against an arrogant

'boss' in a drama is not subject to the consequences of this action in real life. Yet if the play-acting is realistic, people can learn from it.

This type of simulation game is used to help participants begin to understand and deal with some of the problems in their future situation. It works to the extent that the Basarwa are able to see themselves in that situation. Some anthropologists have said that the Basarwa cannot deal with the future. The working hypothesis here is that participatory drama provides a much more effective medium for identifying with that future situation than listening to a talk or discussing these issues in an academic way.

This type of theatre is based upon immediate experience. It grows spontaneously from the audience's participation and their emotional response to the situation. At best it is almost unconscious - the audience becoms involved without knowing that they are being involved. There is a certain element of risk, since the participants themselves determine what situations are important - they may choose to be passive or to represent a totally fatalistic outlook. Yet the element of risk is important: it is the placing of the 'power' of role-playing directly into the hands of the participants which makes this approach liberating (University of Massachusetts, 1975).

In this use of theatre, discussion becomes part of the performance rather than something separate from it. Critical analysis of each event develops spontaneously. Each new event is discussed 'around the fire' by the actors and also by the audience who are watching.

In simulation games you often have a 'control' function to stop or correct responses in the game situation. In this case the 'control' function is shared among all the participants. When anyone seen something unrealistic, he points it out. Where there is a lack of information, the organizers and the other government resource people intervene, but doing this 'in role'.

This simulation game provides the basic core of the community workshop. for variety, it is mixed with:

a) buzz groups (within the theatre-in-the-round seating pattern)

b) small group discussion

c) drama creation in small groups.

CASE STUDY C: POPULAR THEATRE AND FREIREAN LITERACY WORK

Popular theatre has also been used in literacy work in Botswana. The Freirean apporach used in this programme is particularly needed in Botswana where resignation or fatalism is a direct product of harsh environmental conditions and social relationships. Drought is a regular feature of life, destroying initiative and making many people dependent on others. Some are forced by these conditions (about one-third of the male labour force) to find a livelihood in South Africa where their dependence is further reinforced. Many of those who remain behind have no cattle or land of their own and are totally dependent on meagre wages from cattle owners. The Freirean method provides one means of challenging the prevailing apathy, of encouraging people to take responsibility for dealing with their situation.

In Brazil and Chile, Freire used pictures to spark off discussion. In experimenting with this medium in Botswana, it was discovered that pictures were not a sufficient stimulus for discussion. Often participants had difficulty understanding the context of a picture. In many cases, the pictures could only provide a narrow image of the whole issue and for some issues it was difficult to find a suitable representation. For these reasons the literacy programme organizers decided to add an additional medium - story-telling - as a catalyst for discussion. As a more versatile medium than pictured, stories can provide a clearer context and deal with issues

that are not presented visually. In combination with pictures, stories can be used to present fictitious yet realistic situations familiar to the learners as the basis for sparking of discussion on similar situations and problems faced by the learner.

The stories are produced on the basis of:

1) problem research in the target villages (i.e., open-ended discussion with small groups of adults contacted in a very informal way - at the water supply, outside the clinic, at beer parties, and at individual homes;

2) problem analysis and story writing in a material production workshop (similar to the Laedza Batanani pre-campaign community workshop).

In the literacy group sessions, these stories are read out by the literacy animateur and then discussed by the group. (A flipchart picture representing a critical incident in the story provides an additional focus for the discussion.) In several cases they have been actually dramatized by the group. Outside the study meetings some groups have used drama as a technique for getting others in the village talking about some of the issues the literacy groups are discussing.

Groups have staged performances on TB, malnutrition, sanitation, and over-drinking for public meetings at the kgotla, clinic or community centre. In a few cases, this has provided the impetus for community-wide action on these issues.

In both cases, drama is more than an object for analysis and discussion. It is an important experience for the literacy participants in developing self-confidence - a major objective of the literacy programme. It demonstrates to participants that they already have a kind of literacy that works well.

Direct quotes from the problem research interviews are later used in writing the "problem stories" so that they reflect both the perspective and expressions of potential literacy participants. Some examples are:

-To plough is to gamble. Even if you plough early enough, the rains may disappear and your crops die.

-Nutrition means money. The only balanced food for children is found at the shop.

-Women are looking after children while men are busy enjoying life. When you warn your husband about leaving you alone with the children, he beats you and his girlfriend beats you too.

-If there is no rain, there is no life - we can't plough and we're forced to go to South Africa.

-When we try to warn young people about their misbehaviour, they say that we have no education, no civilization. What is needed is hard lashes at the kgotla.

-We go to the mines in South Africa because here in our country we're not the 'right type of people for work'. They keep saying - "Where's your certificate or experience?" We don't know when we're going to get this 'experience' because we never get jobs.

-Prices go up because of those [illegible] enough to have jobs getting increases in their salaries. They go up because of "Development", but this really hurts the poor and causes hunger.

-We don't like this business of applying for land from the Land Board. Soon we'll be told to buy land as if we're buying a tractor. Because of the difficulty of getting the grain to the depot, we're forced to sell them to the Boers who come and cheat us with low prices. Later in summer they sell them back to us at high prices.

-Hunting is like buying mealie-meal..you've got to pay for it. But we can't afford the licenses. Wild animals destroy our crops but government won't let us hunt them.

-If you're married, you have to accept what your husband says, even if you disagree. Sometimes you're taken to the lands to spend the rest of your life there not coming to town.

-Firewood has become a business. People come in trucks and steal all our wood. Our area is completely bare. We now have to walk miles to find even one stick of wood. And it's hard to get wood without a wagon, because they're all as fat as England.

Drama has also been used in the organizational and leadership training stages of the project. In publicizing the literacy programme at the kgotla, extension staff in each village put on a drama about illiteracy. This has proven to be an effective device for recruiting literacy animateurs and participants. In training workshops for literacy animateurs, drama has played a major role:

- as a warm-up exercise which helps in building confidence and active participation;
- as a technique practices at the leaders' workshop for use with literacy groups;
-as codes for developing the critical awareness of the leaders themselves ...in particular challenging their view of how they should relate to their literacy group.

For the latter purpose, a special puppet play was devised which dramatizes in a bold, hard-hitting way the contrast between authoritarian and non-authoritarian styles of leadership.

CASE STUDY D: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND EXTENSION WORK IN APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY

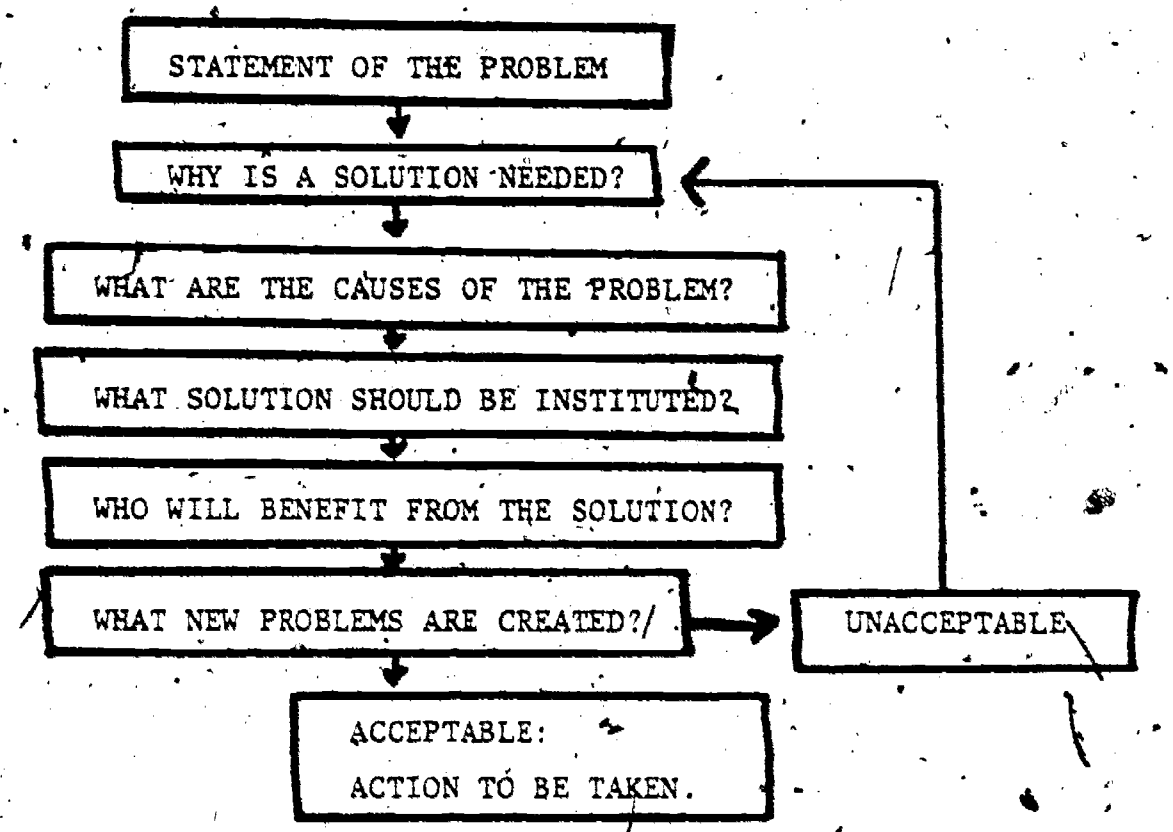
Botswana's Rural Industries Innovation Centre (RIIC), which was established in 1974, combines a research and extension function with the design of appropriate technologies for rural development. In order to guide their future activities, RIIC started with a research project to discover the problems, preferred solutions, and priorities of villages near their centre. This coincided with a similar interest in 'consultation' - as a preliminary step in drawing up the district development plan - by district officials. They decided to combine their efforts.

Teams of field workers were trained to interview members of every village development committee in the district. The interviews were open-ended and attempted to engage the participants in a dialogue on their situation: This consultation process was seen as more than mere data collection; it was also designed as an education programme in which participants started to develop a critical understanding of their situation and some of the directions in which they could act. It demonstrated in clear terms the people's role in defining and directing the development process. This was reflected in the programme slogan: "To be fully human an individual should be free to be critical of and creative with his own environment" (Carothers, 1977).

Each dialogue went beyond a mere listing of common complaints. Participants' surface level perceptions were challenged and participants were encouraged to reflect more critically about each of the statements they made. As a problem-solving discussion, participants were involved not only in describing

their problems in detail, but also in working out and analyzing possible solutions. Where necessary, additional factual information was provided - for example, on alternative technologies - but in a way that was as culturally neutral as possible. The interviewers avoided 'selling' technologies in a propagandistic way; participants were involved in assessing the the suitability of each proposed technology - its raw materials, design, usefulness, cost and cultural acceptability.

The dialogue followed this sequence of steps:



For RIIC this initial baseline research represented only the first stage of a continuing dialogue with villages on their problems, alternative ways of solving them (technical and human), and strategies for action. Their extension staff are currently experimenting with puppetry and drama as a codification of the priority issues identified in the first stage research - in order to regenerate the dialogue in each village. Again, performance is seen as the catalyst - a vivid way of presenting issues so that people want to talk about them. Discussion will follow a similar format to the one described on the previous page. Initially they are working out single-theme, 'pre-packaged' puppet plays performed by their own staff. Later, when they feel more confident with this medium, they may move to more participatory theatre, working out drama sketches on the spot with local people.

In this case, drama and puppetry are seen as important devices for 'humanizing' the technology. Without this, there is a danger of the technologies becoming paramount and a rift emerging between them and their social situation: on the other hand, they are poor at demonstrating the construction or use of technologies. Their job is to 'situate' the technologies, to demonstrate how these technologies can relate to day-to-day life in the village, to reflect the problems for which the techniques provide a solution.

Analysis

There are six steps in conscientization programmes:

1. problem identification
2. problem analysis
3. codification (putting the problems into a code, e.g., picture or drama)
4. presentation of code
5. discussion of code
6. action

TYPE OF PROGRAMME	1) PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION	2) PROBLEM ANALYSIS	3) CODIFICATION	4) PRESENTATION OF CODE	5) DISCUSSION OF CODE	6) ACTION
A Community Education Campaigns (e.g. Laedza Batanani)	Workshop of community leaders & extension staff: problem listing & priority selection	Actors workshop: KAP study and analysis of constraints	Actors workshop: agreement on plot and characterization then improvisation	Kgotla presentation by mobile team of actor-animateurs	Small group problem-solving discussion in kgotla led by actors	Follow-up programme run by extension workers integrated with the regular work of extension staff.
B Empirical Theatre/ Simulation Game (e.g., Resettlement Education)	Spontaneous response to situation - part of performance, not separate from it.		Improvisation in response to simulated situation	'Participatory' theatre: presentation by the whole group	A spontaneous part of performance, not separate from performance	
C Freirean Literacy Work	Open-minded, informal-discussion of problems with groups selected at random in target area	Literacy staff workshop: KAP study and analysis of constraints	Literacy staff workshop: story written for each problem incorporating direct quotes from research	1) story reading by literacy group leader, or 2) dramatization by literacy group members	Literacy group problem-solving discussion facilitated by flip-chart picture of key incident in story (drama)	Action by literacy group including public drama presentation to motivate participation by whole community
D Extension Work in Appropriate Technology	Problem-solving discussion with village development committee (following fixed sequence of questions)		RIIC staff workshop: problem-drama (puppet play) prepared for each priority problem	Kgotla presentation by RIIC staff	Problem - solving discussion with village development committee	Construction and use of appropriate technologies, assisted by RIIC

Of course, the process does not end with 'action' - it is cyclical. 'Action' leads back into reflection and the process continues. The way in which each step is organized, in the different programmes, is summarized in the table on page 26.

The main points to be drawn out of this comparative table are given below:

In Case Study B, problem identification, analysis and codification are done within the context of the performance and involve all the participants. In the other three cases, these steps are done before the performance by some members of the community and the programme orgainzers.

In Laedza Batanani (Case Study A), these steps involve the community leaders and extension workers. This represents a progressive step away from imposing a message straight from government. Yet the community leaders who attend the workshop tend to be drawn exclusively from the wealthier, cattle-owning, section of the community. This accounts for the inclusion of class-specific issues (e.g., cattle theft) and the lack of strong political content.[1]

In RIIC's initial consultation programme (Case Study D), they balanced their interviews of the village development committee - an organization mainly composed of the village elite - with discussions among some of the poorer members of the community.[2] In the literacy project (Case Study C),

---

[1]Cattle theft is not a poor man's issue. 45% of rural households own no cattle at all, while 5% own 50% of the cattle. Most of those without cattle do not plant anything or plant late because of difficulties in getting draught animals. (Rural Income Distribution Survey, 1974)

[2]They concluded, however, that the VDC did represent fairly accurately the views of the whole community. (Carothers, 1977)

the organizers deliberately set out to discover the concerns and issues of the less privileged section of the community. For this purpose, informal interviews with small groups in different parts of the village worked well.

In all the programmes, the performance attempts to reflect the issues from the perspective of the participants: This is not a learning resource created in the capital city. It is drawn out of a process of dialogue with members of the community and attempts to be an accurate representation of the issues raised in that dialogue. In the literacy case, the actual works of people in the community (recorded in the field research) are used in the stories. In the other cases, the involvement of community members as actors and the use of improvisation makes the performance a true picture of local issues and idioms.

In all cases, the performance raises the issues only; it is not prescriptive, there are no pre-packaged answers. Working out an appropriate solution is left to the discussion and this comes only after a critical analysis of the problems themselves. This is particularly important in Case D: technology is kept under harness, subservient to the participatory process of determining its use in the context of solving important community problems. It is this patient and sustained commitment to a process of dialogue which keeps RIIC's extension work 'honest', which makes it legitmate to use the label 'appropriate' technology. The technologies respond to real community needs because they are planned by the community.

In the first three cases, members of the community are involved in the presentation of the code. In the latter case, this will occur once RIIC has developed some confidence and experience with the medium. Involving the learners in performing the code is an effective way of increasing confidence and developing active participation.

However, if popular theatre is to be come truly participatory, there needs

to be more experience in less formal, regular uses of popular theatre (in contrast with its use in a once-a-year campaign or festival). It needs to be seen as a standard technique available to village-level extension staff in their day-to-day work. As 'rough' theatre, it can be easily managed and woven into their everyday work, rather than used as a once-a-year 'gimmick'. It could be used as part of regular presentations at kgotla meetings and clinics, village-level courses, farmers' days, group demonstrations, etc.

Participation and critical reflection are not the only objects of social transformation programmes - there is also 'action'. In the case of 'Laedza Batanani" (Case Study A), a special followup programme is organized by the extension workers to support the action decisions taken in the community discussions. In the literacy project (Case Study B), each group is encouraged to take action on a few modest tasks. In the first year of this project, there was spectacular success. The groups tackled projects which could produce immediate results and their confidence grew. Soon, they were tackling a range of projects:

- organizing public meetings to get others in the village committed to the same problem (e.g., overcharging by transport-owners, veld fires, school-leaver problems)
- taking 'direct action' (e.g., cleaning up the village meeting place, clinic yard, and the area around the shop; raising funds through concerts, making handicrafts, selling food)
- consulting those responsible to make changes (e.g., asking shopkeepers to improve their service; complaining to the local Councillor about a dam polluted by hospital sewage)
- inviting field workers to give talks and demonstrations.

One factor accounting for this success is that the literacy groups were together over a sustained period of time and were able to develop a spirit of solidarity and mutual commitment. This factor explains why the RIIC programme (Case Stucy D) seems to have the most potential in making the process of critical reflection lead to social action. They have made a long-term commitment to a continuing and year-round dialogue with groups in the villages they are serving. Action - in this case experimental use of various technologies by village groups - will itself become the basis for further reflection. Some of the constraints and problems encountered at the action stage could be codified through drama or puppetry as the focus for further discussion and analysis (Russell, 1977).

CONCLUSION

Experience in Botswana has shown that popular theatre can play an important role in social transformation programmes, expanding participation and self-confidence and providing a mirror for critical analysis and a stimulus for discussion and action. For the field worker it represents not only a new teaching tool, but a totally new approach for working with rural communities. It is a practical tool which helps in making Freire's educational philosophy operational. As 'rough or simple' theatre, it is a manageable technique and therefore capable of involving and being kept within the control of local people. It is as yet under-utilized, but it has an amazing potential as a conscientizing and mobilizing force contributing to progressive social change.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, Tevia "Folk Theatre in Maharashtrian Social Development Programmes" in Educational Theatre Journal, October 1975, pp 395-407.

Asian Cultural Forum on Development Asian Action: Special Issue on "Asian Rural Drama", No.7, March/April, 1977.

Belkin, Gerald Reports on Tanzania Year 16 Project (1971-1972), Canadian Hunger Foundation, Ottawa, Canada.

Brookes, Chris "Useful Theatre in Sall's Cove" in This Magazine, Toronto, Vol.8, No.2, June 1974.

Carothers, Richard "Southern District Consultation", Southern District Council and Rural Industries Innovation Centre, Kanye, Botswana, 1977.

Colletta, Nat "The Use of Indigenous Culture as a Medium for Development: The Indonesian Case" in Prisma, Indonesian Journal of Social and Economic Affairs, Vol.1, No. 2, 1975.

Etherton, Michael and Crow, Brian "Wasan Manoma: Community Theatre in the Soba District of Kaduna State, Nigeria", unpublished article, Ahmadu Bello University, 1977.

Freire, Paulo "Research Methods" in Studies in Adult Education, Institute of Adult Education, University of Dar es Salaam, June 1973.

..... Education for Critical Consciousness, Seabury Press, New York, 1973.

Hall, Budd Report on Participatory Research Project, International Council for Adult Education, Toronto, 1978.

Kidd, Ross and Byram, Martin "Laedza Batanani - Popular Theatre and Development: A Botswana Case Study" in Convergence, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1977.

Kidd, Ross "Go Bala ke Tswelelopele: Botswana Case Study of a Freirean Literacy Pilot Project", paper produced for the Fifth Biennial Pan-African Literacy Seminar, organized by AFROLIT, Nairobi, December, 1977.

Leis, Raul "Teatro Popular" in Communicacion Popular: Teoria y Practica, Centro de Communicacion Popular (CECOP), Panama, 1976.

Low, Colin "Media as Mirror" in A Resource for the Active Community, Canadian Radio-Television Commission, Ottawa, 1974.

Mathur, J.C. "Cultural Role of Mass Media in Transitional Societies" in Convergence, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1968.

Mbughuni, L. "Appropriate Audio-Visual Communications Technology in Tanzania", an unpublished report for UNESCO, University of Dar es Salaam, 1977.

National Film Board of Canada Challenge for Change/Access Newsletter (1970-1978), Montreal, Canada.

Russell, Bro Unpublished report on a Popular Theatre Project in Ghana. Institute of Adult Education, University of Ghana, 1977.

Sherlock, Phillip Letter to the authors, May 1975.

University of Massachusetts "Empirical Theatre" in An Approach to Non-Formal Education in Ecuador, Centre for International Education, Amherst, Massachusetts, 1975.

APPENDIX A

(Laedza Batanani, 1974-1975)

A) VILLAGE CO-ORDINATION AND GENERAL ISSUES

1. Homesteads in the Bokalaka are scattered. There are no concentrated village settlements and many people live at the lands or cattle posts. There is an increasing tendency to move away from the 'village' and stay more at the lands, often permanently. This scattered population pattern creates problems in communication, siting of services, community cooperation, and general village development.

2. There are seasonal movements of people, related to agricultural activity, between the villages and land area, and this adds to the problems identified in 1. above.

3. Poor development of both homes (villages and lands) because they are far apart. The seasonal migration referred to in 2. often means that neither place is adequately cared for, and in the case of the land area, agricultural development suffers.

4. Conflict between the Central and Ward kgotlas. Attendance at the Central kgotla is low because people live considerable distances away, and are reluctant to travel. Thus, there is a preference for attending meetings at the Ward kgotla with a related shift in loyalty to 'ward' institutions.

5. People living far from the Central kgotla tend to miss out on government information, since the Central kgotla remains the main public meeting places for government extension workers, etc.

6. People have little interest in attending development meetings of the kgotla, VDC or other organizations (e.g., PTA). They tend to be misunderstood and regarded as 'just talk, nothing ever happens'.

7. Court cases involving theft or seduction, however, are much more popular and well-attended. People seem to enhoy the debate and controversy of these sessions.

8. Unpaid headmen are reluctant to attend meetings.

9. Self-help schemes are unpopular. Very few people contribute to self-help projects and there is a preference for 'food-for-work' projects. People are on the whole much more interested in lobbying government to provide services than in raising funds locally for projects.

10. Laws and punishments for criminal offences are too lenient. For example, cattle theft (Bobava) is rampant, but fines for speculators who buy stolen cattle exacerbate the problem. There is also 'stealing for the government' - the practice of stealing cattle from Rhodesia. Many people feel that the only crime is crossing the border fence.

11. There is some dissatisfaction with government (central and district) provision of services for developing the area. There is a general feeling that the area is neglected.

12. Poor relationships between government officers and the people.

13. Schools are no longer where people live, therefore, schools should be moved. This problem is related to the current tendency to stay longer at the lands.

14. Dissatisfaction with social life and recreation in the rural areas.

15. The Kalanga language, it is felt, should be allowed at least as a learning medium in the early school levels, and kgotla meetings.

16. Rhodesia-Botswana border: refugees crossing the border into Botswana and causing confusion; Botswana children crossing into Rhodesia.

B) FAMILY PROBLEMS

1. Tension when the husbands are away in South Africa. There is suspicion by each partner about infidelity.

2. Conflicts about traditional marriage practices: 'Nkumbo' (elopement) and 'Nkadzana' (taking the sister of the wife as 'younger wife').

3. Role of men and women: women often complain that they do all the work while the men are always drinking.

4. Husbands refusal to allow wives to get involved in teaching, voluntary organizations, etc.

5. Juvenile delinquency: lack of parental discipline, particularly with regard to house theft.

6. Elderly people misleading the young, such as a father encouraging his son to drink. This results in children being late for school, pregnancy at an early age, indiscriminate smoking, and gambling and fighting.

7. Young people drifting away to the towns, particularly during the ploughing season when hard work needs to be done.

8. Conflict between parents and children, between young and old, between the educated and the uneducated. The elders' feeling that young people do no give them sufficient respect.

9. Concern about the education of children: "What can I do with children who have failed Standard 7?" Standard 7 failures have no other alternatives and parents often blame automatic promotion. They also feel the use of Setswana as a medium of instruction in primary schools put their children at a disadvantage.

10. Procrastination about work which needs to be done before the rains: if bush clearing, de-stumping, training of oxen, thatching, etc., is not done in time, then there is chaos when the rains come.

C) VALUE CONFLICTS

Value conflicts refer to conflicts between modern and traditional beliefs and behaviour, and the conflict between actual behaviour and acceptable and legally recognized standards of behaviour.

1. Conflict in dressing habits: women wearing mini-skirts, bell-bottoms, etc.; men wearing high-heeled shoes, and plaiting their hair.

2. The dislike of women drinking.

3. Gumba-gumba parties disturb people at night. People believe they encourage prostitution, fighting and juvenile deliquency.

4. Women's demands for increased participation in community life.

5. Conflicting ideas and misconceptions about health practices. Example: beliefs that pregnant women should not attend the clinic as it causes death, that pregnant should not eat eggs, that women not breast-feed their second child if the first one has died.

6. The smoking of dagga, which is illegal.

7. Conflicts between the ideas of the extended family and the money economy; people expect to live off the earnings of money-earning civil servants.

8. People forgetting traditional practices and customs.

9. 'Gumutjende' - hernia disease which causes swollen testicles. People inflicted are afraid to attend the clinic.

D) ECONOMIC CONCERNS

1. Jobs: difficulty of finding local employment and earning money. A feeling that only the educated get jobs.

2. Crop prices: prices offered by the Botswana Marketing Board are felt to be too low.

3. Cattle theft: speculators buy stolen cattle.

4. Veld fires: the laws concerning veld fires are not enforced and consequently much grazing land is destroyed.

5. Cattle and goats are left uncontrolled and land is not fenced so that livestock destroys crops.

6. Harvesting is often done too late. Grain is also poorly stored.

7. Loan rejections: application for loans for agricultural development are often rejected.

8. Disputes over payment for borrowing oxen for ploughing.

9. 'Busukwa' (traditional beer) producers complain of low prices for their beer; measures must be smaller or prices higher.

10. Worries about the Land Board and land allocation.

11. Migrant labour to South Africa: many men go to South Africa to earn money and either spend it while they are there, or on their return, consider themselves to be a 'big shot' and spend it within the space of a week.

E) CONSUMER CONCERNS

1. Inflation: "everything is costing too much."

2. Public transport: fares are too high without any standard charge and the service is inconsistent.

3. Health services are insufficient; the mobile clinic is unreliable.

4. There is no water reticulation. People and cattle need to travel long distances to rivers, boreholes, and wells.

5. There are no social services for the blind, crippled, old and destitute.

6. Butcheries are a health hazard, often selling dead meat.

7. Roads are poor with few 'drifts' across rivers.

8. Lions destroy cattle in the cattle post areas but when people destroy the lions, they are fined without receiving any payment for the sale of the skin.