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# **COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

## Exploring Adolescent Sexuality through Process Drama: Memories of 'For Tomorrow' Project

Edojah Godwin Ukwedeh

### Abstract

*Adolescence is a transitional stage of physical, emotional and cognitive human development occurring before the onset of puberty and ending by adulthood and Sexuality, the expression of interest, orientation, and preference, is a normal part of adolescence. Adolescent sexuality encompasses multiple factors, such as developing intimate partnerships, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion and culture. A stage when they begin to be interested in more intimate relationships. A period of danger for the less informed. As a way of providing this informed choices, two Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Zaria, the Nigerian Popular Theatre Alliance and the Second Chance Organization of Nigeria in collaboration with the Playhouse Birmingham carried out a project. Tagged 'For Tomorrow', employing the use of Process drama and other participatory tools to generate awareness and a better understanding of adolescent sexuality issues and cause behavioural changes on the part of adolescents in their sexual practices. A mode of learning that allows learners of any age to use imagined roles to explore issues, events and relationships. This paper explores the use of Process drama (in this project) to generate awareness and a better understanding of adolescent sexuality issues and cause behavioural changes on the part of adolescents in their sexual practices. In this sense, the paper exposes how the re-enactment of the shared and yet individual experience can potentially serve as stimulus for the discussions in the schools.*

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Young people, Process drama, Participation, Sexuality education

### Introduction

The term "Process Drama" is used to describe the genre of applied theatre in which participants along with their teachers/facilitators create a

dramatic ensemble and engage in a dramatic experience to make meaning for themselves (Bowell & Heap, 2005; Bolton, 1979). Process is purpose; it is ongoing and focuses on the journey rather than the finished product. Process drama is a mode of learning that allows learners of any age to use imagined roles to explore issues, events and relationships (O'Neill & Lambert, 1983: 11). It is dependent on the specific group of people taking part and on the external conditions over which they have little control (O'Toole, 1992).

Process drama has evolved out of the work of Dorothy Heathcote, Gavin Bolton Cecily O'Neill and others who were interested in developing new ways to activate learner imagination by using dramatic structures (Crumpler, Rogers & Schneider, 2006). It is a collective activity which depends on the consensus of all those who are present and involves everyone working together with a common purpose (Neelands, 1984; O'Neill, 1995). Thus, we understand that the drama is realized in the company of others and involves the negotiation and renegotiation of dramatic elements as participants interpret and reinterpret their own views in combination with others in a drama (Crumpler, Rogers & Schneider, 2006). The dramatic experience is unscripted and thus the outcome is unpredictable and every process is unique (Njewe, 2010).

The primary purpose of process drama is to establish an imagined world, a dramatic elsewhere created by the participants as they discover, articulate and sustain imagined roles (O'Neill, 1995). The intention of process drama is to promote a meaningful dramatic experience for its participants that engage them on both critical thinking and emotive level (O'Neill & Lambert, 1983).

It is a tool for learning, thinking and doing and when used effectively allows participants to view the world from multiple perspectives and involves them in situations on which they need to make informed decisions and be able to live with the consequences of their actions (Crumpler, Rogers & Schneider, 2006). The strengths of a process drama lie in its potential as a means for exploring, constructing and making meaning. Process drama enables the participants to look at reality through fantasy, to look below the surface of actions to their meaning, and that is how drama is evoked.

## **Background**

For Tomorrow: Adolescent Health and Sexuality Issues” was developed by the Nigerian Popular theatre Alliance (NPTA) and the Second Chance Organization of Nigeria (SECON) in partnership with the Playhouse Birmingham. The project was developed to use participatory drama to reduce teenage pregnancy, improve the educational participation and the life chances of young women in Zaria and Jos (the project sites) in 2005. This way, the project hoped to build characters and minds for tomorrow. The author of this paper was a facilitator in the project. The schools in Zaria will be the focus of this paper.

The playhouse with its partners NPTA and SECON developed project “For Tomorrow” which was aimed at using a participatory drama and theatre for development approach to reduce teenage motherhood, improve the educational capabilities and so the life chances of young women. It was a response to the high rate of teenage pregnancy occurring among secondary school girls with a correspondingly high number of girls dropping out of school.

In order to achieve these goals, they embarked on a project of sexuality education for adolescents in order to seek ways through which young girls who have dropped out of school could be reintegrated into the educational system. The objectives of the project were:

- a) Researching into and finding out the dropout rates of girls and boys in secondary schools in the target areas.
- b) Conduct workshops for schools on issues of adolescent sexuality, implications of unplanned and unsafe sexual practices such as STDs, HIV/AIDS. These workshops will also be concerned with the relationships of all these to the phenomenon of school dropout.
- c) Bring teachers and students together to discuss the problem of school dropout and of sexuality education in a friendly and mutually respectful atmosphere.
- d) Engage out of school teenager girls and boys in discussing the possibilities of picking up the pieces of their broken lives together again.
- e) Discuss and explore the avenues of reintegrating dropouts back into the formal school system or planning alternatives, but functional educational training for them. These discussions will take place with

several groups and authorities such as school management boards, parent teachers associations and principals. (TFDC project information, 2001).

The project was designed to take several levels of actions in order to meet the objectives set out for the project. Project execution was in five stages; Baseline research, workshops (In- house training of trainers {TOT}, In school training of trainers), Performances in schools and processing the plays presented.

The workshops were in three parts. The first was made up of discussions in schools, made up of different sessions. The first session was a general brain storming session involving both students and teachers while in the second session, the teachers and students were separated to give the students freedom to come out with more information. In The third session, boys and girls were separated so that there will be women to women and men to men discussions. This gave them the chance to hear each other's stories and to forge common identities. They were also able to discuss remedial strategies together. These discussions were to give a clear idea of "What each group knows about sexuality issues", "How each group sees and understands the other" and "What biases they hold about sexuality" (TFDC, 2001:4).

The project on the whole was to focus on skills training in negotiating relationships between male and female. These skills are necessary to build mutual respect for each other's feelings and reach an agreeable compromise. The target beneficiaries and participants are adolescent girls and boys, both in and out of school who are the major target of the project, Staff and principals of schools, where the project will take place and parents and guardians who face public shame when their daughters or wards are victims of unwanted pregnancy or when their sons and daughters drop out of schools.

In order to achieve the objectives of the project, NPTA/SECON drew up project teams made up of seasoned lecturers in drama, health workers and students, mandating them to-

1. Explore issues pertaining to adolescent issues and health related matters
2. Engage in discussions of health issues and factors that could lead to dropping out of schools by students.
3. Format key leanings into a theatre piece to generate discussions and focus on the dangers of uninformed, unhealthy sexual practices.

4. Train a group of students in peer education skills.
  5. Educate and equip these young adults towards making informed choices and becoming peer educators themselves by giving them information on health-related issues, hence improving their lives.
- TFDC, (2002)

Project “For Tomorrow” was preceded by a baseline study in seven secondary schools in Zaria in 2002. Two of these schools were mixed (boys and girls), two were all boys and three all girls. The research team – a male sociologist, a female nurse and a female graduate student in development communication – asked questions to school principals, guidance and counselling teachers, officials of the Parents-Teachers Associations (PTAs) of the various schools, and girls who had dropped out of school due to problems related to sexuality of some sort. The team wanted to know the health status of the students in the schools, as well as the attrition rate and the reasons for their dropping out of school. Other questions that interested the research team were what policy the schools had in place for sex education and what plans the schools had in place for girls who became pregnant, or were victimised through sexual violence and abuse. It was also discovered that sex education was not taught as part of the academic curriculum in any of the schools surveyed.

The In-House Training of Trainers (TOT) involved the training of people who were in turn to train adolescents in school. It was made up of individuals who specialized in diverse but related areas. This was to give the project depth in terms of experience, knowledge and information. About twenty people in all were trained. This training was a way of ensuring uniformity in all the areas to be covered. This stage lasted for two weeks. Professionals in the field of theatre, professional Counsellors and medical experts were recruited to train this core group for the first week in peer education and counselling skills and another one week was spent on learning skills in drama. The curriculum for this stage of the workshop was entirely targeted at imparting uniform knowledge into the core group members. It ranged from facilitation, counselling, honing their skill in drama in order to be able to communicate with the adolescent and other issues that has to do with adolescent psychology and behaviour.

The training workshop enabled the core group to engage in practical lessons in human psychology to the extent that when this phase ended, they

were eager to go to the field to put into practice what they learnt. The core group were taught new ways of doing things especially in reaching out to an age group that usually proves difficult to reach out to: adolescents. They also learnt skills in working with adolescents especially on issues pertaining to reproductive health and sexuality.

This trained group were divided in pairs and sent into the schools to interact with the adolescents. The curriculum for the in-school training was not that different from the in-house training of trainers. It bordered on using games and exercises to help everyone get to know each other, break barriers, create team spirit and for you to assess the student's level of skill and understanding. It also extends to Practical work that explores their attitudes and experience and level of knowledge of the issues to be explored. There was also the use of literature and health professionals to help students gain a good understanding of the facts rather than the fiction of sexuality issues. This is to enrich them so as to undertake research of their peers' knowledge and experience and understanding of issues that will influence the content of the drama devised. The trainers were also to aid them in creating focusing questions that will be posed to the audience in the drama and workshop, ensuring they have the chance to participate and create change and creating a small set of aims with the students so that they know what they want the target audience to get out of taking part in the drama and workshop. The drama was devised through brainstorming on issues that really interest the students to generate story ideas. The curriculum was designed in a way that it will give students the opportunity to practise facilitating, using others in the group as the target audience. Thus, achieving the aim of the project, which is to train a group of students in peer education skills and engage in discussion of the health issues and factors resulting in dropouts by students. And at the end of the day, format key learning into a theatre piece to generate discussion and focus on dangers of uninformed, unhealthy sexual practices. The structure of the curriculum was geared at helping students to gain confidence in making informed choices themselves.

On the whole, students were trained in various skills which include- Listening exercises, ways of sharing experiences, facilitating, Games, codes, presentations, behaviours in groups and using a health professional.

*The high point of the training was that of Drama skills. It was found out that all the schools used one form of presentation or the other as a way of*



*teasing out issues from the adolescents, thus when the time came for the sessions in drama, the kids embraced it with ease. The stories were almost put together before the drama making process was touched. Infact it was the last thing on the group's timetable as the other exercises were geared at teasing out information for the drama while arming the students with different skills. The process of writing the story was not hard as facilitators urged participants to bring out true live stories, biographies, and issues, which they had discussed during the process of the training.*

After a few days of training, facilitators became more specific, that is, it now had more to do with their school environment: their social lives both at school and at home. Trainers took specific note of the different codes and slang among these adolescents and encouraged the use of such to bring about the air of oneness.

Facilitators now helped them organize what stories they had into sequences and teased out the best questions they will ask during the processing of the drama. In as much as it took a little time, they soon got a hang of “Hot seating” and “Forum theatre” after a few rehearsals. Most of the facilitation of this topic was by group work and acting which surprisingly, the kids loved. Trainers encouraged teamwork among the group. At the end of most sessions, team members in the form of facilitation or role-play make presentations. One obvious fact that emerged was that the processing periods that were carried out with illustrations and practical worked very well with these kids. Reference to stories and drama skits helped them participate better. Facilitators used this to their advantage as songs and games were used to explore issues and sometimes to generate discussions. They also used games to create teams and groups instead of taking numbers. The whole exercise was participatory even up to the lunch breaks. At the end of the week, issues emerged ranging from teenage pregnancy, illegal abortion, drug abuse, and truancy and school dropout. The trainers then took the adolescents on the process of drama making after which the adolescents were divided into groups to turn these issues teased out into small skits to be presented to the whole group. Gradually these issues were built into a fifteen minutes play, which was presented to the whole school on a given day.

They were trained in the use of Forum theatre and Hot seating which was to sharpen their facilitation and negotiation skills, and the management of unforeseen circumstances. This knowledge also put in the students the spirits

of versatility, as they were always able to manage any situation. They were also more confident when they were commended after each presentation. It was a booster to their morale. One of the exercises 'the river of life' helped greatly as it gave them more confidence to come forward privately and be counselled over mistakes they had made in the past. The use of codes and forum theatre helped them internalise those things they never had knowledge of. The trainers also facilitated the adolescents on their physiology. It was not through teaching but mostly through group work, where they were divided into different groups, worked in these groups and presented their findings to the whole group. The trainers were careful not to teach but tease out issues about their sexuality that adolescents obviously were not aware of in as much as they see these things differently. They also teased out issues of misconception about their physiology. Myths about growing up were teased out and the health workers came around to answer many questions on misconceptions.

### **Performances in School and Processing the Plays**

A day was set-aside in the schools when adolescents presented their plays to the whole school within the school environment. These plays were a maximum of fifteen minutes each and had to do with the issues teased out in the different schools. The adolescents now used the different skills taught them to process the play, facilitating their schoolmates on issues in the play. The play was not the conventional type, but one that the audiences were participants. The play was divided into sections after which it is stopped to entertain questions while a member of the group moderates in order to bring out the advantages and disadvantages of certain actions in the play. Processing the play also took the form of hot seating and forum theatre where the adolescents used their facilitation, negotiation and dramatic skills in parrying questions while in role.

This play was divided into scenes and these scenes grouped into sections, each section having its own set of questions structured in the line of choices, decisions and consequences. Adolescents led teachers, parents and their peers through discussions to identify root causes, effects, advantages and disadvantages of different actions in the play. In different schools, selected participants facilitated and processed the plays, stopping the performances at crucial moments and goading audience participants to comment and discuss

the issues been presented. This led to lively debates among students, teachers, and parents.

In Government day Secondary school Dogon Bauchi, their storyline went thus:

*Students come into class in the early morning. Two friends, who appear to be lesbians, walk in last; a few of the students show distaste at the way they are holding and cuddling each other. They sit down. One of them grabs the breast of another girl in the class, which creates an outcry. Just as the offending girl makes to leave the class, Mr Okoronkwo, the new biology teacher, comes in. Everyone becomes quiet and the students stand in unison and do the traditional greeting of “Good morning, Sir”. Mr Okoronkwo proceeds to introduce himself and his new subject rather laboriously. The reason for this, we will soon discover, is that Mr Okoronkwo has been carried away by the sight of Chidesco, one of the biggest and most beautiful girls in the class. Mr Okoronkwo stammers while saying his name and the topic of his lesson, and cannot stop looking at Chidesco. While Mr Okoronkwo is trying in vain to control himself over Chidesco, another student, “African Queen,” is wriggling like an earthworm that has been stepped on, trying in vain to get Mr Okoronkwo’s attention.*

*Mr Okoronkwo asks the students to define biology. Even though Chidesco’s definition is one of the best and most correct in the class, he rejects it. At the end of the lesson, he gives the students a homework assignment and asks Chidesco to meet him in his office immediately after class. He walks out in pretentious anger to wait for his prey, Chidesco. But African Queen is faster. She dashes out just as the confusion of the students over the attitude of their new biology teacher is dying down. African Queen knocks on Mr Okoronkwo’s door. When he discovers it is not Chidesco, his countenance changes. Disappointment is written all over his face. He quickly adjusts himself and asks her to come in, but then hurriedly dismisses African Queen because she is disturbing him and is not the one he wants to see. Another knock and Chidesco is finally there.*

*The harsh Mr Okoronkwo suddenly becomes so nice, offering Chidesco a seat next to him. He proceeds to inform Chidesco that all his harshness was a pretense and that if she will “cooperate” with him, she will not only enjoy her life in the school but pass all the exams with ease. As he inches his way towards her, the petrified girl unconsciously moves away until she slips off the chair*

*and falls down. Before he can touch her and help her up, a frightened Chidesco runs out of the office and Mr Okoronkwo pours invectives on her. Back in class, Mr. Okoronkwo collects the homework assignment. To punish Chidesco, he flips through her homework and declares it to be rubbish. Chidesco is told she must cut grass manually immediately after closing. While Chidesco is cutting the grass, one of the women teachers asks her what offence she has committed. Chidesco says she does not actually know, so the teacher promises to intervene. On asking Mr Okoronkwo, she does not get any concrete reason other than Mr. Okoronkwo babbling that Chidesco is rude, lazy and dull. Mr Okoronkwo storms out of the office, finds Chidesco and tells her to meet him immediately at the school gate in her own interest.*

At the critical moment of Chidesco caving in and promising to meet the teacher at the “end” of the drama, the audience were asked:

“If you were Chidesco, what would you do?”

Nearly all the students said they would report to the school principal. One of the girls said she thought Chidesco had made a mistake, and that she would have told the whole story to the woman teacher who asked the reason why she was being punished. Another student cried out:

“Chidesco must be a loner in the school, why can’t she discuss it, at least with any of her friends, if telling the teacher was difficult? I am tempted to agree with the person who suggested earlier that maybe she wants this relationship – nobodi fit shave me for my absence (pidgin English for: no one can do anything to me without my consent) (TFDC. 2002).

Yet another said:

“I don’t believe this thing will happen and somebody will bear it, my mother will hear.”

Although no male teacher at the time of the project was on record as having been reported for harassing a female student, there were cases of girls getting pregnant and never disclosing the name of the person responsible. The Principal stepped in and asked the students to move from the fiction of the play to reality. She assured them that anybody sexually harassed like Chidesco should report it to her. She also advised the students that they knew very well within themselves that a number of them indulged in high risk behaviour and they too needed to reform their behaviour, so as to avoid ruining their own futures.

The PTA chairman urged the students to be bold and to report any teacher who betrayed the trust the system had reposed in them by harassing or abusing a student. He said that if the Principal failed to take action in such a case, the PTA would take it upon itself to take up the matter with the Ministry of Education. He warned the teachers: “The veil used to cover your students’ eyes have been uncovered by this drama, so beware.”

The issues discussed in all the groups ranged from premarital pregnancy, effects of drug abuse, school dropout, and the effects of bad influence. The questions were almost identical as it bordered around the motivations for actions in the plays, the choices available to characters in the plays and the consequences of such actions. In processing these plays, most schools used hot sitting and forum theatre, which help generate further discussions and increased participation from the audience. Once more, adolescents proved adults’ wrong as they used the different techniques taught them to address issues in their lives. Processing the play was also made easier as most of the kids had at this time gathered enough confidence through the different facilitation exercises-the use of process drama.

Performance discussions contributed greatly to breakdown of barriers enabling free discussions of sensitive issues. Sensitive sexuality issues were unveiled and presented for public scrutiny and discussion, often for the first time. In most cases, generation gaps were overcome as students, teachers and parents participated in discussions. These discussions at performances heightened awareness no the dangers of many practices by adolescents, teachers and parents.

The drama showcase was very useful in the sense that very difficult issues and topics, which under normal circumstances will not be talked about publicly because of either cultural or traditional restrictions were discussed within the context of drama. Some of these children could not have discussed those sexual things in the presence of their parents.

A PTA member of Government Day Secondary School Samaru comments:

Sincerely this is the first time I ever listened to children to hear the reasons why they do the things they do. I realized that a lot of times they actually feel that there reasoning makes a lot of sense. You see that little girl that was singing; she is so confused. She probably only needed an advice from someone

who she is convinced loves and cares for her, and we parents will do well to fit into such role so these children do not continue to make these mistakes, which cost us a lot. (Reports from GDSS, 2002)

Many parents testified to how the use of drama has more vividly than ever before captured the reality of the consequence of uninformed decisions made by adolescents. One parent testifies:

The play woke me up from my slumber. I saw the laxity of parents in the play. If Lizzy's mother in the play had a little time for her daughter, she would have taken note of her daughter's sleepless nights in confusion, and her unusual absences. (TFDC project reports, 2002)

The students also present related plays during other activities such as Literary and debating weeks, intercollegiate competitions, speech and prize giving days and so on. The students have also found the above song useful to raise issues of Choices, Decisions and Consequences when they engage in peer counselling (one on one or group).

The efficacy and uniqueness of the Drama approach that was used to address adolescent issues is so glaring as the manner in which it brings out the analytical reasoning of adolescents who were hitherto seen as "KIDS" who do not know much".

From the point of view of addressing the rights of young people, the performances provided the first chance for them to present issues relating to their lives, from their own perspectives. This was very important because of the general tendency that parents and teachers have to blame young people. In addition, since it is young people who are most affected by lack of information on their sexuality, their performances quickly went to the root causes of the different hazards that befall them, rather than focusing on individuals' misbehaviours. As a result, a whole lot of issues were uncovered and subjected to public scrutiny. Through their participation in the project, people felt more collective responsibilities for these issues and felt motivated to make changes at different levels. Participants were empowered to identify and analyse problems and to focus on solutions. Issues that were portrayed through drama at the festival, in which all the different schools came to perform, were reinforced and highlighted by official speakers.

### **Process Drama and “For Tomorrow” project**

Participatory approaches give people the opportunity to participate in activities without inhibitions. This it does by making the process a democratic one where people participate because they want to. Process drama is one of the techniques which helps Participatory development to achieve this. Bolton believed that the dramatic activity in process drama will bring about a change of understanding (1979, p. 44). He believed that process drama can help students gain clarification by offering them a structure in which they can make meaning of the knowledge they have (Njewe, 2010). The structure of process drama offered a fictional world for participants to work without the fear of getting it right or wrong. These participants were not under any obligation to present right or wrong answers so as to be punished when they get these answers wrong. Instead, their participation is more important to the process and this should happen as they wish with the guidance of facilitators. That is why people are encouraged through different means by goading or reinforcing good behavior and performances. In the “for tomorrow” project for example, there was no room for punishment of any form as the process was participatory. This assisted in breaking the barriers between adolescents and adults as it gave the adolescents greater control over the process. In all the schools for example, these students carried out daily activities like evaluation of daily activities, time keeping and even designing daily time tables of activities which gave the trainers an insight into areas to lay emphasis on. The project was also not relying on literacy or writing skills as the adolescents were allowed to present their problems in any way trainers will get the sense in what they are saying. These enabled them to interpret and explain their own data and share ideas using biographies of friends, which are usually traced back to them. In the project, this was so effective that one of the students was able to give details of his family background and how it led to his leaving the house and believing in friends instead of his house which gave trainers an insight into the background to his problems. At the end of the day, the atmosphere of the project created a situation where he was able to identify the problem and also help in providing a solution to it.

Morgan and Saxton (1987) observed that whatever strategy, stance or techniques used, effective learning depends primarily on the teacher’s skill in being able to ask questions which generate different kinds of learning. Skilful questioning is one of the drama teacher’s most useful tools that can evoke the

drama process (Neelands, 1984). Questions provide the participants the opportunity for further thought and research and can be defined as any verbal utterance that signals that a response is wanted (Morgan & Saxton, 1987; Wagner, 1999). The goal of questions is to get the class involved in the drama, committed to the work and reflective about the dramatic encounter that explores a significant human experience (Wagner, 1999). Hence the use of focusing and guiding questions in project “For Tomorrow”.

The language the facilitator uses in framing the questions is of paramount importance in process drama. There is a strong need for the facilitator to ask ‘freeing questions’ rather than closed, threatening questions. A freeing question is framed as pondering, musing and supposing questions that invite participants to step in and answer (Neelands, 1984). In a process drama, the teacher is asking the question because he/she does not know the answer and requires the participants to answer for the drama to move forward (Morgan & Saxton, 1987). Freeing questions avoid indicating that the facilitator is looking for a particular response or that a value will be placed on certain answers offered by the participants (Neelands, 1984). Thus we understand that in a freeing question there is no one right answer and the goal of the facilitator is to genuinely accept and act on any well-intended answer given (Wagner, 1999). Questions can be used to establish the context of the drama during the lesson to involve participants and to deepen their and focus their thinking; and after the lesson to reflect upon the experience (O’Neill & Lambert, 1982).

Process drama is further invoked in the negotiation and renegotiation of the dramatic elements. An effective drama teacher employs the theatre elements within the dramatic process to ensure engagement and belief at an affective level and to achieve significant learning (Njeweke, 2010). These elements invite the participants to step into the imagined context, the “as if” as Neelands (2002) put it to suspend the reality of the classroom context in order to pretend, as a group, that they are other people, in another place, in another time. (Neelands, 2002, p. 46). The fictional world of the presentations in the project provided an avenue for issues affecting individual adolescents to come to the notice of trainers either while brainstorming to arrive at the story line or while the play was already in progress and the ways their plays are resolved, spoke volumes on their reaction to certain situations, and their reasoning. Process drama thus allows participants to look at reality through



fantasy, to see below the surface of their actions to their meaning (Wagner, 1999). It allows them to explore real life issues in a safe fictional context; where through the taking of different roles in the process as if it were happening in the “now”, participants can safely explore complex human dilemmas from a distance (Neelands, 1984).

Adolescence is a period of experimentation and process drama used this to the fullest in this project. In the project, it was found out that those facilitation periods where activity was used helped them learn better and encouraged participation from them. Drama was one of their favorite activities. Most times they prefer action to dialogue. It was noticed in different schools where adolescents in the bid to explain a point, resorted to acting it out instead. Re enforcing O’Neil (1995)’s assertion that ‘the learning through process drama occurs through engagement of the participants in the experience’ (O’Neill, 1995). A situation occurred in demonstration where one of the students was in the course of explaining a point and found it hard to present, as it was one of those issues frowned at by culture not to be discussed openly. The members of the group helped him out by shouting “act it out” the facilitator agreed and at the end of the day, the re-enactment was an opening to tease out other issues as the re-enactment raised some salient issues, he wouldn’t have been able to discuss. Drama therefore served as a way of also finding out what they knew and what one should desist from talking about and if at all it must be addressed, how to go about it. It provided an entry point into different aspects of their lives. The adolescents thrived on exploratory open-ended exercises and their inquisitive nature influenced them to venture into different aspects of sexuality issues and present it the way it affects them and the way they would have wanted it to be.

While people may often think about adolescent participation in projects with adults as impossible or difficult, it is also worth noting how important activity and play with peers, with minimal adult interference, is in the development of adolescents social relations, empathy, sense of belonging and skills of self-control and co-operation. Play is an important training ground for participation. This helps create an environment, which enabled adolescents to develop their skills and expose issues that affect them in life. In project “For Tomorrow” for example, most issues were teased out through the process of role-plays and presentations. In Demonstration Secondary School, role-play was been used to tease out issues of adolescent sexuality one day,

but this ended up exposing an area which one of the students needed counseling. Atule, eleven years old was given the role of girlfriend to Ate innocently. But as the play progressed, the dialogue was conflicting with the aim of the presentation, which was unusual with Atule. The play was allowed to progress to its conclusion but it was obvious that there was trouble somewhere. At the end of the day's work, she came to apologize for her behaviour and went ahead to explain the relationship between her and the boy Ate that she was fighting quietly. This provided an avenue to tease out possible solutions and interventions. According to O'Toole (1992), process drama is a form of dramatic activity which centers on fictional role taking and improvisation.

The games and energizers were another form of play, which motivated the adolescents to continue even when they were exhausted. They were used to refocus and bring the groups back together. They were learning tools for both the adolescents and the trainers as it helped them to remember analogies. When in an exercise, one of the students told a story which she wanted the group to use for the setting having to do with a family. The story was used and the presentation was good. But this story also gave an insight into her nature in the group and why she does the things she does as it was later discovered that the storyline was a common occurrence in her house as she came from a broken home.

The participatory nature of the project also went a long way in achieving the objectives of the project. Flexibility of the methods and processes apart from promoting their participation helped them relate well with the trainers. The trainers were not domineering in any way; instead, they were empathic with them. This helped trainers to further break the barriers between them and the adolescents and created a situation when even if they couldn't come out openly to share personal problems, they came for individual counseling on issues ranging from sexuality to family problems. There was the case of Ben Ate who was reported to have attempted a relationship with one of the minors in the group. What he expected was not what he got as he was simply talked with in an informal but serious manner but like an equal partner. This bought him over to come privately and be counseled on his drug taking habit. Facilitators had respect for the students' individual views and backgrounds. There were situations when facilitators had to respond positively to inquiries by the students not pertaining to the programme. This approach

made everyone comfortable and eager to participate and observe. The empathic role of the facilitators and the extension of that empathy from them to the participants helped develop sound interpersonal and inter group relations. In this project, the flexible, democratic and open-minded nature of the facilitators in the project was a key to effective adolescent participation for capacity development and enrichment, a thumbs up for Process drama.

The project has also shown that adolescents cannot learn in a static and restrictive atmosphere. They prefer an environment of activity. Thus, the importance of the use of interactive sessions during the project. According to one of the trainers, 'during the period of facilitation, it was found out that those sessions in which drama and re-enactment were used made things clearer to the kids and they participated better', TFDC, (2002). This can be concluded from the fact that kids like playing, as the younger ones were the ones that were highly affected at such times. The games and exercises used helped a lot in breaking the stiff relationship between the participants and facilitators on first contact. They eagerly partook in these games and exercises while also presenting their own games. In fact, it was revealed that a girl from one of the schools walked over and presented a totally new song for the group to learn and use. She worked on a tune that went down well with the group. Harnessing drama as a tool for the education of adolescents is one thing that must be encouraged. Most conventional classroom situations may never draw the kind of interest and commitment to the discussion of issues as it did with adolescents. The project also went a long way to prove the importance of the use of drama in adolescent development. Both trainers and the adolescents learnt together from each other. They both participated in the process of discovery and learning. Games form a fundamental aspect of process Drama as it is always used to refocus or build groups.

Bolton believed that the dramatic activity in process drama will bring about a change of understanding (1979, p. 44). He believed that process drama can help students gain clarification by offering them a structure in which they can make meaning of the knowledge they have (Njewe, 2010), an introduction to self-reliance. Hence one of the advantages of Process Drama is its ability to leave participants more self-confident, self-reliant. Ikoku (1976, p. 149) defined self-reliance as essentially a basic faith in one's own ability to succeed: relying on one's own resources, animate and inanimate. According to him, it implies political freedom and the right to arrange one's own choices

and make them felt instead of becoming a dependent satellite of another political and economic order that one neither fully perceive nor control. He emphasised that people have to be the agents of their own development and that it was with this in mind that development programmes have been advocating the need for people's participation for a long time, Ikoku, (1976, pp. 149,151). This also buttresses one of Sarah Arnstein's typology of participation, which supports process Drama as a concept. In her typology, she presented self-mobilisation as people participating by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and the technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power, Arnstein, (1969). This project goes to prove that 'if programmes of such nature and magnitude have failed before, it may well be because people were not involved satisfactorily in certain decision-making processes. Adolescents were given the freedom to present their own realities in their own ways using tools presented to them by elders. It goes to show that who initiates a project is not the issue but the freedom to exercise control over the project is what participation is all about. It also goes to prove that in an atmosphere of freedom, adolescents learn fast and bring out their best. Many development interventions have been seen to create a kind of dependence syndrome, but if the local resources-both human and material-are utilized on the basis of decisions taken by people themselves, the realization grows that many problems faced by the local people have local solutions at their levels with active involvement.

Lack of people's involvement has led to the failure of most development programmes to be effective worldwide. But Process Drama is one of the development approaches that make utmost use of human and available resources to achieve its objectives. it recognises them as agents instead of objects. In relation to this project, adolescents were the agents that were used to achieve the objectives of human development. They were used as vessels to carry out their own development by granting them a say in deciding the objectives, strategies and participation in implementation. So, at the end of every endeavour that operates within this framework, the human person ends up more developed and not just used and dumped. The adolescents took responsibility for most of the activities that also improved

the efficiency of the project thus it made it more cost effective in achieving its aims and objectives. Process drama is effective because it allows the learners to make meaning of the knowledge, they already have through continually negotiating and renegotiating the dramatic elements (O'Toole, 1992). This allows the children to invest directly and actively something of themselves in the drama and enables them to develop responses to it through active engagement and reflection (Bowel & Heap, 2001). The facilitator thus had to activate and make use of what participants already know about the human experience in order to imagine new experiences (Neelands, 2002).

As pointed out above, development interventions have failed to sustain the required level of development activity once support and input are diminished or withdrawn thus, the search by developers the world over for ways of engendering sustainability through participation. The project has shown through adolescents that with the right degree of involvement, particular interventions are sustainable. Thus, with the use of tools like Process drama, and other participatory tools, adolescents in their respective schools can carry on with other such initiatives without the intervention of NPTA/SECON. Evaluations already reveal that most of the schools worked with have clubs like HIV clubs presently. As a result of the enthusiasm and consciousness created by this project, between 2004/2005, the girls in Government Girls Day Secondary School Dogon Bauchi carried out a workshop with another NGO the Youth and Community Health Development (YOCOHD) on STD and HIV/AIDS where they excelled as a result of the extent of information they already had from the 'FOR TOMORROW' project.

## **Conclusion**

One obvious advantage of the drama methodology is that it is not only participatory but also visual. According to Gill Gordon: "Visualization encourages participation and avoids the problems of adults taking additional notes or adding their own analysis." She also notes that theatre pedagogy is a powerful process for enabling children to explore and understand their reality, generate solutions to their problems and communicate their learning to others. Those involved gain confidence and can become leaders and educators of other children and adults. Process Drama allows the connection between the individual and the collective in different ways; it connects the personal stories to the collective narrative to reinforce community cohesiveness and, at the

same time, the community gathering becomes a forum where hegemonic narratives can be deconstructed and alternative patterns of enhanced living can be individuated.

As stated above, it is and will ever be a technique that depends on the 'event' even more than other improvisatory techniques. Process Drama is a technique in a never-ending development whose impact depends highly on the different mediations mentioned above. Process Drama as a tool constitutes a breathing-space for the adolescent both because it permits the release of some personal traumas and because it can strengthen their sense of belonging. It gives people the opportunity to participate in activities without inhibitions. This it does by making the process a democratic one where people participate because they want to. But in such situations, these participants are not under any obligation to present right or wrong answers so as to be punished when they get these answers wrong. Instead, their participation is more important to the process and this should happen as they wish with the guidance of facilitators. It gave the adolescent an opportunity to renegotiate their place within the society and in the process acquire new negotiation skills and better information on their sexuality in order to make informed choices.

It was obvious during the project that in order to work successfully with the adolescent, one needs to be patient, tolerant and listen to what is not been said that is, read in between the lines. One can now confidently say that Paulo Freire's pedagogy can also be applied to children as if given the opportunity to air their views equally as human beings; their contribution to human development could be immense. The major lesson is that one should not overlook a kid or dismiss them as they are humans too and get affected by all things that we adults give out knowingly or unknowingly. Working with the adolescent has enabled adults in the community to realize that adolescents given the right incentives and support can make decisions about their lives and that their opinions are worth taking seriously.

Integrating participatory approaches into formal and non-formal education can build up adolescents' capacities to take part in decision-making and to convince adults of their capabilities. It was also learnt from the project that with the continued development of their capacities to take the perspectives of others, adolescents are able to reflect on what is good for the society and develop a legal or moral perspective. This improved perspective can however also lead to heightened self-consciousness of how they are seen by their peers.

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**Edoja Godwin Ukwedeh**, PhD, is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre and Cultural Studies, Nasarawa State University, Keffi-Nigeria.

**Email:** [itcyminds@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:itcyminds@yahoo.co.uk)