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Citation for published version (APA):
Borisenko, L. G. (2016). Arts-based peacebuilding: Functions of Theatre in Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe

Arts-based Peacebuilding:

Functions of Theatre in
Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe

by

Laurel Borisenko
University of Amsterdam, 2016

Arts-based Peacebuilding:

Functions of Theatre in Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe
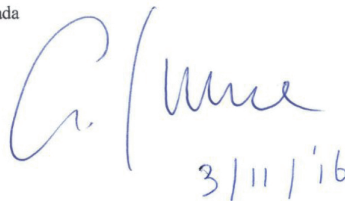
ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor

aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam

op gezag van de Rector Magnificus

prof. dr. ir. K.I.J. Maex

ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde

commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Agnietenkapel

op maandag 12 december 2016, te 14:00 uur

door Laurel Gay Borisenko

geboren te Calgary, Canada

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Faculteit:	Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragswetenschappen

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Abstract

Individuals and communities that have been subject to protracted violent conflict seek ways to move out of a cycle of violence, toward healing and reconciliation. Affected people need tools to critically understand their context and to participate in creative problem solving, thus allowing them to move from victim to survivor, from violence to peacebuilding. Through this dissertation I examine the role of theatre as one form of creative expression and how it can contribute to the process of healing and reconciliation, leading to peacebuilding.

Using a qualitative research approach I observed theatre performances and interview theatre participants, audiences, and facilitators in three different locations in Africa whose communities have experienced violent conflict: Uganda, Kenya, and Zimbabwe. I complement this primary field research with secondary data from organizational project reports, websites, as well as other academic research. My research provides an empirical review of responses from these interviewees, incorporating analysis using MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software. Since I was able to return to each research site two to four years after primary data collection, this research uniquely includes a longitudinal perspective.

Concepts of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience arose as precursors of peacebuilding. I identify positive effects of participating in theatre projects as increased communication skills, community problem solving, and victim-perpetrator communication; increased confidence and positive identity; reduced isolation; and a venue in which to have stories heard. Negative effects include retraumatization and emotional insecurity; physical insecurity; a lack of community ownership of the project; and Non-Government Organization (NGO) or donor control. Finally, conditions by which theatre would be better positioned to make a positive contribution to healing and reconciliation are a safe and trusting environment, physical and emotional security, community ownership, cultural relevance, authenticity, trained and motivated facilitators, and when the project takes place in the cycle of violence. I conclude that theatre as one type of arts-based peacebuilding provides a venue for storytelling which contributes to reclaiming one's identity, healing relationships, and thus moving affected persons from being victims to survivors, and moving communities from violence to peacebuilding.

Key words: protracted violence, political conflict, war-torn communities, arts-based peacebuilding, applied and community theatre, trauma, retraumatization, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, resilience.

Preface

- A version of chapter 3 has been accepted for publication: Borisenko, Laurel. "Refugee Theatre as a Tool of Resilience in Kenya." The Canadian Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies, 48 (2016).

- A version of chapter 4 has been published: Borisenko, Laurel. 'Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws': Community Response to Harare Theatre as a Tool of Peace Building'. In Post-Conflict Performance, Film and Visual Arts: Cities of Memory, Editors, Des O-Rawe and Mark Phelan, Palgrave Macmillan, UK, 2016.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Abbreviations

CAP	Children as Peacebuilders
CPA	Concerned Parents Association
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTP	Dadaab Theatre Project
HIFA	Harare International Festival of the Arts
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
JRP	Justice and Reconciliation Project
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MDC	Movement for Democratic Changes
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
ONHRI	Organ of National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNHRC	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Educational Fund
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

Acknowledgments

My foremost thanks for unfailing support from beginning to end of this long endeavor goes to my supervisor, Dr. Gerd Junne, whose encouragement, patience, and insight over the years made this thesis possible. Dr. Tracy Davis began as a wise and faithful resource person, and generously agreed to take on a formal role as co-supervisor. While I take full responsibility for all errors and omissions, I am deeply indebted to the two of them for rigorous feedback, and keeping me on course.

I wish to thank a number of faculty members at the University of Victoria, who became my 'de facto' cohorts and supporters, in particular students and faculty of the Applied Theatre department. I owe particular thanks to Dr. Monica Prendergast who warmly welcomed me, advised me, and allowed me to participate in activities.

There are many other people who encouraged me and guided me at the outset of this undertaking, including Dr Nancy Gibson, Dr Natacha Joubert, and Dr Darlene Clover. A number of people assisted me with brainstorming, copy-editing, and on-going encouragement, notably Carolyn Labun, Bernie Jones, Wade Richardson, and Jenny Francoeur.

I offer my deep gratitude to my family for their on-going support, encouragement, and belief in me through this journey of many years.

My heartfelt thanks to the many individuals in the organizations on which I focused in the three country settings: Justice and Reconciliation Project, Concerned Parents Association (Uganda); Dadaab Theater Project and Survival Girls (Kenya); Rooftop Productions and Savanna Trust (Zimbabwe). I am so grateful to the many people who participated in interviews, and whose resilience and bravery were the inspiration for this research.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

1. Research Question

Artistic initiatives are being incorporated with increasing frequency as part of peacebuilding strategies at different stages in the cycle of violence (Cohen, Varea, and Walker 2011a; Lederach 2005; Shank and Schirch 2008; Prentki and Preston, 2009). Arts-based peacebuilding uses various forms of creative expression that can include performance arts (theatre, dance, drumming, singing, storytelling); visual arts (painting, drawing, wall murals, quilting); and literary arts (writing poetry, plays, and narrative). Peacebuilding researcher Rama Mani has been involved in identifying cultural issues related to the UN human security initiative, 'Responsibility to Protect'.[1] She observes that: "The blood-washed battlefields of human suffering have provided ironically fertile ground for diverse, poignant and expressive creativity'' (Mani and Weiss 2013, 106).

Although the use of arts-based initiatives is increasing, there has been a lack of scholarly research on this topic. Rama Mani and others observe that creative expression as an area of inquiry has not been sufficiently examined by policy makers and social scientists (Balfour 2014; Kuftinec 2009; Mani and Weiss 2013; Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009; Lederach 2005). Of studies that have been undertaken, some researchers note a prevalence of anecdotal reports, with descriptive information primarily reporting positive effects (Gray 2011; Kuftinec 2009). This raises the question as to whether researchers or practitioners have sufficiently analyzed impacts of arts-based approaches, including possible negative consequences. There is therefore a need for more comprehensive and systematic academic analysis that would examine how arts-based initiatives may best be incorporated into peacebuilding practice (Mani and Weiss 2013, 229).

My research contributes to this field by providing an empirical review of feedback from community participants and audiences, which includes their negative as well as their positive experiences. The opportunity to return to each research location two to four

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[1] The Responsibility to Protect ("R2P", para 138) and the concept of Human Security (para 143) are included as international human rights norms to address the international community's failure to prevent and stop genocides, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. These concepts were developed and adopted as resolutions at the 2005 UN World Summit. (www.un.org/en/preventgenocide, accessed 6 Feb 2016)

years after my initial visit presented a unique advantage. It permitted me to follow up with some respondents, and to generate observations based on the impact of the theatre projects several years later.

Finally, I identify the conditions under which theatre can play a role in peacebuilding. Thus, my research examines the role of theatre as one form of creative expression in contributing to healing, reconciliation, and resilience and ultimately leading to peacebuilding in communities that have been exposed to violent conflict. The figure below is a visual presentation of my research question, identifying terms related to the separate elements. The top three terms highlight the components which provide the structure for my literature review in following sections.
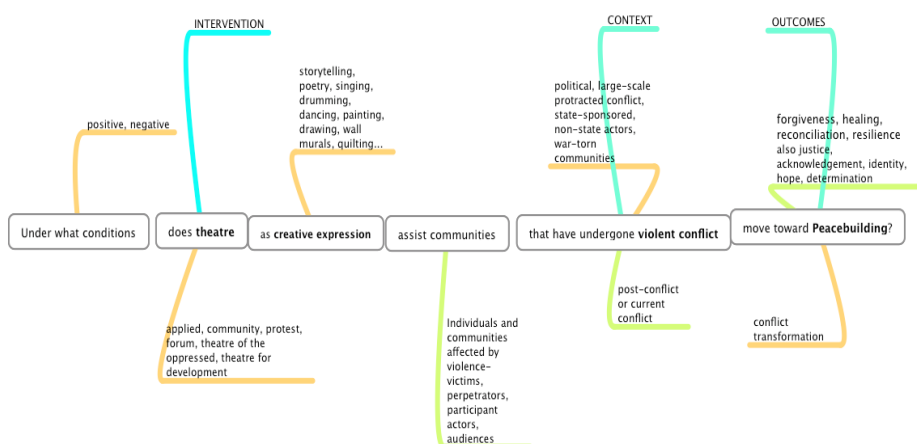
Figure 1: Research Question

This thesis is organized in five chapters. This first chapter introduces the research question and methodology and provides a review of other scholarly literature related to the key components of my research—intervention, context, and outcomes. I then present three chapters that detail results from each of my three research sites—Uganda, Kenya,

and Zimbabwe. The final chapter concludes with the analysis of findings from this primary research, as well as recommendations and issues for further research.

2. Methodology

My research method is based on a qualitative, descriptive, and exploratory approach. I preferred a qualitative analysis so that I could understand more deeply the stories of a smaller number of participants. It is descriptive rather than comparative because I chose to describe the settings in which theatre was being used, rather than seeking contexts that were either completely divergent or complementary. My approach is exploratory since at the outset I did not know which countries or organizations or forms of creative expression would evolve into research contexts, nor what factors would emerge as significant variables. In this respect facets of my methodology were not so much planned as emergent.

2.1 Sample Selection

Although my literature review provides examples of arts-based peacebuilding from countries around the world, all three of my research sites are in Africa. This was a practical choice, since I was living and working in Kenya at the time of site selection, which facilitated my access to African countries and enhanced the number of relevant contacts I could gain in this region. I used three conditions in selecting the countries and organizations to then arrange to visit: First, I was focusing on communities that had recently recovered from or were in the midst of large scale protracted violence. Second, I identified organizations that were already using some kind of arts-based strategy in their efforts to move toward peacebuilding. Third, I responded to organizations that were interested in my research and willing to facilitate my access to groups and individuals using artistic approaches.

Based on these criteria and my site visits, three different countries emerged as my research locations: northern Ugandan communities recovering from Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abductions, refugees living in Kenya who had fled violence in their home

countries, and Zimbabweans who were impacted by the 2008 post-election violence. Although many different forms of creative expression have been used in responding to violence, theatre became the focus of my research, as it was the arts-based approach used by each of the organizations that I visited. There is also an advantage to theatre as it can include a number of other forms of creative expression, including dance, drumming, poetry, storytelling, and singing.

My focal point in Uganda was a Ugandan Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) called the Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP), begun in 2005 in Gulu. JRP assists war-affected communities with the reintegration of former child soldiers, and makes extensive use of community theatre in its peace and reconciliation projects. Although they do not identify a specific style of community theatre, the approach is participatory, and engages traditional forms of performative expression. Local community leaders are consulted and involved prior to initiating the project, and during the evaluation. The organization has a solid base of local community partners in northern Uganda (including Ker Kwaro Acholi and Refugee Law Project) as well as partnerships in Africa (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation in South Africa) and internationally (University of British Columbia, Canada). Funding comes from the Norwegian Embassy, and several American foundations, among others.

In Kenya I connected with two refugee theatre projects, one for refugees living in a camp and one for those living in Nairobi. The projects were initiated by Great Globe Foundation, started in 2008 by two American actors with a background in cross-cultural projects involving cultural exchanges with youth. These initiatives were supported by the US government and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and organizational partners included FilmAid and Save the Children. Refugee participants came together for five months in the camp and for two months in Nairobi to share stories and performative cultural traditions, learn acting skills, to create the scripts, and perform the plays. The plays were performed at several venues: in the camps and in Nairobi, notably at the World Refugee Day celebration.

In Zimbabwe I focused on a professional theatre company, Rooftop Productions. Founded in 1986 by Daves Guzha, Rooftop uses a Zimbabwean indigenous performance style drawn from traditional ritual, satire, and story-telling traditions. His African-centered styles also incorporate elements of activism and civic dialogue. Guzha uses the term 'protest theatre' to describe the type of theatre that he produces. The productions are often about social and political issues relevant to contemporary Zimbabwe, and they have mixed audiences of black and white Zimbabweans. Rooftops Productions has relied on support from external donors for commissioned plays. It is not community theatre per se, but produces 'community-oriented' performances on issues of relevance to Zimbabweans. The two plays used in this study were written by Stephen Chifunyise, a professional writer, and taken on a tour across the country by a company of professional actors. The plays were performed to audiences of affected communities, and a facilitated discussion took place after each performance. Further details about each research context are included in the country chapters.

In the spirit of reflexivity, I note a bias in my research. As I read of negative theatre experiences reported in other research, I realized that I had veered away from investing my research time in organizations that seemed more concerned with simply running projects and expanding the work of the organization than in peacebuilding efforts, and I gravitated towards selecting groups that appeared more authoritative in their approach, their relationships, and their work. This may be why my findings include more positive than negative examples of the impact of theatre. This is also related to the issue of representation of voice in my research. I made the choice to let those interviewed be heard in their own words by liberally including exact quotations rather than paraphrases. My intention is to capture something of their own analysis by using their words.

2.2 Data Collection

Most data were collected in 2011, during which I was living and working in Kenya. I visited Uganda three times and Zimbabwe twice, for a period of about two weeks each visit. Follow up visits were conducted to Zimbabwe and Uganda in 2013 and to Kenya in 2014 and 2015. These research trips are outlined in the figure below.

	Uganda	Zimbabwe	Kenya
2011	Sept 5-19 Nov 17-30	April 26-May 13	Jan-Dec 2011
2013	Oct 26-Nov 7	Nov 9-21	
2014			July 10-15
2015			Aug 18-24

Figure 2: Dates of Research Field Trips

I collected primary data systematically through direct observation of plays, interviews, and a content analysis of selected transcripts and reports, described below. Secondary data sources included project reports, organizational resources, and websites, in addition to other articles and books on similar research interests. Drawing on this variety of primary and secondary data provided a triangulation of sources.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with key respondents, including theatre participants and facilitators[2]. Other interview respondents included artists, human rights organizations, theatre groups, political analysts, academics, and affected communities. I identified interview respondents using the snowball sampling technique.[3] Most interviews were conducted in English; where interpreters were needed, they were available in the communities. When citing those interviewed I only include the names of those working for organizations; I do not use the names of community participants in order to maintain confidentiality. A sample set of interview questions is included in Appendix B.

Discussions of each site include a content analysis of a selection of interview transcripts, and in the case of Zimbabwe, reports on audience feedback, all of which I coded with the help of MaxQDA qualitative data analysis software. Through this process I was able to

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[2] I use the term participant to refer to individuals who participated in the theatre projects, and the term facilitator to refer to individuals who directed and coordinated the community theatre projects. These terms are not relevant to Zimbabwe, where the plays were run by a professional theatre company of actors and directors.

[3] Snowball sampling is a methodological technique for finding interview respondents through the identification of an initial person, who then recommends others, and so on. This technique can be particularly useful in conflict environments, where marginalized populations may be hard to access. See, Nissim Cohen and Tamar Arieli, 'Field Research in Conflict Environments: Methodological Challenges and Snowball Sampling,' Journal of Peace Research, 48.4 (2011): 423–435.

identify common themes that emerged from these transcripts and reports. I then went back and counted the number of instances of comments made in each of these categories; these charts are included in the relevant chapters.

2.3 Limitations

Conducting research in a context of political insecurity requires strategies to ensure the safety of those interviewed. I note in my Zimbabwe chapter the sensitivities and strategies used, for example ensuring that interviews were conducted in a safe place, and in the presence of other people who were trusted by the informant. Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya also spiraled into a period of extreme insecurity in 2011 with the sudden increase in attacks by the Somali militant group Al Shabaab. Although this did not occur until the very end of my data collection in Dadaab, it did impact the ability of Dadaab refugees to continue with the theatre project. There were no physical security concerns in northern Uganda at the time of my research, as it had already been in a post-conflict recovery phase for some years. However, in this research site there was a greater need for emotional security, as the trauma was still fresh for some interview respondents. I ensured that respondents freely chose to participate, and that interviews were conducted in safe and confidential settings.

Because my research is qualitative, the number of individuals interviewed is a relatively small sample group. My research therefore reflects the experience and perspective of a limited number of people, and so my findings and recommendations must be viewed in this light. However, this qualitative information is supported by secondary data drawn from current research in the same area. Another limitation was the length of my visits to research locations. The individual site visits were brief— about two weeks each time— although I was able to return to each country over a period of two to four years. I was able to compensate for this by maintaining regular email exchange with key contacts in each research site.

2.4 My Place as Researcher

I came to this research as a professional humanitarian worker who was also now conducting academic research, prepared for the task by a number of significant prior experiences. I have played a participant-observer role through my work as a peacebuilding and humanitarian aid practitioner of many years in several countries in Africa, including Kenya, Zambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Burundi. Through my work with UNHCR and UNICEF I have interviewed survivors of trauma (refugees and former child soldiers), danced with village women, and listened to stories around the fire. Regarding the creative side of my experience, I was a member of the visual arts council in Zambia and I painted and exhibited with artists in Zambia and Burkina Faso. All of these encounters grounded me in the reality of human suffering through the eyes, voices, and faces of people sitting in front of me. They taught me the importance of identity, resilience, hope, and the creative spirit in the face of enormous challenges.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Conscientization and Theatre of the Oppressed

My theoretical perspective aligns with the critical pedagogical approach of the Brazilian educator Paolo Freire, who coined the term 'conscientization'. As described in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, conscientization is "the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world" (Freire 1970, 19). It is through conscientization that individuals and communities are made conscious of social constructs and are able to critically analyze the power relationships that control access to information, resources, and choices. Freire asserts that "only as subjects can we speak" and that "moving from silence to speaking out is to begin the process of education for critical consciousness…offering people a sense of identity, place, and hope…reclaiming memories, stories, and history" (Freire in Prentki and Preston 2009, 304).

Freire's work draws attention to the relationship of the local community to the broader political context and webs of power within which communities function. When people in a community become aware of these contexts and power relationships, they can become subjects of their own knowledge, decisions, and actions, rather than objects controlled by larger power structures. For Freire, facilitating collective participation in understanding their world is the way in which individuals and communities can be transformed (Freire 1970).

Augusto Boal, the Brazilian founder of theatre of the oppressed, based his theatrical method on Freire's philosophy. Boal had been imprisoned and tortured in his home country of Brazil, and wrote his seminal book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, while a refugee in Argentina. Following the example of Freire, Boal aimed to empower learners as active agents in their own education, using theatre as a platform to develop critical thinking and social analysis. His goal was to develop people's capacity to critique their environment by means of the arts, primarily using theatre. His ultimate aim was not just critique, but social transformation (Boal 2008, 6). He emphasized the need to distinguish the theatrical process (affect) and product (effect), and the different benefits of each.

Boal speaks of art as a special form of knowledge that is subjective and sensory (2008, 20). The process of the creative act opens us to different ways of knowing- we can 'know' things kinetically, visually, orally, and metaphorically. Thus art becomes a way of knowing and critiquing the world. This embodied epistemological shift in 'knowing' creatively, leads to 'acting' creatively (Lederach 2005, 174).

Boal describes several different techniques and forms within theatre of the oppressed, but he believes that all forms of theatre have the common goal of "supporting the struggle of the oppressed" (2008, 4). His most popular method, forum theatre, transforms audiences into active participants, coining the term 'spect-actors'. Boal replaces the spectator sitting passively in the audience with the active 'spect-actor'. As Freire broke the hierarchical divide between teacher and student, Boal did so between performer and audience member. Boal also replaced a narrator role with a 'joker'. Rather than simply guiding activities, the Boalian Joker provokes debate, doubts, and challenges easy

answers in order to encourage more in-depth reflections (Kuftinec, 2009, 20). Boal used this technique to create change and to actively address practices of power. The methodology is participatory, and is designed to be accessible to all levels of education and backgrounds (Sliep, Weingarten, and Gilbert 2004, 310).

3.2 Peacebuilding and Creative Expression

John Paul Lederach is a leader in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation. Consistent with Freire and Boal, his theoretical framework also recognizes the central role of creative expression, though in his case he applies this specifically to peacebuilding. His work and writing focus on the relationship between imagination, social change, and breaking cycles of violence. His basic tenet is that overcoming violence requires imagination, which translates into creative acts, both literally in incorporating artistic expression in peacebuilding, and also creativity in problem-solving and building positive relationships. Lederach would encourage all parties involved in resolving violent conflict to tap into the creative energy which is fundamental to being human, to "use an artist's intuition to appreciate the complexity of human experience that can be captured in an image or story" (2005, 149). He believes that "transcending violence is forged by the capacity to generate, mobilize, and build the moral imagination". Moral imagination is described as "…imagin[ing] something rooted in the challenges of the real world, yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist". In his experience people who can harness such imagination in situations of violence have a capacity to find creative ways to move beyond violent responses (2005, 29).

Expressive arts therapist Steven Levine also believes that art making is central to human experience, as the way that we make sense of our world. He emphasizes the importance of the 'lived body experience', and the use of all senses to create meaning. His perspective is supported by Levine's co-author Paolo Knill, who describes creativity as "an ability that allows people to discover a new solution to an old problem or an appropriate response to a new situation" (Knill, Levine, and Levine 2005, 72). Creativity enables people to move beyond existing narratives of violence to new and unexpected solutions. Conversely, violence can be described as "…the behavior of someone

incapable of imagining other solutions to the problem at hand" (Fisas in Lederach 2005, 29). Storytelling through theatre is one creative tool for imagining other solutions. Lederach eloquently expresses the way in which creative expression can point us away from the cycle of violence and toward a cycle of healing: "We live by the stories we tell about each other. Once guns are chosen as the way to tell our stories, the modality by which we communicate, it becomes hard to find our way back to words" (Lederach 2011, 15).

Consistent with Freire's approach, Lederach suggests a paradigm shift away from focusing solely on providing technical services through trained peacebuilding professionals, to a more creative approach that better facilitates relationship building (2005, 173). He asserts that building constructive social change in conflict settings is an artistic endeavor as much as a technical process. Hence, social and relational spaces can be more effectively developed through creative activity that is intentionally instigated than through the traditional model of program development by professionals external to the community (2005, Introduction).

In Lederach's experience, peacebuilding is a highly relational process, and participating in creative acts puts individuals into a more open mindset, giving the capacity to "imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that include our enemies" (2005, 6). He uses the metaphor of a fishnet to explain the centrality of restoring relationships as central to resolving conflict: "A fisherman does not 'resolve' a tangle [conflict]; he restores the connections and relationships, and brings back to life the very fabric and function of community" (2011, 13). Prendergast combines the focus on relationship in conflict transformation with an epistemological outlook: "Aesthetic learning enables us to see not only ourselves, but also to reflect on the perspectives of others, helping us to wonder and imagine things as if they could be otherwise." She avers that after an aesthetic experience, "persons see differently, resonate differently" (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 188).

The arts have also been used throughout history as part of healing ceremonies, formed as rituals and dramatic enactment to facilitate individual and social healing (Knill, Levine,

and Levine 2005, 16). For Boal, "imagination is memory transformed by desire" (Boal 2008, 21). In Levine's experience it is through the use of imagination that creative expression transforms the event of suffering for the victim, and thus the person is "freed from its grip" and able to see the event in a new light (Knill, Levine, and Levine 2005, 68). In Greek mythology the Muses for the Arts are daughters of Mnemosyne and Zeus, calling forth symbolically the capacity to remember and the power to evoke creativity. It follows that the preservation of history requires a creative act, and the act of imagination requires memory: "The Muses inhabit the nexus of memory and the creative act" (Lederach 2011, 6). Peacebuilding and reconciliation are products of creativity and memory; imagining positive solutions to problems and remembering events in ways that build inclusive and positive identity, rather than a narrative of hate.

I conclude this section by affirming the relevance of these theoretical perspectives to my research. I begin with the proposition that affected people have the capacity to critically understand their context and to participate in creative problem solving. I posit that when communities take the lead in their own development, rather than depending upon external donors, sustainable results are more likely. I agree with the propositions of Lederach, Freire, Boal, and others that the act of creating opens up new ways of understanding, and new perspectives on events. My research explores whether this provides the possibility of healing relationships, reclaiming one's identity, and thus moving from victim to survivor, from violence to peaceful and resilient communities.

4. Components of Research Question

As already noted in the elements of my research question, it can be broken down into three major components: the context of protracted violence; outcomes of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience, leading to peacebuilding; and intervention of storytelling through theatre. These components are delineated in the figure below.[4]

Context	Protracted violence

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[4] I list only positive outcomes at this juncture because my research question is framed to ask what conditions will contribute positively, and thus negative effects are not included here.

Outcomes	Peacebuilding: Forgiveness, Healing, Reconciliation, Resilience
Intervention	Storytelling, Theatre

Figure 3: Components of the Research Question

In the following section, I use the structure of these components to frame and examine other research related to my topic. From this literature I derive the definitions and concepts that provide a framework for understanding the findings of my field research in subsequent chapters.

4.1 Context

Violence

The context of my research is communities that have been subject to violent conflict. I focus on large-scale protracted violence within war-torn communities, rather than violence that is the result of individual criminal acts. This political violence can be meted out by state or non-state actors, such as rebel groups.

Conflict, as opposed to violence, is not negative in and of itself. It is a normal part of human interaction, and can be handled constructively or destructively. Renowned peace researcher Johan Galtung refers to conflict as both 'Destroyer and Creator', and contends that conflict is dangerous if it turns into violence, but that it can also be an opportunity for constructive change (Galtung and Fischer 2013, 60). Conflicts that turn into deep rooted or protracted violence are those with patterns of destruction which continue across generations (Lederach 2005, 43). Such violent responses are intended to harm and may bring about an escalation of violence returned in the form of defence and/or revenge (Galtung and Fischer 2013, 61).

Galtung distinguishes between direct violence—"violent actors, bullies with no concern for the harm they cause", and structural violence—"violent structures that exploit, repress and alienate people" (Galtung and Fischer 2013, 62). Lederach observes that most peacebuilding initiatives have focused on the short-term goal of reducing direct violence rather than addressing structural violence, producing what he calls a 'justice gap'—the

gap between justice and peace (Lederach 2005, 43). This justice gap develops when four basic human needs/rights, identified by Galtung, are not met: survival, well-being, freedom, and identity. The presence of these basic needs is necessary for a just and peaceful society and their absence can be the cause of continuing in the cycle of violence (Galtung and Fischer 2013, 36).

The figure below, created by peacebuilding lecturers at Eastern Mennonite University's program for trauma awareness and resilience, provides a comprehensive description of possible responses to violence or acts of aggression by perpetrators or victims, which ties together the context and outcome components of my research question. As outlined in this illustration, responses to acts of aggression can continue with revenge or retribution, or they can move on a path toward forgiveness and healing, and eventually toward reconciliation.
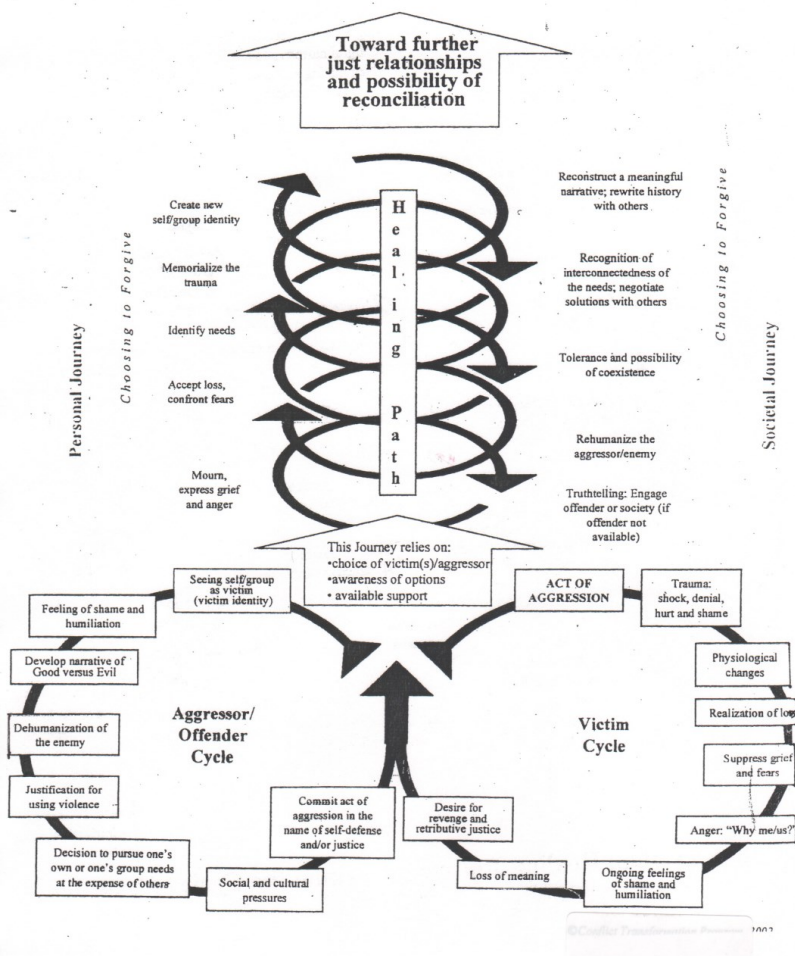
Figure 4: Breaking the Cycle of Violence[5]

4.2 Outcomes

Peacebuilding

The ultimate goal for most individuals and communities subject to such violence is to restore them to peace. Peacebuilding as a term was first introduced by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali in his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, where he defined it as "actions to identify and support structures that will strengthen peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Prince Claus Foundation 2007, 86). Peace is not simply the absence of war; rather it is a proactive and long-term process that takes place on the micro and macro levels:

> The construction of a peaceful world requires that individuals, groups, and nations can negotiate shared meanings, including coherent but compatible identities and patterns of social relationships…it is shared meanings that form the core of group identity and culture, as well as peaceful interpersonal and intergroup relations (Lumsden in Hartwell 2000, 13).

Schirch uses the term peacebuilding as an umbrella term to comprise a variety of activities that contribute to stable societies, which includes prevention, reduction, and transformation of violence. She therefore contends that conflict transformation is one component of peacebuilding (Schirch, 2005, 12). I agree with this usage, since in my research question peacebuilding can be considered as a broad impact, under which I place process outcomes of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience, all of which may be components of peacebuilding, and may or may not be experienced sequentially. Below I define each of these process outcomes, as they relate to my research context.

Forgiveness

The concept of forgiveness may seem more fitting in a religious context than in a political world, however it is increasingly viewed as necessary for trauma healing and reconciliation. According to Hartwell, forgiveness may be one of the "…least understood but potentially necessary acts for a society to fully break a cycle of violence" (Hartwell 2000, 1). In situations of protracted violence there is inevitably something to be forgiven, to heal from, and if possible, to reconcile. In Figure 3 on Breaking the Cycle of Violence, 'choosing to forgive' is noted as part of the personal and social path to healing.

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[5]This illustration is used with permission of Eastern Mennonite University. It was created by C Yoder and colleagues (2001), and is based in part on the writings of Botcharova, Levine, Volka, and Wink.

Forgiveness can be defined as a "conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness." This refers to a behavioral aspect; there is also an emotional component: "Forgiveness brings the forgiver peace of mind and frees him or her from corrosive anger...enabling them to heal and move on with life." There are physical benefits to practicing forgiveness such as lower blood pressure, better sleep, less fatigue; and emotional benefits, such as freedom from corrosive anger (Toussaint et al. 2014, 2).

The act of forgiveness can reconnect the perpetrator and the victim and establish or renew a relationship: "it can heal grief, forge new and constructive alliances and break cycles of violence" (Minow 1999, 14). Bishop Tutu agrees and proposes that, "to forgive is not just to be altruistic. It is the best form of self-interest. What dehumanizes you inexorably dehumanizes me" (Tutu 1999, 31). This is expressed in the African concept of Ubuntu, which is the essence of recognizing our humanity, intertwined within the human community: "my humanity is inextricably bound up in yours". Rather than, 'I think therefore I am' the philosophy is 'I am because we are' or 'I am human because I belong, I participate, I share'. Those with Ubuntu gain self-assurance from knowing that they belong to a greater whole, and that, conversely, they are diminished when another person is diminished (Tutu 1999, 31).

Minow underscores that forgiveness must always be the choice of the victim: "It is part of the dignity and right of victims to decide whether they are ready to give or to withhold, forgiveness" (1999, 17, 20). Yet in communal cultures, victims may feel pressured to forgive in order to maintain social harmony (Minow 1999, 14). The victim may be asked to forgive the offender in a public ritual, in order to restore relationships for the sake of the community. Even in the case where a person decides to forgive, she may or may not choose to renew a relationship. Although forgiveness can help repair a damaged relationship, it does not oblige the victim to reconcile with the perpetrator, or release them from legal accountability.

It is equally important to clarify what forgiveness is not. Forgiveness does not equal condoning or absolving the guilty party. As noted above, "Forgiveness does not mean exemption from responsibility for reparation for the wrong done" (Minow 1999, 15). Forgiveness is not forgetting. As Lederach suggests, rather than 'forgive and forget' the call is to 'remember and change' (2005, 46). Donald Shriver describes the tension in trying to balance remembering and moving on: "Pain can sear the human memory in two crippling ways: with forgetfulness of the past or imprisonment in it…down either path lies little health…too much memory or not enough, too much enshrinement of victimhood or not enough memorialisation" (in Minow 1999, 17).

In seeking to forgive, the desire of the offended person is to begin anew and not be hindered by past hate and bitterness; in particular, to not have one's healing under the control of the perpetrator. Staub and Pearlman believe that forgiveness, even in the face of such serious violence as genocide, promotes psychological well-being, and it paves the way for reconciliation and healing (Staub et al. 2005, 298).

Healing
One of the main purposes of forgiveness is to allow for healing. The effects of the trauma need to be healed after an experience of individual or generalized violence. Fuertes defines trauma as "a deeply distressing experience; lasting adverse effect on functioning or well-being; emotional shock following a stressful event or injury" (Fuertes 2013). The physical and emotional reactions to trauma can be described as natural responses to unnatural events.

Traumatic stress can result when we experience or witness an event involving actual or threatened death, serious injury, or threat to the physical integrity of ourselves or others. Our usual ability to cope with, or respond to threat is overwhelmed. This can happen at physical, emotional, and spiritual levels. Daily routine and the sense of safety and security are destroyed along with the more visible destruction of homes, lives, and jobs (Yoder, 2001).

Repercussions may include memories of the violence, nightmares, heightened violent responses, domestic violence, stigmatization, isolation, and alcoholism. Healing in this context can be seen as being released from pain, shame, hurt, anger, and revenge, and moving forward to healthy relationships and a hopeful future. Expressions of healing may manifest in a number of ways. People have a positive release of emotions, they feel able to sing, dance, and laugh. They are able to conduct daily activities; they can sleep, eat, have sex, concentrate, and work. They may experience a regeneration of hope and belief in the future (Fuertes, lecture, May 2013).

Healing implicates not just individuals, but also families and communities; community is the unit of social healing. Galtung emphasizes the relational aspect of healing: "trauma did not just happen to somebody, but between some-bodies" (2013, 179). Figure 3 (Breaking the Cycle of Violence) also exhibits that respectful and just relationships are crucial for reconciliation. Lederach further suggests that social healing and reconciliation are tied together as a collective process: "Social healing is about deepening and expanding space [for healing] rather than a process of phases and sequential steps leading to an end product" (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 101).

Recent research on the impact of emotional trauma sheds light on the physical connection to healing. Traumatic events are stored in our bodies physically, through our brain and nervous system. Traumatic memories can be expressed in imagery more readily than words, since during trauma the central nervous system reverts to a more primitive (non-verbal) memory, coming from the limbic system, which is the most primitive part of the brain. Furthermore, neuroscience research about the effect of music explains our physical response to music. The pleasure of listening to familiar music releases the neurotransmitter dopamine, also triggering the limbic system. Dopamine is what causes us to have a deep emotional connection to the music that we love, and so whenever we hear that music, our body produces this sensation of pleasure (Zatorre et al. 2011, 60).

This is why the physical expression of singing, dancing, drumming, and storytelling is increasingly used in trauma healing. I agree with Madison, who proposes, "our cognitive system yearns for the pleasure of improvisation – this pleasure of new ideas, experiences,

insights, and sensations…addressing the call from our cognitive system for...new performances, new ideas, new hopes to be lived and remembered" (Madison 2010, 7). Theatre as one arts-based approach involving such physical expression can open doors to trauma healing, and prepare the way for reconciliation.

Reconciliation

The concepts of healing and reconciliation are often considered together, perhaps with the recognition that people need to heal to some extent before they can consider the possibility of reconciling. Peacebuilding experts agree that reconciliation stands at the very heart of social recovery (Abu-Nimer 2001; Al Badilla Fuertes 2008; Galtung and Fischer 2013; Lederach 2003; Minow 1999; Schirch 2006; 2004). It is a process of restoring broken relationships, and rebuilding trust so that affected people can live together and rebuild their communities. Part of this rebuilding process is to allow those on different sides of a conflict to "create common ground in contested histories embedded in their social and physical geographies" (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 4,5,7).

Holocaust survivor and philosopher Hannah Arendt articulates the question of how communities can reconcile after mass atrocities: "What would it take to come to terms with the past, to help heal the victims, the bystanders, and even the perpetrators? What would promote reconstruction of a society devastated by atrocities…[and] build a nation capable of preventing future massacres or regimes of torture?" (Arendt 1958, 21). Through these critical questions Arendt reflect on how communities may break the cycle of violence and choose to move toward reconciliation rather than revenge.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is the most prominent recent example of seeking national reconciliation after long-term political violence. The purpose of the TRC was to provide a platform for victims to be heard, and to have the chance to face perpetrators, who then had the opportunity to acknowledge their actions and ask forgiveness (Tutu 1999, 281). TRC Chair, Bishop Tutu, cites a number of examples from the TRC of people's extraordinary willingness to forgive and their desire to reconcile. Many witnesses attested that they experienced healing through the process of telling their stories, and of being heard: "The acceptance, the affirmation, the

acknowledgement that they had indeed suffered was cathartic for them" (Tutu 1999, 165).

Many in the peacebuilding field agree with Tutu that any authentic attempt at healing and reconciling relationships, even if there will be no future contact, involves recognizing the humanity of perpetrators. Lederach identifies the relational side of reconciliation as a key factor in conflict transformation (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 4). Arendt believes that reconciliation restores dignity to victims, even to the point where they may "[deal] respectfully with those who were complicit in the violence" (Arendt 1958, 23).

Another difficult aspect of reconciliation is ensuring access to justice. Staub warns that a lack of access to justice for victims contributes to the risk of victims becoming future perpetrators by turning to revenge. The cry, 'no peace [or reconciliation] without justice' is often heard, in particular in relation to state-sponsored violence. The pragmatic phrase 'all the truth and as much justice as possible', has been used in relation to TRC commissions (Minow 1999 forward). Hizkias Assefa, a negotiator in a number of peace negotiations, observes that in his experience perpetrators want reconciliation and victims want justice.

Resilience
While justice may be difficult to attain in the short term, if at all, individuals and communities exhibit resilience through their coping mechanisms. Resilience is what turns a victim into a survivor. The term resilience is used in a number of disciplines. In health sciences resilience is described as "the ability of complex living systems to maintain or rebuild their balance after experiencing shocks or continued periods of stress" (Collin 2005, 290). A succinct social science definition is "positive adaptation despite adversity" (Fleming and Ledogar 2008, 7). Resilience in a context of violence refers to, "the capacity for people to survive violence and loss...and to have flexibility of response over the course of a lifetime...including a sense of agency and choice" (Fuertes 2008, 21).

Building community resilience after mass political violence takes enormous courage. And yet, as Hartwell notes, examples abound: "All over the world, huge numbers of

ordinary, unremarkable people demonstrate a capacity to endure, adapt, and transcend suffering" (2000, 11). The Chinese character for resilience includes the same radical as for bamboo, symbolizing something flexible and strong. Resilient people have the ability to form supportive, nurturing relationships characterized by mutual empathy. They have the capacity to construct personal narratives to better understand traumatic events, thus allowing them to develop a positive identity and a coherent sense of self (Fleming and Ledogar 2008, 19). Lederach views resilience in communities as a 'grounded realism': "They do not allow the repeated cycles of violence to kill their passion for life…they keep walking the daily terrain in spite of the violence" (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 55). He suggests that hope for ending protracted violence that is founded in such reality is a gift for community survival (2010, 55).

This hope is supported by a 2011 report by the Institute for Economics and Peace. Not only is resilience connected to healing and reconciliation, this report maintains that resilience and peace are interconnected, since societies that had high ratings on a peace index also displayed high levels of resilience. Resilient communities have strong adaptive skills including the ability to plan and problem-solve in response to stressful events. They propose that an environment in which peace thrives is also the optimal environment for human potential to flourish (Measuring Peace in the Media, 2011).

I have described the outcomes that my research question proposes peacebuilding, developed through forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience. Through an examination of the literature I provided definitions for each of these concepts, and presented a context in which to understand how they are relevant to my research. I now offer examples of specific creative interventions that have been used in contexts of protracted violence.

4.3 Intervention

Before focusing on theatre as the particular intervention, it is beneficial to delve into the concepts of storytelling and narrative, as they afford a necessary framework in

understanding the use of theatre in this context. This provides the basis for a more detailed examination of different types of theatre.

Storytelling and Narrative

It was stated frequently by interview respondents that individuals affected by violence need to tell their stories and to have their stories heard, whether these stories are expressed verbally through storytelling or theatre, or non-verbally through dance or painting. In particular they seek acknowledgement for what has happened to them. This is especially true for trauma survivors in a context of protracted violence; the retelling of events often assists with healing (Knill, Levine, and Levine 2005, 67). Columbian arts activist Patricia Ariza recognizes the centrality of creating a venue for victims of violence to speak and to be heard: "No one and nothing is mute: the task is to find an appropriate space for them to speak up, to have a voice… memory needs to be made visible, recognized, valued" (Prince Claus Foundation 2007, 53).

Storytelling is central to African traditions. Nigerian scholar and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka remarks that "the artist has always functioned in African society as the record of the mores and experience of his society and as the voice of vision in his own time" (1968). Ugandan poet and anthropologist Okot p'Bitek also stresses the importance of the African tradition of storytelling, and how violent conflict can negatively impact the transmission of cultural values (Rosenoff 2013, 46). Examples abound of different forms of traditional storytelling in African cultures.

West African storytellers, called griots, are hereditary musicians and oral historians. In addition to keeping an oral record of births, deaths, and marriages through generations, griots may provide satirical commentary on current events and daily life (Mani and Weiss 2013, 103). 'Fambul tok' [family talk] is the Sierra Leonian storytelling. The family talks around the fire about a particular event. Wrongs are recounted to the circle, which will include community members. They will decide together how the issue can be resolved, and what has to happen for the individuals to function again as a part of the community (Ferme 2001, 19).

Performative traditional storytelling in Uganda is called 'Wang-o'. Families gather around a fire at night and tell stories about mystical characters, which are meant to pass on lessons to children about how to behave. The traditional Zimbabwean storytelling style known as dare/ekundleni uses indigenous performance styles drawn from traditional ritual, satire and story-telling traditions (Vambe 2004, 2). It is based upon the power of the word on the imagination and emotion characteristic of the dynamic nature of African memory in both written and unwritten form. It traces the ways in which the African oral story-telling tradition has survived. Somalia has been called 'a nation of poets', because of its rich oral tradition of storytelling and poetry. Until recently Somali was exclusively an oral language, and so this storytelling tradition was a critical part of passing stories on through a historically nomadic culture. Somali literature is the vehicle of political, religious, and ethical instruction and storytellers were viewed in the highest esteem (Laurence 1993, 9). Poetry and oral recitation embodies the totality of their culture, and to which they attach the highest importance (Samatar 1982, 55).

Communities will resonate with forms of creative expression that are indigenous to their culture. Using familiar cultural expression is more likely to build resilience because the initiative is now embedded in the family and culture (Porter, Interview, 2011). After living many years in different African communities, I would highlight the different perspective held on individual vs. community story. My African friends and colleagues have a life view that is far more community-based than individualized. A story belongs to everyone in the community. In each African context the purpose of the storytelling tradition is to connect individual story to responsibility, learning, and the best interest of the community. Good storytellers, whether around the Ugandan fire at night or the griot in West Africa, tease the audience into participation and understanding. The individualization of events may be seen as dissecting and analyzing—technique without understanding or care.

The word 'story' is often used synonymously with the word 'narrative'. However for the purposes of my research, it is useful to differentiate between the two. The important distinction is between the actual events (story) and how the events are represented or how the story is told (narrative). Abbott defines narrative as "the representation of an event or

series of events" (2002, 12). He points out that the etymology of the word narrative comes from the Latin words for 'knowing' (gnarus) and telling (narro). This etymology describes the two sides of narrative—as a tool for absorbing knowledge and for expressing it: "narrative provokes active thinking and helps us work through problems, even as we tell about them or hear them being told" (Abbott 2002, 11). Thus, for the purposes of my research, the stories that participants told are important as acknowledgement of what actually happened to them, and their creative interpretation of these events became their narrative expression.

Hannah Arendt describes narrative as "the art of redefining our personal and corporate stories", which allows us to imagine a different future, even though we cannot predict or control it (in Lederach 2005, 148). Ignatieff uses the terms factual truth (story) and moral truth (narrative). The first gives a chronology of events, and the second is a narrative explanation of why events took place and who is responsible (Ignatieff in Hartwell 2000, 9). Consequently, in theatre the storytellers or writers give meaning to the events of their stories by providing the audience with the narrative context in order to understand, and ideally to reflect further on implications.

However this begs the question, whose narrative is being represented? Whose version of history is being told? Theatre researcher James Thompson asks the very pertinent question, "If wars are fought over competing versions of history, what stories do theatre and performance narrate in these circumstances?" (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 2). Conflict resolution will only be successful when avoiding narratives of historical hate that justify more violence: "Cycles of violence are often driven by tenacious requirements to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that describe social reality in artificial ways…categories of good and bad, us and them, right and wrong, even victim and perpetrator" (Lederach 2005, 35–36).

The question, then, is whether storytelling through theatre can create an inclusive narrative that assists communities to look at the world through the eyes of 'the other' who, in a conflict context, would be 'the enemy'. How can personal and collective memories be shaped into new narratives of identity and belonging in the form of

embodied performance that speak to all sides of a conflict? Lederach believes that there is a very direct connection between storytelling and peacebuilding: "There is a sense in which the whole of peacebuilding could be summed up as finding and building voice". McKnight and Block agree: "The stories of a [resilient] community are a narrative...[that] gives body to the collective...the beginning of myths that memorialize and remind us of the epic nature of our journey together" (2010, 95).

Theatre

Through the selection of my research sites, my focus narrowed to theatre as the specific form of creative expression, since all the organizations accessed used theatre as a central part of their programs. Although research contexts included professional and community theatre, each of the theatre projects could be considered under the broad umbrella of applied theatre, since all the projects had a broader message or goal, involving issue identification and varying degrees of community participation.

There is a growing interest in using theatre in contexts of violence and how this context impacts performance responses (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009). Thompson makes an interesting observation that the term 'theatre of war' can be used almost literally when one considers the performative aspect of this setting: "…as places where the destruction…of human lives are planned, often rehearsed, and finally enacted" (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 2).   He identifies the goals of such theatre as increasing understanding, and being concerned with justice, reconciliation, and peace initiatives (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 14). Theatre researcher Sonia Kuftinec proposes that theatre provides a way to deal more effectively with past events through metaphorical means, and works to avoid the replication of the trauma (2009, 40).

Theatre, as opposed to drama, is a performance before an audience. In applied theatre the participation includes audience as well as actors, and in some cases the broader community. The line between audience and performers is more flexible, and audiences can be engaged before, during, or after the performance (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 11). The goal of applied theatre is to elicit dialogue on issues identified in the process of creating the play. Madison claims that the audience becomes a witness to issues which,

through performance, can be engaged within a broader arena: "Entering a public sphere enlivens scrutiny, enlarges responsibility, and cracks open into plain sight hidden wrongs" (Madison 2010, 6).

Prendergast and Saxton define applied theatre as "a web of performance practices that fall outside the mainstream theatre performance and take place in non-traditional settings and/or within marginalized communities" (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 6). Differences may be in space (where the piece is performed), participants (who may not be professional actors) and audience (those with vested interest in the issues) (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 20; Prentki and Preston 2009, 10). The purpose of applied theatre goes beyond entertaining to informing, educating, and transforming social problems into community solutions. In this respect applied theatre draws on Freire's concept of conscientization.

A number of types of theatre can be included under the broad umbrella of applied theatre, including community, participatory, protest, political, and prison theatre; theatre for development, drama in education (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 176; Prentki and Preston 2009, 10; Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 6). I have described in my theoretical framework Boal's forum theatre, which creates a space for reflection so that people can examine their problems. Prentki and Preston (2009, 10) identify different types of community involvement— theatre 'for' (touring play) or 'with' (workshop facilitation) or 'by' a community (community initiated or owned).

Within the applied theatre field, and in particular theatre that is used with a strong social agenda in mind, the line between performance and life can become blurred. There is a question as to whether performers need to be objective. Saxton cautions regarding reality-based or documentary theatre, which may include autobiographical performance. Theatre should not be a personal therapy session for performers; rather, catharsis is for the audience. Also, if theatre is too real it does not allow for the necessary distance for the audience to ask questions and enter into debate. Instead the audience is in the awkward situation of judging a real person rather than a character. The audience can no

longer benefit from what theatre offers— performance that is more objectified (Saxton, 2013).

5. Positive Examples of Arts-based Peacebuilding

Having provided a description of storytelling and theatre as areas of intervention, I now give specific examples of arts-based projects. In the description of my research question I refer to the broad role of imagination and creative expression in peacebuilding. Therefore, the examples presented below are from a number of visual and performing art forms, including but not limited to theatre. Recognizing that all projects will have positive and negative elements to their implementation, I highlight some positive and negative aspects of certain projects, to later compare with my own findings. This section begins with positive examples of creative expression used in contexts of violence. I follow with examples of negative effects of some arts-based initiatives. The positive examples cited give evidence of how this seed of creative human expression can break through the granite of protracted violence. The negative examples warn of pitfalls to be avoided if arts-based initiatives are to be effective and positive. These examples furnish the necessary backdrop in which to view my research findings.

Rama Mani offers numerous examples of artistic initiatives in the midst of large-scale violence. Sometimes this creative expression emerged through visual arts and artisanal crafts, such as carpets woven by Afghan women, traditional quilts or hand-sewn pictures (arpilleras) by Quechua village women in Peru, wall murals in El Salvador and Guatemala, and street art and graffiti in Gaza city (Mani and Weiss 2013, 111). Walls of Hope project at the Open Studio in Perquin, El Salvador, is a project inspired by Argentine artist and human rights advocate Claudia Bernardi. The project worked with 30 indigenous Guatemalan women who are survivors of sexual violence that took place during the armed conflict in the 1980s. This project used art as a tool to collect and preserve their personal histories as well as the historic memory of communities that had suffered human rights violations and state-sponsored violence. The women, who were community leaders, narrated some of the terrible episodes that occurred during the armed conflict. The women chose to paint a mural that expressed their personal stories.

Participants of this art project stated that they were amazed at how beauty and tragedy merged in their mural. The women shared that for them creating this art project together became a way to examine the emotional wounds they sustained. It also became a witness to their resilience (Walls of Hope, http://wallsofhope.org/, accessed April 27, 2014).

Sometimes the performance arts have been used. Congolese dancer and choreographer Faustin Linyekula returned to the city of Kisangani where he opened a cultural centre to teach dance, incorporating traditional and contemporary choreography (Mani and Weiss 2013, 109). In the Sevdah Café in Mostar during the ethnic violence that split apart neighbourhoods and families, soldiers from all ethnic groups who were enemies during the day would at night lay aside their weapons, pick up instruments, and play music together (Mani and Weiss 2013, 116). Algerian poet Tahar Djaout, who performed activist theatre using his poetry, eloquently summarized the artist's dilemma: "If you speak, you die. If you remain silent, you die. So, speak and die". He was assassinated by Islamic extremists in 1993 (Mani and Weiss 2013, 110).

There are examples of artists continuing with performances in the midst of bombings and attacks. During the siege of Leningrad in 1941 in the middle of a musical performance a theatre was suddenly bombed. The director turned to the audience asking if the performance should stop. They shouted, 'Continue!' and so it did. The Leningrad symphony likewise played a full concert which was broadcast over the city with loudspeakers while the Germans were attempting to capture the city (Tremonti, 2012).

In the course of the siege of Sarajevo, Haris Pasovic started a film festival. Pasovic recounted that people would dodge sniper fire in order to purchase tickets. One journalist asked him, "why are you holding a film festival in the middle of a war?" He replied, "Why are they holding a war in the middle of a film festival?" He later observed, "In a city where a million grenades fell during the siege, people were longing for art…we offered spiritual support, and in this way we were part of the defense of the city." A young Sarajevan actress pointed to the intensity and authenticity of the experience: "we lived truly, and the theatre was crowded all the time. The audience adored the work because we didn't lie; we didn't pretend. We had to have performances lit by candles; it

was escape from the black reality but it was so sincere" (Interview by Tremonti, CBC The Current, April 19, 2012).

Radio has been used in several post-conflict reconciliation initiatives. Radio has a number of benefits as a medium of communication, notably its accessibility to most of the population, whether urban or rural, rich or poor, and its low production costs. Another significant advantage is that people listen to the radio in groups, which provides opportunity for community discussion after the radio show. Radio Isanganiro (meaning 'Meeting Point' in Kirundi) is an initiative launched in 2002 by a group of Burundian journalists whose goal was to support reconciliation initiatives between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. The great advantage of radio is that it has a wide audience across the country, including illiterate people, and it is cost-effective to produce and distribute. This radio program was interactive, offering a phone-in component where anyone could anonymously express their opinions on current events, which was broadcast live across the country. The program was praised by Burundians for its ability to raise issues without exacerbating tensions, and for "resisting violence, while not remaining passive" (Prince Claus Foundation 2007, 86). The program also made use of local music and drama, providing a venue for Burundians to express themselves on issues related to reconciliation. By consulting with government as well as civil society, the program was able to navigate the highly contested political arena during a fractious period in Burundi (2007, 86).

Radio was also used in post-genocide Rwanda for similar purposes. Just prior to the genocide Radio Milles Collines had been used to incite violence against Tutsis and sympathetic Hutus, but in post-genocide Rwanda, radio has been used for reconciliation. After the genocide Dutch NGO La Benevolencija created a peacebuilding soap opera called Musekeweya (New Dawn), the aim of which was to teach listeners how to "prevent ethnic violence, embrace reconciliation, and heal the wounds of the past" (Staub et al. 2005, 301). This radio show was created in response to the scope of the need for reconciliation and trauma healing in post genocide Rwanda, where victims lived side by side with perpetrators, and community structures could not cope with the vast numbers of trauma-affected people. Radio show episodes were written by Rwandans. Plots centred

around issues that had been the cause of violence in the past, such as land disputes, access to water, inheritance, and intermarriage (Radio La Benevolencija, 2010, 62). Results from a study revealed that listeners to this radio program were more likely than non-listeners to critique authority figures, and to voice their own opinions— in the words of Freire and Boal— to become Subjects (2010, 61). A number of rebels who surrendered themselves revealed that listening to the radio program had a significant influence convincing them to give up fighting (2010, 61–62).

La Calendaria Theatre is a project begun by Patricia Ariza in Columbia. As an early activist against the violence meted out by state and non-state actors against Columbian people, her struggles in support of social justice have been expressed through the arts. As she avows, "Only art creations seem to have that force of synthesis, and hold the secret of talking to the conscience and to the most secret parts of each of our souls and bodies. Only they can heal by recalling through the heart what was once painful…converting the memories…into a shared language" (Prince Claus Foundation 2007, 52). A Peruvian theatre group, Yuyachkani, used theatre incorporating traditional folk dance and music to help the war-affected population memorialize past atrocities (Mani and Weiss 2013, 110).

In 2013 I was able to visit a village theatre project in the Katanga province of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), addressing protracted violence between rebel groups and government forces. The project was run by Search for Common Ground, an international organization that makes extensive use of different media (radio and television programs, mobile cinema, and theatre) in its conflict transformation work. Search for Common Ground conducts baseline studies at the beginning of each project to learn from communities about current challenges and which issues they prioritize. The students perform plays on market days to gain the widest audience. The plays have become extremely popular because they entertain, as well as speaking to relevant issues. Play topics included stigmatization of internally displaced people, domestic violence, respect for children, and access to water. The enthusiasm of all participants for the use of theatre was remarkable. During this visit I was informed that the theatre project allowed children and adults to discuss openly issues and concerns that had not otherwise been examined. Traditional leaders noted that more families have been able to solve domestic

disputes without involving local police. IDP children were included in more school activities, and they were no longer chased away from water points, as happened before the theatre intervention (Mbayo, interview, October 24, 2013).

These artistic initiatives show evidence of a number of positive outcomes for affected communities. They provided the venue to begin trauma healing through storytelling, as victims can examine together emotional wounds. Several examples display a kind of artistic resistance in the midst of violent attacks, as artists were able to speak out against dictatorships and resist further human rights abuses. In some instances positive communication was established between enemies, with an acknowledgement of events and their impact. Performances gave courage to civil society in times of war, and projects assisted in preventing further violence post conflict by working toward reconciliation.

6. Negative Examples of Arts-based Peacebuilding

Researchers also present a number of cautionary examples of possible and actual negative effects of using arts-based approaches in contexts of violence. Given the difficult circumstances of such settings, it is expected that researchers would discover and report on a variety of complications. These negative examples are particularly valuable as they identify subject matter for future research. Below I describe several specific instances of creative projects with negative outcomes.

When referring to 'theatres of war' Thompson underscores the fact that even though the term is used metaphorically (as with state and non-state 'actors'), there is an element of performance in these settings (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 6). These metaphors are taken to the extreme in Joshua Oppenheimer's documentary film, *The Act of Killing*, which captures the perspective of perpetrators of violence. Oppenheimer created this film with the participation of death squad leaders who took part in massacres that killed thousands of people under Suharto's regime in Indonesia in the mid-1960s. He challenged these perpetrators to act out their memories of the events, and gave them free reign on cinematography. They recreated specific acts of violence in which they

participated, sometimes using bizarre fantasy scenes in their reconstruction. Oppenheimer shares, "I felt like I had wandered into Nazi Germany 40 years after the holocaust only to find the Nazis still in power" (Interview with Tremonti, CBC The Current, February 28, 2014). He confirms that the human rights commission, and families of victims, encouraged his making of the film, because they were convinced that the film exposed "the rotten heart of the regime at that time". However even in the film the emotional toll on all participants is evident, and Oppenheimer wonders how survivors coped as they expressed their fear that this could happen again (Ibid).

Thompson presents a case where possible negative consequences of a theatre project could have contributed to extreme insecurity. A theatre project was undertaken with Tamil former child soldiers who lived in a compound in a Sinhalese area of Sri Lanka. Three months after the completion of the project there was a massacre of Tamil residents in this compound. Thompson questions the extent to which the theatre project could have been a factor leading to this massacre by contributing to the emerging hostility to the Tamil men in the Centre. He wonders if the way in which we engage in applied theatre is sufficiently strategic for security and for long term sustainable (in Prentki and Preston 2009, 116–22).

Jonathon Fox reports on the lack of success of a theatre project in which he participated in Burundi. He assisted the international NGO Search for Common Ground in training Burundian actors in Playback Theatre techniques. However, when he followed up with this project three years later, neither the individuals trained nor the organization had continued with the project. He observes that such projects are often under pressure to achieve rapid results, even with significantly less training than would normally be provided. In my experience, NGOs and donors are becoming sceptical of the usefulness of workshops. Participants have an inspirational time during the workshop, but there is seldom evidence of application of learning upon return. Fox also asks the question as to whether they participated primarily to gain the small benefits of food and transport money- a concern that was also raised by respondents in my Ugandan and Kenyan research (in Prentki and Preston 2009, 245).

A research project in northern Uganda provides an example of a lack of community ownership and agency on the part of its child participants. An international NGO was requested by its donors to present a play for government authorities. Laura Edmonston reports that the children were not involved in deciding about which topics to present, or in putting a script together, and during rehearsals the facilitators wielded careful control over the words and delivery of the performers. She notes that: "The families, lacking agency and cultural resources, simply wait for World Vision's guiding hand, which they ignore at their peril" (2005, 459–60). During the same research project she also relates a situation where a local Ugandan NGO was convinced by Dutch workers to incorporate western techniques into its performance. They did so under duress, but after the international guests left, these techniques were not used again.

Ananda Breed reports on the harmful effects of community theatre as it was used in a theatre project in the politicized environment of post-genocide Rwanda. She tried to conduct participatory theatre workshops with former perpetrators (called 'Genocidaires') while they were in government controlled 'solidarity camps'. Former perpetrators, along with students and returned refugees were required by the government to attend lectures in these camps on topics such as the cause of the genocide, history of Rwanda, and reconciliation (Prentki and Preston 2009, 149). Her description of the constraints and controls in this setting appeared not only to reveal a government controlled and propagandized version of history, but it became an insecure environment. She describes an event where all camp residents were summoned to a football field, and those whose names were read were taken back to prison. Rwandan government officials confirmed that stories participants shared in the theatre workshops could be used by the Gacaca (traditional community) courts, to bring charges against the storytellers, which had an obvious negative impact on participants' willingness to share stories (Prentki and Preston 2009, 150–51).

In the examples cited above, negative effects range from a lack of project sustainability to a threat of physical insecurity. In some projects the agenda and goals of an external donor or the coordinating organization became the priority, and there was a lack of engagement by community participants. There was a concomitant lack of motivation,

and these projects were not able to build a sense of community ownership. In other cases, limited ownership and motivation was due to a lack of cultural relevance. The lack of sustainability of the project is attributed in part to inadequate training of facilitators. More seriously, some projects were initiated in conflict or post-conflict situations where participation could have compromised the physical security of participants; and in one case government control created an atmosphere of propaganda and lack of trust.

7. Conclusion

I began the exploration of my research topic with the premise that creative expression, as a fundamental human trait, would have a positive influence on the ability of individuals and communities to transform conflict into reconciliation, leading to peacebuilding. This premise is supported by a review of related research. The following statements drawn from my literature review summarize the foundational themes and principles that are pertinent to my research question:

> Violence can be described as "…the behavior of someone incapable of imagining other solutions to the problem at hand" (Lederach 2005, 29).

> Overcoming violence requires imagination, which translates into creative acts (Lederach, 2005, p 29).

> Creativity allows people to move beyond existing narratives of violence to new and unexpected solutions (Knill, Levine, and Levine 2005).

> Building constructive social change in conflict settings is an artistic endeavor as much as a technical process (Lederach 2005).

> People increase their capacity to critique their environment by means of the arts (Boal 2008).

> "Moving from silence to speaking out is to begin the process of education for critical consciousness…offering people a sense of identity, place, and hope…reclaiming memories, stories, and history" (Friere in Prentki and Preston 2009, 304).

> "If done ethically, correctly, and with heart we have [in theatre] an incredible tool to speak of things that otherwise we have no way of talking about" (Cohen, Varea, and Walker 2011a, 154).

From this literature review I deduce that arts-based initiatives can provide a venue for storytelling, which contributes to trauma healing. Communication between the different parties involved in violent conflict can prevent further violence, and is an important part of the process of reconciliation. Telling their stories through theatre allows them to move away from victimization and become agents of their own personal change. The voices of artists are also voices of resistance to human rights abuses against civil society. However, caution must be used to ensure the physical and emotional safety of participants, in particular when the conflict has not ended. Ideally the project aims for engagement of affected communities, to respect the agency of community participants, and to be culturally appropriate.

I have identified from previous research positive and negative effects of arts-based initiatives, which are described in earlier sections. Examples are drawn from an array of art forms, including theatre. I also identify specific issues that will merit further attention in my field research. This includes the role of external stakeholders such as donors and organizations, the place of culturally indigenous creative expression, and the dynamics of reconciliation between victims and perpetrators living in the same community. This positions me to now investigate through my own field research the question of what led to such positive and negative outcomes, and to explore the impacts of theatre in these three settings. In the following chapters my field research will illustrate how individuals and communities used theatre to move toward healing and reconciliation, and how this set the stage for peacebuilding.

Chapter 2: Uganda

'A Geography of Scars':[6] Theatre as a Tool of Healing and Reconciliation in Post Conflict Northern Uganda

"It was the rebels that took us. The rebels were fellow school-mates, that's why they could know where to come. They came at night, broke into the dormitory and forced all of us to go with them. It took us two months to walk to Sudan. The hard time for me in the bush was constantly being on the run, the hard work, the hunger, the killings, the beatings, the mutilations. I saw people die from bullet wounds, malaria, cholera, starvation. Then finally came the day when we could try to escape back home to Uganda. Freedom was so close; we were just three days away. Three more days without water or food. All the time I was in the bush I dreamed of going back to school. The most helpful thing for me was to be with friends and family when they accepted me. When I joined the theatre group I felt good to talk about my needs, and I wanted to say it to people who should hear" (Interview with a former child soldier, November 4, 2013).

1. Introduction

Uganda has survived decades of war-induced violence, starting before its independence, and continuing through the regime of Idi Amin Dada, to the infamous rebel group, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The context of my research is the period of recovery from the LRA, which terrorized northern Uganda starting in the late 1980s and continuing till 2008. A hallmark of LRA brutality was the abduction of children who were forced to join their ranks—and then forced to commit atrocities, often against their own families. The depth of the trauma and the need for healing and reconciliation was profound. And yet the astonishing resilience of individuals and communities has matched the suffering they have endured.

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[6] "Art that heals and protects its subject is a geography of scars" (Wendell Berry, What are People For? p 7).

Trauma healing initiatives employed by Ugandan organizations in response to this violence included using community theatre as a vehicle for sharing stories. Theatre was used in camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and reception centres for former child soldiers as an effective means of bringing the community together and opening up dialogue. It is this example of how communities survived and began to rebuild, and how they used creative expression in this process that motivated me to ask my research question: What is the role of theatre as an arts-based approach in providing a platform for healing and reconciliation in war-torn communities?

Theatre has continued to be widely used, as formerly abducted people and welcoming communities move toward healing and reconciliation, eventually building resilience. My research provides an empirical examination of responses from a number of stakeholders, including community theatre project coordinators and notably participants from two northern Ugandan villages. They describe the positive effects of using theatre as reduced stigmatization and isolation, increased community problem-solving, and positive communication, which allows for healing and reconciliation.

Negative effects were also noted. In some instances retelling of painful stories resulted in retraumatization of participants and observers. A certain amount of instrumentality was evident in organizations' funding-driven program choices, and participants who catered to NGO-driven messages. This was also a result of a lack of community ownership of the initiative. Taking all the above into consideration, and after a thorough analysis of primary and secondary data, I identify conditions under which community theatre can stimulate concrete change in individuals and communities, contributing to trauma healing and reconciliation, and creating a platform for resilience.

2. Methodology

I made two research visits to northern Uganda in 2011: 17 days each in September and November, and then in November 2013 I conducted a ten-day follow-up visit. Stakeholders were identified using the snowball sampling technique. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and direct observation. During

the two visits these interviews involved 37 key informants, including youth who were formerly abducted or from IDP camps and their parents, most of whom were play participants or audience members. I conducted five focus groups with a total of a further 35 people. I also interviewed seven artists, 12 NGO project coordinators and two humanitarian workers to gather contextual data. I was not able to observe any play performances or practices, but I did watch one video of a play that had been performed in a village.

Interviews and village visits conducted in 2011 enabled me to understand the historical and political context of northern Uganda, and to identify topics for further exploration relevant to arts-based peacebuilding. I interviewed project coordinators with the main organizations using community theatre in two of the major centres in northern Uganda-Lira and Gulu- as well as two head offices in the capital city of Kampala (Mennonite Central Committee and War Child Holland). I gathered background information from two officers with UNHCR. I visited six villages and participated in two 'Wang-O' evening storytelling sessions.

When I returned in 2013 I focused on the work of one particular NGO, Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP). This Ugandan NGO based in Gulu assists war-affected communities with the reintegration of former child soldiers and makes extensive use of community theatre in its peace and reconciliation projects (Community Theatre Report 2013, 1). Their theatre programs were facilitated by JRP project coordinators with a background in peacebuilding rather than professional actors. JRP has developed a Community Theatre Toolkit which provides a structure for issue identification and storytelling among participants, which eventually is formed into performances. Individuals from affected communities were invited to join theatre projects, and so these community participants identified the themes that they wanted to explore, developed scenes, and acted in the plays. Volunteer facilitators from the local community were recruited and offered training in how shared stories can be turned into plays and performed. Audiences were made up of other community members in the hosting village.

I directly assisted with two days of action research evaluations of community theatre projects that had been conducted over a seven-month period in ten villages in the Gulu region. I participated in whole group evaluation activities, and I interviewed three individual theatre participants each, who came from two villages. I then gained access to JRP's detailed evaluation notes from a further five village evaluations that they conducted. From these written reports and my own interview notes I conducted a content analysis, coding participant and audience comments, and deriving the major themes outlined in my findings.

In addition to a review of the academic literature on this subject, I accessed project reports and manuals from three of the organizations noted above. Thus triangulation of data collection was achieved through using different methodology (interviews, focus groups, direct observation of community gatherings, and a review of secondary data) and different sources of data (theatre participants, audience, project coordinators, and humanitarian workers, all of whom included formerly abducted people).

3. Context

The two decades of violence meted out by the LRA in northern Uganda took an enormous toll on the region, though news did not hit the international radar screen until close to the end of the conflict.[7] In 2004 UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, described it as "the worst forgotten humanitarian crisis on earth" (Deleu and Porter 2011, 4). By that time there were 1.8 million IDPs in 150 camps in the Acholi sub-region (UNHCR Uganda: Country Operation Plan 2011 2011, 4). This meant that a staggering 95% of the population of northern Uganda lived for extended periods of time in these 'protected camps' in appalling conditions. People were crammed into small spaces, with limited movement and activities; they had insufficient food rations and men

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[7] The timeline of this conflict is disturbing: The LRA phase of the conflict started around 1987, the violent tactics seriously devolved after the failed peace talks in 1993, the height of the conflict is identified as 2004. The conflict began to decrease starting in 2007, and by the end of 2008 the LRA had been chased out of northern Uganda. Yet most NGOs did not start activities until 2004, and many started to wind down their programs in 2009. There was effectively 15 years of violence before this conflict came to the attention of the international community.

were unable to provide for their families. This caused social networks to break down, and family violence to increase (Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 35). Thus it was not just the formerly abducted children who were victimized and in need of trauma healing, but the entire population of northern Uganda.

The LRA targeted children between the ages of 12 and 17: the boys were used as porters and soldiers and the girls were forced to be 'wives' to LRA rebels. Abductions lasted from a few weeks to many years, depending on opportunities for escape. Estimates are that between 30,000 and 60,000 people were abducted over two decades of violence, two thirds of whom were under 18 years of age (McClain 2009, 8). This was the era of the 'night commuters'- children who would come in the towns each night and sleep together to avoid the high risk of being abducted from their villages. The LRA was pushed out of Uganda in 2008 and most IDP camps were closed by 2009 (Ouma, Interview, September 15, 2011). As of this writing Joseph Kony and a small number of rebels continue to live in the Garamba forest – a triangle of jungle that includes parts of eastern Congo, South Sudan and Central African Republic. Their numbers are seriously reduced, but they are still abducting children in those areas.[8]

Women faced particular difficulties because of the patriarchal nature of Acholi culture. Many women and girls were victims of gang rape during their abduction and then given to LRA rebels as 'bush wives'. Girls who came back with children were ostracized by their communities and abandoned by their families. In addition to being ostracized, inheritance laws meant that if the husbands of those married women died, they would be forced by his family to leave their property. Because of the social ostracism and the risk of being thrown out by their husbands, women and girls were not able to confide in anyone, and as they recounted, they "bore the pain alone" (Mama Idda, Interview, November 29, 2011).

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[8] The 'Kony 2012' video produced by the American organization, 'Invisible Children' that went viral succeeded in shaming the Ugandan army (supported by American Advisors) into action, but after deploying 5000 troops, Kony remains alive at the time of writing.

The people of northern Uganda experienced extreme trauma; the result was a high level of dysfunction exhibited by many young people who had been abducted. This dysfunction was seen in substance abuse, violent crimes, and higher rates of school dropout. Land conflict and youth unemployment were identified as two of the most potentially volatile issues for communities (Deleu and Porter 2011, 4). Communities involved in the theatre projects added to this list gender issues, such as domestic violence, rape, 'survival sex', and girls dropping out of school (JRP Community Theatre Activity Report 2013, 12). A mental health study conducted by UNDP revealed a "drastically higher prevalence of mental illness," underscoring also the inverse relationship between mental illness and community resilience (Deleu and Porter 2011, 4).

In addition to the human cost from abductions and displacement, infrastructure was destroyed: homes were burnt down, and most schools and hospitals were left in ruins. For example, in 1996 the number of functioning schools fell from 199 to 64, and only 14 out of 30 healthcare units were functioning (Human Rights Watch Report on Northern Uganda 1997, 14). By 2011 northern Uganda was identified as moving from a recovery to a development phase, although one report indicated that the standard of living in northern Uganda was lower in 2011 than it had been in 1985. Slowly the infrastructure has been rebuilt—replacing schools and hospitals, rebuilding bridges and roads, and assisting the 95% of the population that was displaced to return to their villages (Human Security Project: Northern Uganda, 2011).

4. Community Theatre in Northern Uganda

The Acholi culture of northern Uganda has a rich history of using many forms of cultural expression, including dance, drumming, singing, storytelling, as well as traditional cleansing ceremonies: "Acholi culture is full of unwritten dramas" (Loum, Interview, November 25, 2011). These dramas often involve active participation of the audience, either through call and response, or through a narrator engaging audience members as characters (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 6). One example of performative traditional storytelling is called 'Wang-o'. Families would gather around a fire at night and tell stories about mystical characters, which are meant to pass on lessons to children.

Traditional forms of expression were suppressed during the violence, both because of security concerns (not wanting to signal their presence with sound or light at night) and because people were simply too depressed to engage in creative expression. Consequently during the years in IDP camps, cultural traditions were not passed on to youth (Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 39). Acholi poet and anthropologist Okot p'Bitek highlights the performative processes in oral culture, and how violent conflict negatively impacts the transmission of cultural values, as societal structures are severely compromised (Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 46). This has been a widely reported negative impact of life in the IDP camps.

However, during the day music was used by Ugandan NGOs as a tool to mobilize communities to join activities. Rather than trying to convince people to come to a formal discussion, a group of musicians would start singing and people would come to hear them. Plays were then performed, both for entertainment benefit to relieve tensions, and as a vehicle to allow communities to talk about their concerns (Oryema, Interview, September 17, 2011). Theatre provided a means for community members to gather, to identify issues, and to reflect on solutions. Because of the long cultural tradition of storytelling (Wang-O), the use of contemporary theatre for peacebuilding was well received and easily adapted. Theatre performances incorporate storytelling, dance, and singing with traditional instruments. Artistic expression was incorporated into the reintegration programs of reception centres for former child soldiers. Children were invited to draw pictures—and plays were developed and performed. Drama was also incorporated in some public school curricula (Obita, Interview, September 15, 2011).

In an effort to reignite traditional Acholi culture in the post-conflict era, some communities re-initiated the traditional healing ceremony called Mato Oput. Although not a play in the formal sense, the ceremony is performative in nature, as with most traditional ceremonies. This cleansing ceremony is administered to individuals who seek forgiveness for committing an offence against someone. It is a 'truth-telling' opportunity. A person who has committed a crime asks for the ceremony, usually because they feel haunted by bad spirits, and they can only be released through this dramatic ritual cleansing. It is a community process, as ten head of cattle are required to

compensate the wronged person, and the community contributes cattle, since this is more than one person could manage. Thus the individual is held accountable by the community who supports him to reform his behaviour after the ceremony, and it becomes a collective responsibility to reconcile the perpetrator to the community. The central message of the ceremony is that the perpetrator is still a human being, and the community should honour his efforts to restore relationships (Wasonga 2009, 2).

During my visits to northern Uganda in 2011 and 2013, I found a number of Ugandan NGOs that initiated the use of theatre as a primary tool in their peacebuilding and reconciliation programs. The over-all goal of such peacebuilding initiatives was to break the cycle of violence and allow communities (that included victims and perpetrators) to rebuild by developing their resilience. Villages needed concrete tools to assist them in re-integrating former child soldiers, who were their children and neighbours, back into society. The purpose of community theatre was to initiate healing and reconciliation through sharing stories and truth-telling. Storytelling was used as a community documentation process. The expectation was that a deeper understanding between community members would "promote more effective solutions for resolving issues peacefully…the stage becomes an arena for shared reflection and exploration of new life choices and expressions for the future" (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 5).

Other than the one professional theatre company (Lamele Theatre) who would use professional writers and actors, the NGOs using theatre would normally invite village participants to join a theatre project, then they would provide a project coordinator to guide the production of a play, and training of volunteers from each village who would act as facilitators. The participants would meet to share stories, identify themes, and create scripts together. Common themes identified by community participants included stigmatization of former child soldiers, domestic violence, trauma healing, and land reform. Participants would write scenes, based on their experiences. The scripts were often satirical, using dark humour, which was very well received by the audiences. They would then perform these plays in their villages to their families and neighbours. Performances were normally followed by a discussion of the themes brought out in the plays.

Gulu-based researcher Lindsay McClain places these arts-based initiatives into three categories: Indigenous—locally-driven and based on traditional art forms, hybrid— locally driven, but using western popular culture; and transplanted—both artistic form and initiative are external (McClain 2009, 11–13). When McClain refers to projects that are locally driven she has not distinguished between locally initiated and locally funded, but I take this to refer to the initiative of conceptualizing, then implementing the theatre project. Funding for community theatre projects would come from sources external to the country. Funding may be provided to an international NGO like War Child Holland or FilmAid, who then may use a local implementing partner, or it may be provided directly to a Ugandan NGO. Either way, the theatre project is funded externally, and the Ugandan NGO is accountable to external donors.

The following are the major organizations using theatre as part of their peace and reconciliation initiatives in northern Uganda and my assessment using McClain's categories:

Organization	Type	Description
Justice and Reconciliation Project (JRP)	Hybrid	Formed in 2005. Uses storytelling as a community documentation process, especially in the case of large-scale massacres. They provide the platform for survivors and witnesses to share their experiences.
Lamele Theatre Project	Indigenous	A grassroots northern Uganda theatre company started by actor and director Justin Oriyema in 1996. The group of professional Ugandan actors were funded to perform and facilitate discussions in IDP camps. They also provide training to village groups in theatre techniques.
Children as Peacebuilders Project (CAP)	Hybrid	Formed in 2006 after some formerly abducted children returned from the Global Child Rights conference in Toronto. CAP used theatre as a venue for truth-telling, to record individual stories, and to initiate reconciliation through sharing stories and truth telling.
Concerned Parents Association (CPA)	Hybrid	Began as a grassroots Ugandan group started by the parents of girls who had been abducted

		from a girls' school in 1996.[9] The organization has evolved into a sophisticated NGO whose work has expanded to food security.
War Child Holland	Transplanted	An INGO using creative play as part of a standardized curriculum of thematic modules that was originally developed and used for survivors of war-related violence in Kosovo.
Ker Kwaro Acholi	Indigenous	An Acholi cultural institution comprised of traditional cultural leaders involved in reconciliation initiatives, primarily using traditional ceremonies.

Figure 5: Northern Ugandan Organizations using Theatre in Peacebuilding

Respondents from these organizations identified a number of benefits of using theatre as an arts-based approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation. Theatre gives critical distance from the issues and helps people see alternative perspectives, and engage in creative problem solving (Okwir Odiya, Interview, October 29, 2013). In the experience of JRP a deeper understanding of self and others is key to healing and reconciliation. Theatre also lends itself well to audiences with limited formal education, as was the case during the violence when most schools were not able to function. Other benefits of theatre include: actively engaging audience as well as actors; involving a variety of people, all having the potential to benefit; participation encourages agency over the issues raised, it engages the whole person- with physical, mental, emotional expression (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 5, 13).

5. Findings

These findings are a compilation of results from my three research visits to northern Uganda. The themes below are derived from my content analysis of community feedback gathered during JRP's evaluation of their community theatre projects in 2013. I actively participated in two days of evaluations in two villages, and I later accessed their reports

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[9] The abduction by Boko Haram of the schoolgirls from Chibok, Nigeria in April 2014 was sadly similar to the abduction of all 139 girls from St Mary's College, Aboke.

from a further five village evaluations. Participant and audience comments were coded separately (87% from participants and 13% from audience), but combined in the table below since there was no notable difference in responses. After analyzing these responses in conjunction with other data (interviews, observations, and reports) I identify below positive effects of using community theatre, as well as negative consequences. As seen in the table below, retraumatization was the only negative effect referred to directly by community theatre participants; other negative effects were articulated by various program coordinators.

Themes	Total Responses		Indicative quotation from participants
N=111 comments	#	%	
Community works together, positive actions	30	27	The police reduced their patrolling of our village because they had increased confidence that we could resolve conflicts ourselves, like domestic violence
Learned new skills, positive communication	25	22.5	I was afraid at first and now I feel free, I have the courage to speak in public. I am strong and confident to speak without fear.
Reduced isolation and stigmatization	26	23.5	We learned the spirit of forgiveness. We learned that it is important to associate with others freely rather than being selective. We learned to empathize with others' pain.
Contributed to healing	16	14.4	I have now opened my heart. The part that I played touched me. I do not go back to the past now.
Retraumatization	14	12.6	I felt like I was being exposed, retraumatized, (opened old wounds) along with other retraumatized women.

Figure 6: Coding of Comments from Participants and Audience Evaluation

5.1 Positive Effects

There was a high level of enthusiasm on the part of communities that used theatre in peacebuilding due to their experience of the positive effects of their participation. They were keen to create and perform more plays, and to take their plays to other communities. One village participant made the following astute observation, recognizing the performative nature of theatre as a tool, and the need for individuals to apply concretely what they learn: "I can pretend to forgive a character in a play who raped me, but can I

forgive the actual rapist in real life? That's the next step. Theatre gives us the tools to understand and to forgive; now will we actually do it?" (Kicaber Village, 2013, 31 Oct). JRP recorded concrete behavioural changes and tangible results in participating communities. These included reports of reduced stealing of family food provisions, less alcoholism, and bribery being exposed. They also noted an improvement in community problem solving, including land conflicts (mediation at earlier stages) and inter-personal relations (less domestic violence) (Okwir Odiya, Interview, October 29, 2013). The local NGO, Concerned Parents Association, used baseline data to validate the benefit of using community theatre. Although there were likely other contributing factors in addition to theatre, and a causal relationship is difficult to verify, the communities that participated in their drama programs reported positive changes as compared with communities that did not take part. For example, one community leader reported a reduction in the cases of domestic violence: "There used to be about five cases in a week and now I have only had one since the performance" (Akech, Interview, September 13, 2011).

Very practical benefits to actors were the skills that they gained through the process of creating and performing the play. This included public speaking, group facilitation, and mediation. They were better able to manage personal problems, they were more active in helping other community members, and they exhibited leadership skills. Longer-term results were also reported in participating communities. Youth groups had registered with the local government, and they were still active a year after CPA had withdrawn staff (Akech, Interview, September 13, 2011). The villagers spoke of the ability to resolve issues using traditional chiefs or within families, rather than needing to go to legal authorities, using less violence and more mediators to solve disputes (primarily land disputes). JRP observed active listening skills, which became the basis for mediation and problem solving. Participants also spoke of increased confidence in speaking to authority figures, and increased self-esteem. Participants could articulate what they needed to say, to be heard. In particular women gained confidence and reported a more active role in their families and communities.

Interestingly, many villagers (children and adults) had difficulty distinguishing between the character in the play and the actor as a real person. This convention of contemporary

theatre was not familiar to most village audiences. Some participants played characters based on their own experience. However even those who played parts that had no relationship to their daily life had to explain the role separation: "Children saw me act out stealing in the performance and reported me as a thief." Role confusion is increased when community members act scenes that are a part of their daily life, rather than bringing in external actors, who are clearly playing roles.

One very significant positive outcome of using theatre was allowing participants to share their experiences with each other, thus reducing their feelings of isolation. They discovered that others had the same feelings and challenges and they could help each other. One woman shared: "Alone I have evil thoughts; with the group I have brighter thoughts" (2013, Oct 31). Songs written by women became the means for them to share painful past experiences, and time to heal: "When we listen and sing together we think, 'I am not alone in suffering'" (Opinia, Interview, November 30, 2011). Santo Okeyma, an Acholi cultural leader posited that: "[healing] is not the making of a single person. You need support of others to reinforce your natural healing and this [support] can only be enforced by adding sweet things to neutralize the bitter ones, and sweet things are embedded in songs and dancing" (Okeyma, Interview, November 18, 2011).

Several respondents observed that their participation in the play was the beginning of their healing and that it gave them courage to help others. One female participant commented, "It felt good to communicate clearly my needs to an audience that needed to hear" (Interview with the author, 2013, Nov 4). Theatre opened up the opportunity for her to communicate her story, and equally important for her was to be heard and understood, by an 'integral audience', as defined by Schechner.[10] It provided a safe, neutral venue to tell stories of what happened to them without focusing on them as individuals. Concerns would be raised using drama that people would not speak of otherwise. "You have something inside you and when you say it out loud you feel relieved. Sometimes you

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[10] Schechner (in Prendergast and Saxton 2009b, 21) distinguishes between integral audiences (those for whom the play has special meaning) and accidental audiences (those who come to see a show without background knowledge or a specific agenda).

don't even depend on the response of the other person to feel better" (Origa, Interview, November 30, 2011).

This sharing of experiences also served to decrease the stigmatization of former child soldiers, which was identified as one of the primary issues affecting the reconciliation of returnees and host communities. Because those abducted had been forced to commit atrocities against villagers, and sometimes against their own families, welcoming them back was a slow and cautious process, requiring mediation for all sides. Returnees were excluded from social, economic, and political reintegration. Theatre was a venue for the experience of the abducted children to be more deeply understood by the home communities: "Theatre becomes a shared experience and helps us understand each other better. We understood that it wasn't their fault and the importance of reconciliation" (participant, Amalac village, October 30, 2013).

The effects of stigmatization and the extent of the trauma and the healing required after two decades of violence were profound. "How do we heal the minds of people who have been through such trauma?" asks one program coordinator (Odur, Interview, September 14, 2011). One peacebuilding academic and practitioner states unequivocally, "Unhealed trauma is toxic" (Fuertes, lecture, May 6, 2013). Jackie Komakech, (Director, Living Hope) relates trauma healing to the metaphor of a snakebite, and warns of the negative impact of seeking revenge: "When a snake bites you it injects venom into you. If you take time to run after the snake to kill it the venom flows fast. Revenge has the same effect inside you. Yes, it's painful, yes you have poison inside you, but you must deal with it by forgiving to get rid of the bitterness and the poison" (Interview, November 29, 2011).

Her observation was consistent with the sentiments expressed by a number of respondents who spoke of the need for forgiveness in order to heal and to move on with their lives. Abducted children were forced to commit atrocities so that they would think they could never return to their communities. They were regularly given guns and required to abduct their neighbours, or be killed themselves. Komakech observed, "They had to get rid of the prison inside of themselves" (November 29, 2011). Counsellors

proposed that healing was precipitated in part by participants' need to forgive themselves, as well as being forgiven and trusted again by victimized families and communities.

Consider this common scenario: a child is abducted and forced to commit atrocities against her family in order to survive. She is angry with her parents for not protecting her. Her parents feel guilty for this, but may have also suffered atrocities at her hand. Hence another dynamic of this conflict is the cycle of victims becoming perpetrators. This is precisely the challenge that Ugandan communities have been faced with, and have by and large been able to overcome. Theatre programs included former child soldiers and victims of their violence, who were able to create and perform together, and reconcile past events as they gained mutual understanding that in fact all had been victims.

How does theatre facilitate healing and reconciliation? One project coordinator affirmed that healing and forgiveness are facilitated by artistic expression because participants were able to use the arts to express feelings that they found difficult to articulate. One participant shared: "I was abducted and when I first returned, I could not talk about my past in the bush easily with people, but when I joined this drama group, I can talk freely and easily" (January 4, 2013). Several village participants stated that they wanted to bring their wives who are still traumatized to see the play. This indicated two things: they recognized their continued trauma; they believe that watching the play could help. And this was indeed the report from survivors: "This theatre program must continue and expand because it is so important for healing trauma and bringing unity" (former child soldier, abducted for 1.5 years), and, "Before performing this play it was not easy for me to forgive anybody who had done something wrong to me because I would have the heart to revenge" (former child soldier, Interview, January 4, 2013). One villager used this powerful metaphor to articulate his understanding of the need for concrete change, and the role of theatre in this process:

> If I have a bullet in my leg, the play might help me to recognize that the bullet is there, and that it needs to be removed, but the play itself will not take the bullet out of my leg. I must follow up and take care or the wound continues to fester. We must focus on concrete results. A play helps us to understand the problem but it is not real life. At the end of the day, no matter how much I enjoy the process, no

matter how much I think I have learned. I must see change in behaviour and attitudes (Kicaber Village, 2013, Oct 31).

5.2 Negative Effects

There were also reports of negative repercussions of using community theatre in this context. A small but significant percentage of respondents (12.5 %) reported a feeling of retraumatization from either participating in or watching the play. The play was a reminder to them of their painful experiences during the conflict, in particular their experience of being abducted. One community actor averred that performing was painful as it opened old wounds: "I felt like I was being exposed, retraumatized, along with other retraumatized women" (Kicaber Village, 2013, Oct 31). An audience member noted that the play portrayed exactly what she had experienced (her husband had been murdered) and that she felt retraumatized after watching the play, and went home crying. Another woman went home very upset, though she was able to and talk with her children about the play.

Although the issue of retraumatization was not directly referred to by a large number of respondents, program coordinators observed a high level of trauma that still needed to be healed in participating communities. The experience of trauma was not limited to participants, but the personal experiences that the group shared sometimes affected the facilitators, who had also survived their own trauma. They shared that they dwelled on the issues once they returned home after play practices. Despite these descriptions of people's experience of retraumatization, which was difficult at the time, it was unclear to what extent this negative experience later became an emotional release for some participants. One respondent stated that though acting these events was painful, she also felt it increased people's understanding of her, and another spoke of her participation as "a way to finally expose to the light deeply hidden and unexpressed pain, and shame" (Kicaber Village, 2013, Oct 31).

A number of program coordinators observed that participants were more likely to be retraumatized when facilitators lacked proper skills to assist trauma victims, or when victims felt compelled to participate in activities. Aceng reported from her experience

working as a trained counsellor in reception centres and IDP camps that children and adults sometimes felt obliged to participate in performances, whether singing or drama, but that they were not always ready for such expression: "emotionally they could not sing; you can't sing joyfully when you are being forced to, and you are still suffering". She and others further observed that although agencies claimed to offer counselling as part of their programs, often what was referred to as counselling was simply recording the child's bio-data and the story of how they escaped (Aceng, Obita, Interviews, September 2011). Although a different type of creative expression, a similar observation was made about children in reception centres being asked to draw pictures of what they had experienced in the bush. These drawings were often used as promotional materials for fundraising purposes for the organization, which seemed to a number of respondents as potentially exploitive of the children (Okeyma, Aceng, Obita interviews, November 2011).

Interview respondents were also critical of NGOs (national or international) whose motivation seemed to be more concerned with finding funds to continue running the organization, rather than by using theatre in a safe and respectful manner. Edmonston reports that children at reception centres were "paraded out" to perform for each donor visit, and posits that artistic expression "was valued as a means to market trauma" (2005, 457). Related to this is the risk of projects being 'donor-driven'. Ugandan NGOs are often implementing partners for international NGOs funded by external donors. Consequently the requirements of international donors could have a significant impact on how projects are run. The term 'NGO-speak' has been coined to refer to the practice of community participants reproducing terms that will please facilitators, rather than communicating authentically their feelings and concerns (Bloodgood and Littig, interview, June 21, 2011). JRP theatre toolkit encourages community facilitators to try to avoid "moralistic messages". It stresses that the play should be "authentic and not force a public education message that is externally imposed" (2011, 9). Cohen warns against such "didactic goal-driven message-centered productions" (brandeis.edu/peacebuildingarts/ acting together, accessed April 27, 2015).

An understanding of this dynamic was evident in the response of one village participant who articulated: "With theatre we don't take shortcuts—just listen and mouth the responses we think are expected but no inner change. The shortcut response is revenge—killing the person who offends you." One of my interviews was delayed because of such a revenge killing—the person could not leave his house due to a lynching and murder occurring at that moment outside his door. This observation highlights again the gravity of the issues northern Ugandans were facing on a daily basis. Several times participants expressed the desire for real inner change that would give them the personal resources to resist revenge and break the cycle of violence. The project coordinators and community facilitators were themselves trauma survivors, and so they understood personally the need for healing and how authentic storytelling through theatre could contribute to this.

Several interview respondents (interviews with Aceng 2011; Obita 2011; Porter 2011; Otim 2011) identified another negative effect of externally initiated projects as developing an 'NGO mentality' in communities. In particular Aceng was critical of the practice of paying a sitting allowance to participants for simply attending meetings. She expressed that in Acholi culture such an allowance is a shameful thing for community members, and that it is a signal of a lack of community ownership. Aceng asserted that this kind of practice could create a dependency: "Now the communities say that they can't do theatre without the support of an NGO" (Aceng, Interview, November 16, 2011). She is referring to communities' inability to replicate a western project without funding, and not about eroding their traditional forms of performance-making, such as dance, Wang-O storytelling, Mato Oput; it was the 20 years of violence that contributed to this erosion. Where communities used traditional performative designs as the basis of their contemporary plays, there was a deeper understanding and ownership.

6. Analysis

Under what conditions does theatre as creative expression stimulate long-term concrete change in individuals and communities? What conditions contribute to healing and reconciliation, and lead to building resilience? It is not the simple act of participation in community theatre that leads to positive or negative effects, but the way in which theatre

was used by organizers: if it was used with authenticity, professionalism, care and attention, or was it opportunistic and inauthentic. The table below summarizes the positive and negative effects of using community theatre in northern Uganda, and further identifies conditions under which positive effects are more likely to lead to the desired outcome of resilient individuals and communities.

What were the positive effects of using theatre?	When was using theatre harmful (negative repercussions)?	How to avoid harm and create a platform for positive effects (Conditions)	In order to maintain what outcome?
-Reduced isolation, reduced stigmatization -Participants gained valuable skills -Platform for survivors to tell their stories and be heard -Community problem-solving and behavioral change -Contributed to healing, resilience	-When it retraumatizes—when facilitators lack necessary counselling skills -When it created dependency -Opportunism on the part of NGOs (funding-driven) -When participants used 'NGO-speak' (lack of authenticity)	-Need trained facilitators -Need for authenticity, culturally relevant creative expression -Community ownership	-Forgiveness -Hope -Healing -Reconciliation -Resilience

Figure 7: Summary of Positive and Negative Effects and Conditions

6.1 Trained Facilitators

Avoiding retraumatization of participants and audience is one of the greatest responsibilities of organizations using theatre in a post-conflict context. How does one reduce the risk of re-traumatizing individuals who have suffered from extreme violence? A former child soldier shared that the theatre performance was a reminder to her of her painful experiences during the war, in particular being abducted. Although counsellors formally trained in trauma healing are not available in every community, facilitators must

have the sensitivity and concern for the well-being of participants. Aceng observed, "Treating the heart is more complicated than healing physical wounds. These people need so much care and attention, from people who really care for them as persons" (November 29, 2013). Participants reported that program coordinators who exhibited an authentic concern for individuals, and a commitment to assisting long term as part of the community, were able to provide such sensitivity and care, which assisted in their healing. Conversely, those individuals and organizations which appeared to be more motivated by gaining continued employment via a program, were unable to build the trusting relationships necessary to assist trauma survivors.

In particular facilitators need to be sensitive to when, how, and in front of whom trauma survivors are ready to share their stories. The sponsoring organization must take ultimate responsibility to ensure participants are not put at emotional risk, and that local facilitators are sufficiently equipped to identify issues that need follow-up. There should be a facilitated discussion after each play to provide a venue for the community to debrief together. In some theatre programs, participants would also debrief after each practice, not just at the end of each performance. Organizations also need to monitor quality of implementation of their programs. I refer back to the statement from Aceng, that some activities that were referred to as counselling sessions were limited to the children re-telling their stories, and collecting bio-data for family tracing.

6.2 Community Ownership

Local participation in an initiative is essential for community 'buy-in' and for sustainable change. McClain observes that projects with the highest degree of local ownership and resonance within communities are more likely to have a deep and sustained impact. (2009, 4) NGO initiatives can create dependency, if a concerted effort is not made to determine how motivated communities can continue projects independently, after the NGO is gone. Several respondents expressed the belief that communities need to own the intervention, in order for it to be sustainable" (Interviews with Odur 2011; Porter 2011; Obita 2011; Okeyma 2011). Porter avers that resilience is built from using organic Ugandan practices.

Whether a project is initiated locally or externally, almost all funding comes from sources external to Uganda. Funding may be provided directly to a Ugandan organization, or via an international NGO, which will often sub-contract to a local implementing partner. In either case, the local community must fully understand and support the project, and see direct benefits, if they are to be motivated to continue in the future.

Here are my recommendations to encourage community ownership:

-Start the planning with an exit strategy that asks what can be continued after funding ceases, and how to best support the community in this.

-Involve local community stakeholders at the outset and throughout the project, including traditional leaders, women, and youth.

-The community participants should take the lead in determining what issues to address, the subject matter and process, including culturally appropriate expression.

-Investigate ways to involve local institutions. For example, some Ugandan public schools now include dance and drama in their regular curriculum.

-Facilitators that live in the targeted communities should be trained and provided with skills and experience that they can use in assisting the community in its future initiatives, after the sponsored project is complete.

-The project should use only basic supplies that the community will be able to sustain on its own, to avoid creating dependency (e.g. costumes they can put together themselves, traditional instruments, no sound or light systems).

If the participant artists can become teachers themselves, they can pass on skills so that others can also use theatre as a targeted form of storytelling. They become agents of their own change. One community participant observed that the only way to move forward is to help someone else. Participants reported helping those in other communities who had come to watch a performance, and were keen to also use theatre in their villages.

6.3 Cultural Relevance

Communities will most easily relate to forms of creative expression that are indigenous to their culture. Singing, dancing, and storytelling are traditional modes of expression in Acholi culture, which lend themselves naturally to the media of theatre. Forms of expression that are familiar connect to participants in a deep place. The activity is no longer frightening and unfamiliar; the drumming, singing, dancing literally resonates in their bones and draws them in spontaneously. The children poignantly expressed this: "In our everyday life there must be music in everything we do. If there is music then life becomes good. It helps me forget the bad things that happened in the past" and "When I am dancing and singing I feel like everything is like it used to be. Everything feels O.K., like I am in the village" (former child soldiers, interviews, 2011). Creative expression that is familiar and indigenous restores to the victim positive parts of their identity by placing the person in a previous context of agency, security, and belonging.

There is an ongoing debate in Africa over the appropriate use of forms of expression which do not have roots in the culture and history of the specific population (p' Bitek, 1986). Ugandan respondents expressed concern with externally imposed forms of expression such as drawing. p'Bitek notes that drawing is a non-indigenous form of expression. Rosenoff Gauvin states that the population was exposed to immense amounts of foreign ideology through the presence of international NGOs in the IDP camp and their training programs. p'Bitek wrote extensively about the impact of violent conflict on a community's ability to maintain the oral transmission of its culture and how the interruption of these oral traditions in turn impacts the rebuilding of social relationships (p'Bitek 1973 in Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 42).

In northern Uganda traditional performative modes of expression have been revived, as evidenced in the Mato Oput healing ceremony and Wang-O storytelling around the fire. Nigerian scholar and storyteller Wole Soyinka stresses the importance of ritual in storytelling. He maintains that the traditional genre influences the telling of the story, and therefore affects the understanding of the storyteller and the audience (Whitehead 2008, 21). That is to say, the understanding of the story is affected by the epistemology

(traditional way of knowing) of the storyteller. Cohen (2011, 2) warns against what she refers to as epistemic violence as "injury to local ways of knowing, cultural practices, and forms of expression". Using indigenous cultural expression is more likely to build resilience because the initiative is now embedded in the family and culture. As Gulu-based researcher McClain posits, "Even if every foreign organization leaves tomorrow, the Acholi will still be dancing and singing songs handed down through generations. The artists singing in contemporary styles will continue singing and the break dancers breaking" (McClain 2009, 19).

6.4 Authenticity

The storytelling performance needs to be authentic. Authenticity refers to participants communicating their narratives as truly as they can. When this happens, the play will be effective, regardless of the professional level of actors. Authenticity goes beyond aesthetic quality of the performance; it saves art from becoming manipulative propaganda. Cohen warns against "didactic, goal-driven, message-centered productions" (brandeis.edu/peacebuildingarts/ acting together, 2011, accessed April 27, 2015). JRP also urges community facilitators to avoid overt messages: "Your play should not focus on a righteous moral lesson that could invoke judgment. The aim is…so people will consider how the story relates to their own lives" (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 9). They stress the importance that the conflict, the story, and characters reflect authentically and accurately the situation in the host community (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 13). Authenticity in the motivation of participants distances the theatre project from the system of sitting fees, free sodas, and certificates. Rather, the motivation is to be heard and understood and to begin healing. Authenticity in the approach of the sponsoring organization will centre the process and subject matter on the needs of the community, and will find ways to empower and engage the community to continue whatever aspect of the project they deem to be worthwhile in the future.

Community theatre that is based on authenticity of motivation, approach, and relationship moves it from becoming nothing more than a technique or strategy or tool. Creativity gives people the tools to 'think outside the box'; it opens people up to different ways of

problem solving. Opinia observed that acting out situations made abstract concepts like justice tangible to participants. Community groups could not answer the question, "what does justice mean?" but they could act out an unjust situation, then talk about it, using a forum theatre style (Interview, November 30, 2011).

7. Conclusion

What was the positive impact of using community theatre in villages that have survived violent conflict? Rosenoff Gauvin beautifully articulates the resilience that she found in war-torn northern Uganda: "…those of us that have not lived through two decades of war are, at best, students open to learning about transition and social reconstruction from the experts themselves— survivors whose daily lives embody the theoretical, moral, and practical challenges of that reality" (2013, 50). These survivors learned new skills that helped them contribute positively in their communities. They gained problem-solving competencies that were employed in community-level mediation. They gained a more empathetic understanding of victims. This communication and empathy resulted in less stigmatization of formerly abducted children and adults. The sharing and performing of painful stories broke the isolation felt by former victims. Victims were empowered and became survivors, forming support groups. Within the post-conflict context there is a need for sustainable community-based initiatives that break the cycle of violence and instability and ensure an environment where communities are able to rebuild their lives. Community theatre, when owned by the community and conducted with skill, sensitivity, and authenticity, provided the venue and tools that contributed to healing, reconciliation, and building resilience to participating communities in northern Uganda.

Simon has invited me to his family's compound on the edge of Gulu for a Wang-O storytelling evening. We take two taxi-motos (motorcycle taxis) that drop us by the side of the road, then Simon leads me down a path that takes us into the bush. We first stop at the small thatch hut where he lives with his younger brother. Inside it is dark. There is a bed, one broken plastic chair, and all their clothes hanging on a couple of nails. Outside is a mound of smashed rocks, which Simon breaks and sells in order to make money to pay his university tuition. We keep going father into the bush, and finally come to his

family's compound. I first greet his elderly mother, who comes out of her hut to receive me. She has a beautiful smiling leathery face and deep eyes. Then I greet his sisters, who are making tea around the fire. I have brought cookies to share, which are immediately distributed among all the children. The children are shy and curious, giggling and talking together, clearly discussing me. We are not far from the equator, so night falls like a stone. The men wander in last, pulling up three-legged wooden stools to position themselves around the fire. The women sit together on one grass mat. The children settle in together on another mat, lying on stomachs and sides, supported by elbows, all eyes, all ears, ready for the storytelling to begin… (Field Notes, November 6, 2013).

Chapter 3: Kenya

'The Collapsible Spaces Between Us':[11]

Refuge Theatre as a Tool of Resilience in

Kenya

Ochala comes walking toward me up Rhapta road, tall and black and smiling. He bends far down and hugs me. It has been three years since we last met and we are both full of smiles, so happy to meet again. I remember how serious he was in the camp, how he of all the participants made the most effort to meet with me. Today as I welcome him to my apartment, waiting for the others to come, I tell him I need a few minutes to finish my preparation, (he has arrived about 45 minutes early). He immediately asks me if there is anything he can read to prepare for the meeting. What initiative! I give him some notes that I wrote up on the theatre project, and right away he recognizes exactly who said what, though I have recorded unassigned quotations. It brings back memories to him.

I ask him if he wants hot chocolate or coffee or tea. He says he has an ulcer (from stress and going too often without food) so water will be fine. He remembers the first time that he tasted chocolate, when Julianna brought some to one of their practices in the refugee camp. Somehow this memory of his first chocolate sparks for him the memory of his flight from Ethiopia. Firsts: The first time he was in a town to go to school, the first time being beaten and jailed for several days by Ethiopian police, the first time to leave his family and flee for his life to Kenya, the first time coming to a refugee camp, the first time taking acting classes with refugees from other countries (Field notes, Nairobi, July 2014).

1. Introduction

Kenya has been the host to large, protracted refugee populations for decades. Refugees often spend decades in camps and in urban centres, struggling to find ways to rebuild their lives after being forced to flee violent conflict in their countries of origin. UNHCR uses the term durable solutions to refer to long term options for refugees, which include: integrating in countries of asylum, repatriating to their countries of origin, or being resettled to third countries.[12] However, these macro-level solutions are largely beyond the

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[11] (Eggers 2007, 535)

[12] UNHCR Global Report on Durable Solutions (UNHCR, November 2012).

control or access of individual refugees. Another perspective on durable solutions is for refugees to engage in activities that build resilience, and thus enable them to cope with their current reality and with whatever direction their lives may take. The term resilience is used in a number of disciplines; in physics it describes the ability of materials to bounce back to their original shape after being exposed to external pressures. It has since been used to refer to the ability of living systems to rebuild their balance aftershocks or continued periods of stress (Collin 2005, 12). A more succinct definition is, "positive adaptation despite adversity" (Green 2005, 5). The interconnection between resilience and peacebuilding is seen in peaceful societies which display high levels of resilience.[13]

Within such intractable environments, how can refugees develop positive identities, becoming agents of their own personal change? How can theatre as one form of creative expression be a platform for healing and resilience in refugee communities? Although there are increasing examples of artistic tools used in peacebuilding initiatives, in particular in the area of theatre[14], some academics note a prevalence of more anecdotal research reports, with descriptive information primarily reporting positive effects (Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009; Kuftinec 2009). My research provides an empirical study that examines effects of refugee participation in applied theatre projects. As a qualitative study, the number of refugees interviewed is not a representative sample, however it provides meaningful examples of peacebuilding performance work. Significantly, I was able to follow up three and four years later to monitor the continued impact on refugee participants. Among the positive effects reported by participants who engaged with theatre are: increased communication skills, positive self-identity, and increased confidence and hope. Negative effects include retraumatization, lack of sustainability of the initiative, and lack of participant ownership. Finally, I identify

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[13] Measuring Peace in the media: 2011, The Institute for Economics & Peace, 2.

[14] See for example: Cynthia Cohen, Roberto Gutierrez Varea, and Polly O. Walker, eds., Acting Together I: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict: Volume I: Resistance and Reconciliation in Regions of Violence (Oakland, CA: New Village Press, 2011); Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, The Applied Theatre Reader (London ; New York: Routledge, 2008); Monica Prendergast and Juliana Saxton, Applied Theatre: International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice (Intellect Books, 2009).

conditions under which theatre can make a positive contribution to building resilience in refugee participants.

2. Methodology

I conducted this qualitative research in Kenya in 2011, and completed it in follow up visits in 2014 and 2015. My research focused on two groups of refugees that were involved in theatre projects: one based in a refugee camp, and the other comprising urban refugees. The camp-based group, Dadaab Theater Project (DTP).[15] included ten refugee youth from different countries, living in Ifo refugee camp in the Dadaab camp complex; the urban refugees were a group of eight young Congolese women who called themselves the Survival Girls.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the individual refugee participants from these two groups. I also organized four focus group discussions with refugee participants: in 2011 I held a focus group with seven of the DTP members, and a separate focus group with six of the Survival Girls. I then conducted a combined focus group with two DTP members and two Survival Girls members in 2014, and another combined focus group with four DTP members plus one of the directors, and one of the Survival Girls in 2015. Interviews were conducted primarily in English and French, and interpretation was provided by a fellow actor in the few occasions where that was required. I had multiple interviews and email exchanges from 2011—2015 with the two directors of DTP (Michael Littig and Juliana Bloodgood), with the director of the play for World Refugee Day (Richard Hess), and with the director of the Survival Girls (Ming Holden). I interviewed representatives from organizations using theatre in peacebuilding in Kenya (FilmAid, Amani Peoples Theatre, and Irex Europe), representatives working with peacebuilding NGOs (Life and Peace Institute, Nairobi Peace Institute, and Mennonite Central Committee). I also interviewed two Kenyan artists and UNHCR staff coordinating Community Services projects in Kenya. I observed the dress rehearsal of

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[15] The American spelling of the word theater is used when referring specifically to the American initiative, Dadaab Theater Project. Otherwise Canadian spelling (theatre) is used throughout the document.

the plays produced by the two groups, as well as their performances during World Refugee Day in Nairobi. Thus data sources were triangulated through conducting interviews, observing performances, and accessing secondary documentation.

In 2014 and again in 2015 I returned to Kenya to follow up with the refugee participants. I met again with representatives of both urban and camp-based refugee theatre groups, individually, and in focus groups. This allowed me to probe questions of sustainability and ownership of the initiatives. I was able to verify what they were doing, and the impact their participation in the theatre project had on them a few years later. The following is a collation of data gleaned from the research.

3. Context

For decades Kenya has dealt with large refugee influxes as a result of conflicts in the nearby countries of South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Refugee camps were established close to the borders with Sudan and Somalia. Since the early 1990s, Kenya put into place an encampment policy, which obliges the majority of refugees to remain within UNHCR-administered refugee camps. Refugee camps are generally situated in remote and arid regions that are barely able to sustain sparse local populations. Thus host communities lobby the Kenyan government to limit agricultural activities of refugees. Dadaab (the site of my camp-based research) is referred to as a refugee camp complex, since it has evolved from two camps totalling about 90,000 refugees when it began in 1992, to five camps of almost 500,000 refugees at the height of the Horn of Africa famine in 2011 (Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Program 2014). Thus, the Dadaab refugee camp complex became the fourth largest urban population in Kenya.

Although refugees have escaped the political violence within their home countries, protection issues persist in countries of asylum. Refugees are often victims of individual and community conflict, such as rape, spousal abuse, and ethnic violence. Inter-community conflict is a significant issue in the camps as minority refugee groups are often the targets of the majority Somali community. Within the camp context identity

and belonging are the basis for protection and a social safety net, especially for refugees from minority groups. One refugee actor who came to the camp as a young boy shared of his refugee experience:

> My first time to hear the word 'refugee' and to see a refugee camp, it carried many troubles. There was no blue flag [of Somalia] but only a narrow tent that was hot during the day and cold at night, where bandits could creep in. My younger sister died of complications after being raped... this made me hate and hate and hate. Many were the times when I asked myself where I belonged, but remained unanswered. I realized that I had nothing that could give me my identity and a sense of belonging…currently I feel l am abandoned and lost in between nowhere.[16]

Kenya's urban refugee population was estimated in 2011 to be 50,000 individuals, and in 2015 the estimated population was similar (Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Program 2014). Although the encampment policy has been in place for decades, Kenya has allowed some refugees who can manage to live independently to remain in Nairobi. Refugees living in Nairobi are registered by Kenya's Department of Refugee Affairs, and given refugee identity documents. However, they are still prone to arbitrary arrest and detention, often in order to procure a bribe for local police. One participant reported that Kenyan police refer to refugees as 'ATM machines'. Urban refugees do not receive any form of regular assistance: "Without adequate support, many refugees are forced into poorly paid jobs and find it difficult to afford adequate essentials such as food, housing, healthcare and education"(Parker 2002, 10). They often lack the means to sustain themselves even in the most basic manner. Urban refugees have very limited access to economic activity, as they often lack authorization for regular employment and therefore face serious limitations to economic self-sufficiency, and are prone to sexual and economic exploitation.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC—former home of the Survival Girls) has been generating refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) for decades. Eastern Congo has suffered from on-going violence perpetrated against civilian populations by

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[16] Abdi Abdullahi Mohammed, DTP website blog, posted June 2011. Quotations are only attributed to individual refugees where the information already exists in the public domain; otherwise names are omitted to maintain confidentiality.

government forces and a number of disparate rebel groups. Violence in this region is marked by such brutality as pillaging villages, abducting children to use as soldiers, and using gang rape as a tool of war. This violence has resulted in large internally displaced populations as well as a steady flow of refugees to surrounding countries. The Congolese refugee population in Nairobi was estimated at approximately 5400 individuals as of 2011 (UNHCR Statistical Summary: Kenya 2012).

There are three durable solutions for refugees identified by UNHCR (UNHCR Statistical Summary: Kenya 2012):

1. Repatriation to their country of origin once it is deemed safe: there have been large repatriation movements of refugees worldwide, such as Afghans, Mozambicans, Angolans, Liberians, and Sierra Leoneans. However, the refugee populations in Kenya do not have a positive prospect for peace or stability in their home countries and therefore repatriation will not be an option in the foreseeable future.

2. Local integration into the country of first asylum: this requires the host country to grant permanent resident status to refugees, thus giving them access to most of the rights and services of its citizens such as free movement, the right to work, and access to primary schools. Almost no asylum countries, including Kenya, offer local integration to refugees. Movement is restricted and refugees are usually not given work permits.

3. Resettlement to a third country: the third durable solution is to identify countries willing to share the responsibility of humanitarian protection with first asylum countries by accepting a quota of refugees to be resettled permanently to their country, eventually gaining citizenship. The top three countries of resettlement are the USA, Canada, and Australia.

Only a very small percentage of all refugees have access to one of these durable solutions.[17] It follows, then, that for the vast majority of refugees the actual 'durable solution' has been to survive for decades in camps or urban settings. Consequently the context of a research project with refugee populations is one of conflict and insecurity, with limited future options, and limited resources available. Given the lack of freedom of movement, limited audience, insecurity, identity-based violence, refugee theatre is not unlike using theatre in prisons. When funds are prioritized for food and medicine, few social programs are available in relation to the large refugee population. Participation in a theatre project for refugees is, therefore, not the casual choice it might be for young people in a developed country environment, where this is one of many opportunities. Rather, it provides hope for future opportunities, as well as a meaningful activity on a daily basis.

4. Refugee Theatre Projects 2011

The refugee theatre projects that are the focus of this study were initiated by Great Globe Foundation—a small, dynamic American organization founded by actors/directors Michael Littig and Juliana Bloodgood. Great Globe Foundation uses the creation of theatre pieces to contribute to peacebuilding by "raising awareness, generating discussion, and changing attitudes. [It incorporates] the ability to listen deeply and to have empathy, particularly when a community is actively involved in telling its own story" (Bloodgood and Littig 2011, 16). As professional actors rather than development practitioners, they were influenced by the acting traditions of Grotowksi, Brook, and Stanislavski and the philosophy of Augusto Boal (Bloodgood and Littig 2011, 16). Having used theatre with youth in international settings, they found ways to incorporate cultural traditions of the participants, along with using the approaches named above.

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[17] Although exact statistics are difficult to produce, UNHCR 2016 Global Resettlement Needs reports that in 2015 127,000 refugees were repatriated to their countries, almost none have access to local integration, and the target for resettlement is just over 111,000 individuals, with around 20 million refugees globally (2015, 12)

The two directors spent five months working in Dadaab refugee camp,[18] with Film Aid as their local partner, and UNHCR assisted in Nairobi. A young American woman with a background in creative writing (Ming Holden) came to Nairobi as a volunteer for a period of six weeks to coordinate the urban refugee project, which became known as the Survival Girls. Both groups had the concrete goal of creating an artistic piece that would be performed for World Refugee Day 2011 in Nairobi, in the presence of a large public audience that would include urban refugees, UNHCR and NGO staff, as well as Kenya's Minister of Immigration. Dadaab Theater Project and the Survival Girls became the focus of my research. In addition to conducting interviews noted above, I observed the dress rehearsals and the performances of plays prepared by both groups and performed for World Refugee Day.

4.1 Dadaab Theater Project

The DTP comprised ten refugees living in Ifo, one of the refugee camps in the Dadaab camp complex. They were from 18 to 28 years old, and had come to the camps from 3 to 20 years ago. It was by design an ethnically mixed group, including different refugee communities in the camps: Somali, Somali-bantu, Ethiopian-Anuak, and Sudanese. It was also a diverse group in terms of educational background, from refugees who had completed high school to those with very limited formal education. The group started with five Somali women, but four of them were forced to drop out due to family obligations, including one arranged marriage. One brave Somali woman remained. Posters invited refugee youth with an interest in drama, dance, and/or poetry to come for auditions. Participants received training, through which they would develop and perform theatre pieces. As an added attraction, young American actors would come to Kenya to perform with them. The opportunity to exchange artistic practices with Americans served as a great enticement.

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[18] Dadaab refugee camp re-entered a conflict phase with attacks from Al Shabaab militants beginning in August 2011, which terminated the DTP project earlier than anticipated. Because this insecurity occurred after my data collection was concluded in 2011, it did not impact my interview results.

The refugee participants expressed the desire to gain concrete skills such as writing and acting, and group facilitation skills. They hoped these skills would increase their possibilities of finding work with an organization in the camp, or enrich their options if they returned to their countries of origin. But more than this, they expressed the desire to be part of a group of people who understood each other's experiences. One Dadaab participant stated: "My feeling for my country and my people makes me write poems because there is no other way for me to express what I feel." Another participant stated that her objective was to come together with others to learn how to create and perform, but also to be a positive force within the wider refugee community: "There are so many voiceless people in the community, so many untold stories. We want our stories to help others so their voices are heard outside of Dadaab." All the refugees were trauma survivors, having fled violence in their home countries—some alone, some with family members, some as small children, some as adolescents. Most had witnessed family members being killed.

Littig and Bloodgood used a variety of theatre techniques to engage the personal experiences of all participants. Though these techniques were western in orientation, they learned about and encouraged expression from participants' cultural traditions as well. Hence, performances included Somali poetry and singing, and Ethiopian storytelling. Theatre techniques included free writing, as well as open discussion that allowed refugees to share what issues they brought to the performance space, out of which performance themes were identified. Such personal exploration became the material for the theatre performances, as well as a vehicle for deeper self-knowledge. Writing exercises using prompts such as, 'I am, I remember, I hope' allowed them personal exploration of their hopes, dreams, and memories. At the end of each session they would debrief with each other before leaving the practice. English was the language of practice and performance, as it was the common language for all the refugees.

None of the American facilitators had worked in a refugee context, which became evident through some struggles they encountered. Part of their initial plan was to find and recruit what they referred to as master teachers-actors or performers from different communities.

However, the performers that they were able to find would not participate without being paid, and this was not part of the budget or project philosophy. Moreover, the cultural leaders that came initially did not want to be mentors, they wanted to perform. The directors realized that the presence of such master teachers could have reduced the creativity of the participants, who would likely cater to the expert and not express themselves. A second idea was to develop a training manual as a concrete product that could be used after the project ended. However, it became clear early on in the project that rather than a training manual, participants were hungry for mentors, who would "take them by the hand and tell them that they matter" (Bloodgood and Littig, interview, June 21, 2011).

Initially attendance for DTP participants at training sessions was sporadic and directors reported that they had to "pull them along to stay committed".[19] Participants wanted to see immediate and tangible results, and their attitude was "what's in it for me?" Bloodgood observed, "They were always trying to find what they could get from every person. My response was, "What I have to offer you is my heart and commitment and mentorship and friendship. I will also give you my T-shirt, but it isn't about that; that's not why I'm here." As the project continued and participants gained trust in the facilitators, their commitment and motivation increased.

Despite their lack of targeted experience, they had a genuine commitment to the individual refugee participants. This relational offering and the commitment of all participants was solidified during the final phase of the project. At the outset the project planned for a group of five young American actors to come to Kenya with theatre director Richard Hess. Hess directed the creation of a theatre piece combining the works of the refugee and American actors, which was performed for World Refugee Day. The Americans and the refugee participants were asked to prepare in advance something that reflected what they remember from their respective pasts. Each group then performed these pieces the first night they were together. The artistic and cultural exchange between

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[19] Participants' hesitancy to engage is also reported in Prentki and Preston's Applied Theatre book, (2009, 288).

American actors and the refugees was a focal point of this project, providing the richness of a bi-directional learning process.

One of the refugees wrote a poem entitled 'I Remember' about his flight experience, which he shared with the American actors before they came to Kenya. The young Americans were so moved by his poem that they incorporated his words into their own presentation, which they performed for the refugees on their first night together in Kenya. They could not know the reality of being a refugee, acknowledged with the words, "I don't remember… but I do now...". Nevertheless, the refugee author and all the refugees watching were deeply moved by this performance. The author shared: "I remember writing the poem 'I remember'. I didn't feel so much writing the poem, but when the Americans performed it, then I cried, because then I felt it. They had understood exactly what I had written. Maybe they thought it was just words, but it was not. We felt deeply from their performance". After the American students performed their piece for the refugees, there was a moment of silence, then the refugees leapt up and embraced the American students, and both groups of youth stood crying in each other's arms for several minutes. Littig shared, "This moment was a complete offering of respect, trust, gratitude and appreciation and led to a powerful opening within the refugee youth."[20]

The two groups had an intense and productive four days together, enhanced by their preparation before meeting, resulting in the creation of a theatre piece that would be performed for World Refugee Day. They titled their creation The Collapsible Space Between Us. This title was borrowed from the writing of a Sudanese refugee resettled in USA, who poignantly describes from his perspective as a refugee the need of sharing one's story:

> I speak to you because I can't help it. It gives me strength, almost unbelievable strength, to know that you are there. I covet your eyes, your ears, the collapsible space between us. How blessed are we that we have each other? I am alive and you are alive and so we must fill the air with our words. I will fill today, tomorrow, every day until I am taken back to God. I will tell stories to people who will listen

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[20] Littig, Interview, June 21, 2011. Kuftinec relates a very similar incident occurring with Bosnian refugee actors in Mostar. She refers to such moments as "deep witnessing, internalized thoughtfulness" (2009, 67).

and to people who don't want to listen, to people who seek me out and to those who run.[21]

These words could easily have been written by any one of the refugee theatre participants; they apply so appropriately to the strong relationships that developed between participants with very different backgrounds, not just Americans and refugees, but between refugees from different clans and countries. This quotation illustrates the need to have authentic stories heard. The theatre directors were very concerned with the authenticity of the creative experience. They were not interested in having participants simply mimicking 'NGO-speak'—the educational phrases that participants thought the project coordinators wanted to hear. They took the time to lead participants to understand who they were as human beings by posing deeper questions. Theatre was not merely a technique or a tool; rather it was "a process that lead to a better understanding of others and self" (Bloodgood and Littig, Interview, June 21, 2011).

During their five months of training in the refugee camp, DTP created a theatre piece called Nalichoo, a term from the South Sudanese Dinka language. Nalichoo was a composite sketch from the free writing and personal experiences of the group members. It was the story of a mythical land called Hambrecia, which was torn apart by tribal warfare. A young man and woman of different backgrounds fall in love, but her family does not approve of their relationship. The story ends in tragedy, when the young lovers become separated in a no man's land between their country of origin and asylum, from which they can neither go back home nor onward. This is the refugee dilemma; identity lost and neither a way forward nor a way back. The young lovers end up separated from each other and from their families in a lonely limbo. They are caught in a collapsible space. In this case it is not the differences that have collapsed, but personal identity and options- or in refugee parlance, durable solutions.[22]

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[21] (Eggers 2007, 535) These are the words of Sudanese refugee Valentino Achak Deng, on whom Eggers based this novel.

[22] I was struck by the parallels between this scenario from their experience and the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, underscoring commonalities in experiences of loss of home and complexities of identity.

The (Muslim) Somali woman performed with one of the (Christian) Ethiopian actors, which was not well received by Somali refugee leaders who warned that for them it is taboo for youth of different religions to perform together. This cultural faux pas was likely due to the director's lack of previous experience in refugee contexts. Two non-Somali actors quit the theatre group as they were afraid of being stoned or killed by Somali refugees. However, the Ethiopian actor in the scene chose to stay and participate in a discussion that included Ethiopian and Somali camp leaders. His observation after this incident: "The NGO needs to stick around to solve the problem of communication. We could have been beaten, but we stuck around until everyone understands" (DTP Focus Group, Dec 18, 2011). The result of this discussion was increased understanding and support for the theatre project from the Somali camp leader, and the agreement that the play could continue to be shown with the provision that they exchange the Ethiopian for a Somali actor in that piece.

4.2 The Survival Girls

In the urban context of Nairobi the decision was made to focus on young refugee women, as they were deemed particularly vulnerable. Several refugee women responded to an invitation to participate in a theatre project. They were urban refugees between the ages of 17 and 24, who had come to Nairobi between 2005 and 2010. They would receive training and create and perform a piece for World Refugee Day. There were no auditions; rather those who demonstrated interest and commitment by being present day after day for practice formed the group. Eventually eight young Congolese refugee women became part of the group, and chose to call themselves the Survival Girls.[23] Language provided an interesting dynamic. Group facilitator Ming Holden conducted her teaching sessions in English, since all participants spoke English, but the women chose to create the play and perform in Swahili—their native language, and one of the main languages of Kenya. They incorporated traditional dance and singing from the

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[23] Ming Holden has written an E-book entitled *The Survival Girls*, describing her experience.

Congo, as they wove their stories. This maintained the central creating role of the refugee women, and the facilitation role of Holden.

All of the Survival Girls were trauma survivors. Four of the eight reported having been raped; three of them had been gang-raped. One young woman had been suicidal, and was still fragile in 2011. Holden aptly observed, "I was not working on a trauma piece; I was working with trauma victims. It's not the same thing at all. It's not a play; it's their life" (Holden, Interview, June 23, 2011). Although she had no formal mental health training, Holden was herself a trauma survivor, and she knew that the girls would not be able to perform or to experience healing unless they felt safe, emotionally and physically.

The project provided a space for the refugee women to express themselves safely and freely. Holden created a physical "safe space" into which the women could retreat if they did not feel like participating. She was determined not to retraumatize them, to the extent of excusing them from a public performance if necessary. She told the girls that they were never obliged to perform if at that moment they felt at emotional risk. This kind of care— for the individual above any program outcomes—is unusual in my experience. There was also an agreement of confidentiality; everything that emerged during the theatre games and storytelling would remain within the group. Finally, within this safe space one of the girls recounted her experience of rape to the group, thus freeing others to also share their experiences. This became a central theme of their performance, as at least half of them were rape victims. As one member recounted, these were the wounds that needed to be healed: "There was so much raping and killing. This play is a story from our hearts. We express it in drama; when we act we are relieved." Holden assumed that as trauma victims, participants would benefit from connecting to their bodies through the physical engagement of singing, acting, and dancing, which are also integral elements of their cultural expression.[24] Participants discovered the physical actions that embodied the felt experience of their stories.

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[24] As noted in the section on healing in the introduction, recent research on the physical effect of listening to music sheds light on such suggestions regarding the physical connection to healing emotional trauma. See Zatorre et al, 2011, 60).

The type of audience and audience reaction was a key element in the reception and impact of the performances. As previously noted, theatre researcher Richard Schechner distinguishes between integral audiences, for whom the play has special meaning, and accidental audiences who come to see a show with no specific background experience or agenda (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 18). The Survival Girls learned that the prior experience of the audience would influence its response- whether they were performing to an accidental crowd in the street, or to an integral audience of people who had experienced deep trauma. One example came from performing a piece at a centre for vulnerable refugee women: "When we performed at Heshima, girls started crying, and they were very traumatized. Even though our performance ended on a positive note, saying that we will overcome, still they were traumatized, because we performed scenes of how we have suffered". They had not planned for a discussion after the performance, but were able to adjust their program, incorporating an ad-hoc debrief session. Although one may think that the need for such a debrief should have been anticipated, a similar situation occurred in my Zimbabwe research, where the theatre director had to incorporated post-play discussions after beginning the play tour.

5. Findings

What did refugee participants report that they gained from their participation in the theatre projects? Because the responses of the refugees from the urban and the camp theatre projects were so similar (and the research is not comparative in nature), I have combined their responses in my findings and analysis. Below is a summary of what refugees of both projects reported that they gained after participating in the projects in 2011.

What Participants Stated that they Gained	# of Responses (N=46)	Indicative Quotations from Discussion Participants
Writing/Publishing/becoming known	10	I am publishing my work; I am becoming known.

Public Speaking/Acting	8	I gained acting/performance and public speaking skills, now I can talk in front of a big crowd.
Confidence	7	At first I had no confidence, but I gained confidence. I became a skillful drummer and more confident to act.
Positive Identity	6	We were all victims of circumstance in our home countries. Now our identities have expanded and deepened.
Hope	4	Now we have hope, and our future will never be the same again.
Healing/Resilience	5	This gave us transformation and healing that my story and pain has been recognized.
Relationships	6	People I have lived with for 4 years have not been able to share with me what this group has shared together in just a short time.

Figure 8: Themes from Interviews with Refugee Participants

Their responses indicate that the goals they articulated before beginning this project were more than met. They had indeed gained concrete skills (writing in English, performing, public speaking in front of a large audience). They reported an increase in confidence, self-esteem, positive identity, hope, healing, leading to increased resilience. They also spoke of the strong relationships formed with each other and with the American participants. Project coordinators noted that participants had developed a sense of community and purpose. They trusted each other, they asked each other for help, they had become less shy, they laughed more, and importantly, they continued meeting together after the formal project had ended. They all hoped that the theatre group could continue past 2011 to be a venue for different refugee groups to learn about each other's cultural traditions, as a peacebuilding initiative.

Refugee participants reported increased communication skills, as well as self-esteem and confidence. By its nature theatre is well suited to improve communication skills, an observation confirmed by all participants. They recounted an increase in creative expression (written and verbal), in particular the ability to speak in front of a crowd: "Before I could not stand in front of an audience— I was afraid and I felt my English was

not good enough, but now I can communicate well and it makes me very happy" (Survival Girl). This significant improvement in their communication skills led to increased self-esteem and confidence. One DTP participant reported, "Before I was not known; now I am known. Now I am writing poetry and singing." The same sentiment was expressed by the members of Survival Girls: "Now people know who we are; now I am one of the Survival Girls."

Littig observed that as individuals began to find confidence and power in themselves they literally began to find their voices. At the beginning of the training, finding strength and volume was the most difficult component of their vocal work, perhaps because it affected cultural expectations and norms of the voice, and psychological ownership of power and self-esteem. As participants began to strengthen the physical and technical aspects of their voices, their self-esteem increased (Littig, Interview, June 21, 2011).

Not only did refugees find their voices physically, they also found their voice in terms of a deepened understanding of their identities: "We were all victims of circumstances in our home countries". One Somali participant shared, "one of the most disturbing and embarrassing moments I always encounter is whenever I want to identify myself; I am forced to say 'I am a Somali refugee living in Kenya'—no longer Somali, and not Kenyan—lost in between, so where do I belong?" The directors noticed a significant difference between the refugee youth who grew up in refugee camps, outside the natural venue of cultural expression, and those who came to the camp as adults, who had a solid foundation in their own cultural identity.

Nevertheless, as they participated in the theatre project, they forgot their status as refugees, and felt they were human beings first. Lederach identifies insecurity and voicelessness as repercussions of protracted violence and displacement, and suggests that a sense of place, safety, and voice are precursors to building resilience (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 58). Holden avers that "identity is the story we tell ourselves about who we are, our cultural narrative" (Holden, Interview, February 23, 2013). What have their narratives been? One refugee participant of DTP described himself as, "temporarily a refugee in Dadaab". This is in a camp context where the protracted refugee population

arrived in 1991—20 years ago at the time of data collection. The Survival Girls'
experience of being Congolese in Kenya was that of discrimination. The girls were
always reminded that they do not belong: "In Kenya they throw that back in my face,
they say, 'you refugees!' and use it as an insult. I want to feel proud to be Congolese."

The ability to talk about negative aspects of their cultural identity and look critically at
these practices within a safe space was also a positive outcome. Their theatre pieces
explored issues such as female genital mutilation, forced early marriage, rape as a tool of
war, among others. One response to the question: how is cultural identity expressed
through art? is that it is expressed truthfully: the refugees shared the most culturally taboo
aspects of their identity. Understanding of identity and history worked to connect people
from dramatically different worlds. This became the collapsible space, in between home
and asylum, with only the negative identity of refugee, which is a label that people seek
to lose as soon as possible. Thus theatre became the tool to connect identities, expressed
in this way: "I know who I am therefore I am confident enough to let you be who you
are" (Littig, Interview, June 21, 2011).

The need for hope was a theme that was expressed by the participants in both groups.
They expressed that at the deepest level their need was to find hope—hope of having a
positive future, of accomplishing something, of being respected, being known, and most
importantly, of seeing family members again. All participants articulated a hope in
education, as their ticket to a better future. Most refugee participants hoped to return to
their villages (as they pictured them before the war). Even the ones resettled in other
countries plan to return to their countries to visit, if not to live. They hoped that any
skills gained could be used eventually to develop their own countries. One DTP
participant expressed his hope in this way: "I want to say that everyone should hear these
stories of loss. As you can see from the darkest sides of the world where power is in the
hands of rulers…they are showering the bullets upon innocent people, killing them,
torturing…but they will see that hope is alive and well in the world."

But what is the relation between their dreams and their current reality? Another Dadaab
participant declared: "Hope is a luxury we cannot afford." One member of the Survival

Girls attempted suicide when it appeared that her chronically ill father would not live long enough to be resettled to another country. Littig observed that more than hope, refugees rely on determination: "the resilience to get out of bed every morning and find a way to move forward somehow, to feed your family and keep your children in school, and help them when they become ill. Every day they operate at the bottom rung of a hierarchy of basic needs" (Littig, Interview, August 23, 2015).

The ability to share traumatic stories in a safe environment was the beginning of their healing process. Together the participants decided that their group would be a place to talk about the deep pain within them. They had all suffered from trauma, and most of them had not had a venue to share their traumatic experiences with a group. This sense of safety was created by maintaining confidentiality, debriefing after each practice, and ensuring the women felt free not to participate. One Survival Girl participant expressed, "To disclose such things without permission would be like making the person become naked in front of others." However, when their stories were shared voluntarily in a safe environment, they were now prepared to incorporate these traumatic events in their theatre pieces. They declared, "It relieves our hearts of the pain that lives there. The words can come out of us in a healing way." Healing moves victims to become survivors; gaining personal agency and control: "Before I could not tell my story, I would just start crying, now I can tell my story, and I feel healed. We gained confidence, to speak our hearts, to act in front of others." They tell new Survival Girls members: "It's not that we forget the past, but we talk about it together, so we can then put it behind us and look toward the future. Then you don't need to keep going back all the time, but you can move forward."

One of the most striking results of these theatre projects was the close and trusting relationship that developed during the two theatre projects. This had a profound impact on all participants—the relationship of the refugees with their American directors, their relationship with young American actors, who joined them for a week and performed with them, and the relationship that developed between refugee participants. All the refugee participants expressed the importance of these relationships, because of the deep level of trust and respect that developed between them. They confirmed that their

involvement with the theatre project took them out of isolated spaces to discover that they were not alone in their experience: "We never thought that we could become so close to each other and that we could share so deeply. Now we can all safely express our feelings" (Survival Girl). So, diverse individuals became close-knit groups who trusted each other with their deepest secrets. The level of their commitment and relationship of trust, and their ability to empathize on a deep level meant that the coordinators were more concerned with the refugees as people than on producing outcomes for funders. The Americans reciprocated this closeness. Several times in his blog journal, American director Hess declared, "it touched me to my core."

6. Follow Up: 2014

In my research journal in 2011 I wrote of the refugee participants: "They have gained skills, new perspectives, new friends, stronger identities, but what will last? In what circumstance can these theatre projects continue, or what do they morph into?" I came back to Kenya in June 2014 and again in August 2015 to answer these questions. These return visits gave me the opportunity to follow up on the refugee participants, to find out where they were, who was still involved in theatre, and what impact from their participation in this theatre project they reported three and four years later.

In 2014 I met with individual refugee participants from both Dadaab Theatre Project and from Survival Girls who were in Nairobi, and I organized a focus group with representatives from each group. These participants assisted me in connecting by email with some of the other refugee members, who were now spread around the world. I provided the participants with the list of skills they had reported gaining in 2011, as well as the goals that they articulated for their future. I then asked them to comment on whether they had accomplished these goals, whether they had continued to improve on the skills gained (writing, public speaking, acting) and whether they felt stronger, the same or weaker in the areas articulated in 2011 (hope, healing, positive identity, confidence, relationships). Below is a summary of their replies.

What were they doing in 2014? Out of 11 participants of the DTP, two refugees had returned to Somalia, one other Somali man left the camp to work as a driver in South Sudan, two young men from Ethiopia were studying in Nairobi, and four of the refugees were still in Dadaab. The person who returned to Somalia was working with the Ministry of Education, and delivered a Ted-X talk in Mogadishu. One Somali refugee became a journalist working with one of the NGOs in the camp, and another was finishing high school. Some still hoped to be resettled to another country, and some still hoped that someday they could return to their home countries. Of the original eight Survival Girls, three were still in Nairobi, one returned to DRC, and four were resettled to other countries (France, Australia, USA). Of the three in Nairobi, one person was sponsored to continue her education, and the other two occasionally volunteered with NGOs, which provide a small stipend.

What was their involvement in theatre? After beginning in 2011 DTP ceased to function by the end of 2012. 2011 saw the beginning of very serious security incidents in Dadaab Refugee Complex, including the kidnapping of international workers, and assassination of Somali refugee leaders. Many international NGOs, including Great Globe Foundation, were not able to sustain their programs in this unstable environment. The refugee participants met a few times after the American coordinators left. Their initial meetings early in 2012 were full of enthusiasm and hope to continue. They nominated formal positions for the group (chair person, vice-chair, secretary, etc.). But the logistics of trying to meet in an insecure camp environment without institutional support proved too difficult, and after a few meetings the group lost momentum. In addition to the insecure environment, they reportedly lacked a charismatic leader that would draw the participants in. However, it is significant to note that most of the refugee participants became leaders in other groups and initiatives in the refugee camps. Some of them were hired by implementing partners. One young man became involved in a radio program in the camp, and another started a theatre group at his school.

Conversely, I was amazed to discover that, despite all challenges and no institutional support, the Survival Girls were still active as a theatre group in 2014. The three original Survival Girls who were still in Nairobi continued to lead the group, and other members

joined them. The size of the group remained between 8-12 young women. They met monthly, and continued to write plays—sometimes on commission, and sometimes out of their own life experiences. They performed pieces for UNHCR on female genital mutilation, and for another NGO for International Day of the African Child, as well as participating with Kenyan street performers on topics of gender-based violence.

How did their situation in 2014 compare with the hopes they expressed in 2011? I asked refugee participants what impact from their involvement in the theatre projects they could report three years later in 2014. Participants did gain skills, but they all want more training, and the chance to use what they have gained. Several refugees affirmed that their participation in this theatre project had a significant impact on them. They confirmed that they have been able to build on the skills they gained in 2011. Some of them have been able to fulfill their dream of continuing their education. One person confirms, "It was theatre that did this for me." The fact that several participants moved on to leadership positions in their communities or in organizations is significant evidence of a continuing benefit.

The Survival Girls reported their continued involvement and motivation, "We wanted to help other Congolese women, as well as women from other countries, to talk about their past, to overcome their trauma. We keep meeting because there is such need—refugees keep arriving, coming with their trauma, needing help to survive." They have been able to move beyond a focus on their own need for healing, to the needs that they see in the new refugee arrivals to Nairobi. "Does theatre work?" I asked them. "Yes, look at my smile; it works." Three years later Survival Girls participants were enabling new refugee arrivals to tell their stories, using theatre as the platform to gather together, and perform to a wide variety of audiences.

7. Follow up: 2015

I returned to Nairobi again in August 2015, and was fortunate to be there during a return visit of Michael Littig. I arranged another focus group meeting with Littig, four of the DTP refugee actors and one Survival Girl actor. I had email contact with two other DTP

participants and two Survival Girl participants. Of these participants I learned that their lives continued to unfold in hopeful ways. For example, one former DTP participant was facilitating a poetry project with Anuak youth which Littig was in Nairobi to set up. A Sudanese participant was completing a certificate in Journalism at a school in Nairobi, another had become a pastor in the camp. The refugee who had been working for the Somali Ministry of Education was now studying in the United Kingdom. Two of the Survival Girl members were accepted for resettlement to Canada. Interestingly, one of the DTP refugees expressed no desire to be resettled to another country. Rather, his goal was to use his skills to help his own community: "What I need is to help my people; wherever I go I will love that idea. In my country I was beaten up for my face, because I was from an Anuak village."

What of their individual successes did participants attribute to their involvement in the theatre projects? They still affirmed that the project had a profound effect on them, from which they continued to benefit even four years later. They built on the positive identity and confidence that they had gained during the project, and this assisted them to pursue their personal goals. Littig acknowledged: "Members of the group have thrived in ways we could never have imagined" (Focus Group, 2015, Aug 23). After reflecting on his experience with the project in 2011, one participant expressed a profound connection between having his story understood, and moving toward healing and reconciliation: "I felt I received my own words from them which they gave back to me, and I received them in a way I did not expect— they became a mirror for me. I felt like, if someone was going to kill someone, but they would find their way back to peace."

Regardless of these gains, as refugees they still lived in precarious situations with limited future options. The DTP directors felt this keenly during the project, and four years later Littig described his emotional experience after the project ended: "Dadaab was a purgatory; I was haunted. During the project I felt like I failed every day. My involvement in DTP shattered my belief system in commercial theatre. I lost belief in myself. After my involvement in Dadaab and as I continued acting, I kept asking the question, "For what…? I do this play, for what?"

I was surprised by the strength of his reaction, and the resulting existential question this raised for him. I was even more struck by the profound reply from one of the refugee participants upon hearing Littig's confession: "Michael is holding a torch for us, but the torch is reflected in a mirror, so although we can see him clearly, he himself is blinded." Despite this reaction immediately after the project in 2011, Littig continued to communicate with the refugee participants, and returned to Nairobi in 2015 to initiate a poetry project with Anuak refugees, coordinated by one of the DTP participants.

Littig observed in 2011 in the midst of the project, "If this is an isolated project it becomes another broken dream or shattered experience for the refugees." However, when I followed up in 2015 with the question of what they felt needed to be sustained out of the project, he replied, "What needs to be sustained is the development of these individuals. They want to continue creating, continue being known, and continue personal development." He went on, "We don't need 'DTP: The Sequel.' If the refugee artists can become teachers themselves, they can pass on skills so that others can also use theatre as peacebuilding. They become agents of their own change. The only way to move forward is to help someone else; DTP participants have been helping others in their communities."

8. Analysis

My research question was to determine how theatre as one form of creative expression could best produce positive outcomes for refugee participants, weighing the risk of harm against the prevalence of benefits. Certainly in such a project challenges abound due to the complex nature of a refugee context, and the risk of harm must be a primary consideration. The project facilitators had not had previous experience working in a refugee context. This was most apparent in the decision to allow a Somali Muslim woman to perform a love scene with a Christian man of another ethnicity, and in the lack of preparedness after the Survival Girls performed a play to another group of traumatized refugee women. Both situations were resolved rapidly, but with more experience they could have been avoided.

Another challenge was managing diverse cultural expression, among refugees and between refugees and the American facilitators. Although acting exercises were based on Western approaches, the refugee actors used their own cultural traditions in their storytelling, thus incorporating Somali and Anuak poetry and Congolese dances. Sustainability of the projects also arose as a concern of the refugees. DTP was terminated earlier than anticipated due to the sudden devolution in the security situation. Amazingly the Survival Girls did continue to meet and perform, even with no institutional support.

Considering the above critique and based on the analysis of all the data, I identify the following conditions (and negative outcomes to avoid), which affect the ability of theatre to contribute to resilience in refugee participants.

8.1 Participant Ownership vs. NGO or Donor Control

Even if the project is externally initiated, as was the case for the two refugee theatre projects in this study, participants need to become actively involved at the outset, in articulating their personal goals for the project. In this way all participants are genuinely invested in the initiative, evidenced by the depth of their engagement and level of sharing. The ownership is obvious in hearing the voice of the individual, refugees using their own language, telling their story without a formula being imposed. This is in contradiction to those who join a project for the stipend or T-shirts and sodas that may be provided. Their superficial participation produces the catch phrases they assume donors want to hear, but lacks any ownership or personal transformation.[25] As Littig avows, "NGO-speak is false promises, banalities, lack of care or respect for words or stories or the humans in front of you. Authenticity and truthfulness is a huge aspect in the face of all the NGO-speak…something begins to happen when the person is able to tell their story, to be heard and understood, to begin healing."

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[25] Although I did not directly analyze such projects, or observe this lack of impact, this observation was reported by interview respondents in Kenya and Uganda.

When projects are initiated externally participants often have the hope and expectation of on-going support, and feel that the responsibility to maintain the initiative will continue to be external. Littig acknowledged, "We knew that we would not live in Dadaab forever, so how do we run this project with integrity, without becoming just another broken promise?" (Interview, June 21, 2011). The challenge for project directors is balancing the responsibility not to abandon a group that has entered into a vulnerable space of deep sharing, and yet avoid developing dependency. This requires a well-considered exit strategy that takes these factors into consideration. Such a strategy could include discussion of what initiatives should or could continue, and what resources could support this.

8.2 Environment of Trust and Confidentiality vs. Retraumatization

Violence is often perpetrated by state agents who are meant to protect victims, and their trust has been betrayed. This is one factor contributing to trauma, and consequently trust needs to be slowly regained in order for people to be able to tell their stories. This happens in a safe environment, which honours confidentiality, and the right of participants to choose when they are not ready to take part in activities. Their timely involvement creates the first step to healing. Trauma survivors report that this opened up the possibility to talk about painful past events that had previously been hidden and considered shameful. This applies to the physical and emotional safety of the environment. "A current trauma victim can't deal with past trauma" (Holden, Interview, June 23, 2011). Individuals and communities cannot heal when they continue to feel unsafe.

However NGO staff who have limited experience working with trauma survivors can retraumatize people, either from a lack of awareness, or because they care more about meeting donor project requirements than the well-being of participants. This can happen, for example, if they do not provide the safe space for participants to share, or to withdraw, if they don't have a relationship of earned trust with participants. David Diamond asks about community theatre: whose responsibility is it to ensure safety? Can

theatre become exploitive of the very people it should serve?[26]   One notable aspect of this research was the depth of the relationships formed through this project. The strong and (so far) lasting relationships were developed through mutual respect, sharing, and evidence of the investment and trust of all participants.

8.3 Having One's Story Heard vs. Isolation

Much of the therapeutic value of storytelling through theatre is in providing a platform for a story to be heard by an audience. In the process of creating performances from personal traumatic events, the refugees first articulated to themselves in their journals what they needed to say; then they told a small group of trusted people, then they told an audience, through their performance. Most of the refugee respondents reported a feeling of isolation prior to their involvement in the theatre project. Either they had not shared their traumatic experience with family members, or it was simply not a topic for discussion. One participant stated, "before this project I had nowhere to express my deep feelings; no one knew what I had been through. Where else could I go and share? Now my heart is a bit liberated."

Those who have been victims of violence need to have what happened to them acknowledged; they need a witness—an audience to hear their story. This acknowledgement assists in turning victims into survivors. A DTP participant shared, "No one came to say to us they are sorry for what has happened in our country. But performing gave us transformation and healing that my story and pain has been recognized." The young American actors were first a witness and audience for the refugees' stories, then they took these stories, and performed them back their first night together in Kenya. The response of the refugees to being heard and understood was immediate and profound, and formed the basis for the development of their personal and artistic relationships. This initiative was an example of previous strangers entering into the lives of others through stories, and then being able to better understand their own story and identity.

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[26] David Diamond, Email exchange with the author, February 9, 2015.

8.4 Resilience

How did theatre contribute to building resilience in refugee communities? Holden observed of the Survival Girls, "I am in wonderment at their resilience, their life and spark. They should need more security than they have, but look at them—they are bright and sharp and sparkling—how do they cope? It flies in the face of trauma theory" (Holden, Interview, June 23, 2011). The departure point was performing their stories. As McKnight posits, "The stories of a [resilient] community are a narrative...[that] gives body to the collective...the beginning of myths that memorialize and remind us of the epic nature of our journey together" (McKnight, & Block, 2010, 95). Participants tapped into their source of creative expression in a safe environment, as they communicated their stories and had a sense of being heard and understood, it led to mutual understanding and confidence. Their resilience developed because of the energy that they invested and their ability to take advantage of this opportunity. They reported increased hope, a positive perspective on their futures, and strengthened sense of identity.

This became evident in concrete ways:

-The Survival Girls in Nairobi continued to meet and to perform, regardless of financial compensation.

-The original members are now helping other vulnerable refugee women to tell their stories and begin their healing process.

-One DTP member has started a theatre group at the school he attends, and he is coordinating a poetry project for Anuak refugees.

-Several members gained various leadership positions—in other NGOs in the camps, in one case upon return to the country of origin.

Resilience is not simply coping, it is transformation: "…through the fires of change" something new emerges, like a phoenix rising from the ashes (Doughty 2013, 5). All

participants—refugees and Americans—in the two theatre projects reported this as a transforming personal experience.[27]

9. Conclusion

What did the participants gain in the act of play-building? It became the vehicle not just for building skills, but for building identity, confidence, and relationships, that led to hope, healing, and to increased resilience. I would identify two surprising results from this study: one is that the Survival Girls continue to function with no external sponsorship. The second is the depth of the relationships that formed between all participants. Despite a lack of peacebuilding experience of the directors, and initial unsureness of the refugees, the authenticity of all participants paved the way for the successful outcomes described here.

Theatre may not transform conflict, but it can transform participants. As Leonard Bernstein observed: "art never stopped a war and never got anybody a job. That was never its function. Art cannot change events. But it can change people...because people are changed by art—enriched, ennobled, encouraged—they then act in a way that may affect the course of events...by the way they vote, they behave, the way they think" (Gruen 1972). Based on the response from refugee participants—in 2011 and three years later in 2014—and based on the evidence of positive changes in their lives and continued involvement in theatre projects, one could call the impact of this project transformative.

What is the significance of the collapsible space into which participants entered? The space collapsed between people from very different worlds, between telling their stories and being understood, between their trauma and their healing. At the end of the project Hess asked of their involvement: "Did it help in a tangible way? A tiny stone thrown into a pond will cause ripples far beyond the source of impact. I feel like we threw a boulder" (Bloodgood and Littig 2011, 20). Individual trauma survivors can rarely control the circumstances at the macro-level of durable solutions; but they can decide on their

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[27] Although I was only able to meet personally with Michael Littig and Ming Holden subsequent to the 2011 research, I was in email contact with the other directors and actors, who affirmed this feedback.

personal response. Resilience was the durable solution gained by these refugee participants, who had the tenacity and commitment to take advantage of the experience, and to use it to transform their futures.

It is the end of my time in Dadaab, and the end of the Dadaab Theatre Project as well. I arranged one last focus group with the refugee participants in the UNHCR compound- the only safe place to meet. Starting time was set for noon, but by the time everyone arrives and makes their way through security it is closer to 14:30. We sit outside around a table, in the dust and heat of the desert, shaded by an acacia tree. I buy them lunch and drinks, and we settle to share final thoughts. They are all happy to be brought together, as it isn't easy for them to meet in the camp.

I am reminded of the images they wrote about at the beginning of the project for the theme 'I Remember':
-I remember the day when the mothers forgot to sing the lullaby to their young babies and lost the tender smiles.
-I remember the kids grizzling for water to drink and food to eat, panting like dogs.
-I remember kids ran by themselves without their mothers holding their hands.
-I remember when the scorching sun burnt the dead bodies and let vultures celebrate.
-I remember the day, the week, the month, the year when my hometown was destroyed.
-I remember when my mother, father, and siblings were killed for no reason.
-I remember when I left my country and everyone was lying like a stone.
-I remember being separated from my family, up till now I don't know where they are and they don't know where I am.
-I remember the day when the earth opened its mouth to swallow us up.

I'm so encouraged when I compare this with the sentiments they express today at the end of the project:
-Thank you for making my days brighter.
-I can't remember the last time I was so happy.
- I didn't have hope and now I have hope.
-Before I was not known; now I am known. Now I am writing poetry and singing.
-I am not a man who cries. I have scars on my body and still I don't cry. But I cry now when I feel something.
-I remember the event, acting scene- it was touching, it really motivated, it feels like I am somebody.
-Such stories tell every human being that things happen and we get solutions to them.
-We can't say we have done enough.
"We want to act, but the empty stomach says, 'stop'. So we just sleep until someone comes and kicks us and we wake up and start acting again."
-Destiny is in our hands.
(Field Notes, Dadaab, December 18, 2011).

Chapter 4: Zimbabwe

'Dancing in the Dragon's Jaws':[28]

Community Response to Theatre as a

Tool of Healing and Reconciliation

Loud lively Zimbabwean music blasts through the speakers a few metres in front of my head. The young man collecting ticket fares sits on a pile of luggage at the front of the bus, swaying to the music and with the bus as it avoids potholes. I am tightly wedged between a fragile elderly Indian man, and a plump friendly Zambian woman. We share space and food. The bus winds sharply through the green Zimbabwean hills until we reach the border crossing of Chirundu, where everyone gets out to go through the visa post. A group of baboons is ready to inspect our luggage if the customs people are otherwise occupied. Soon after entering Zimbabwe we make a stop at a small town called Karoi. I use a dirty bathroom at the back of a dark café. I pass men who are playing checkers using bottle caps, on a checkerboard made by colouring squares on cardboard—a scene that I will see on many street corners in Harare. This is my second visit to the Harare International Festival of the Arts (HIFA). I came to HIFA for the first time in April 2008, which was only three weeks after the contested election. I am arriving at a time of insecurity, with a total of three email contacts. It feels like 'seat of your pants' research; I wonder who I will meet (Field Notes: bus from Lusaka to Harare, April 25, 2011).

1. Introduction

Zimbabwe is just one example of a war-torn country whose citizens have suffered from decades of violence. The financial cost of conflict is enormous in terms of destroyed infrastructure and human life. On a human rights level, it is part of the humanitarian imperative to protect individuals and communities, as well as to ensure an environment in which people are able to rebuild their lives. The enduring challenge is how to break the cycle of violence and set the stage for durable peace and stability. 'Setting the stage' has become more than a metaphor in the peacebuilding arena. Artistic initiatives are increasingly used as part of peacebuilding strategies in countries wracked by decades of violence. In this chapter I explore how theatre has played a key role in healing and

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[28] This is the title of a song by Bruce Cockburn

reconciliation, specifically in relation to the post-election violence in Zimbabwe in 2008.[29] I provide a content analysis of responses from audiences of two plays by Zimbabwean writer Stephen Chifunyise (b. 1948) about post-election violence: Heal the Wounds (2009) and Rituals (2010). These responses were later complemented by field interviews conducted with a range of stakeholders to evaluate the conditions under which theatre can help communities cope with the aftermath of conflict.

2. Methodology

In 2011 I spent two and a half weeks in Harare collecting data systematically through direct observation of plays, interviews with key people, focus group discussion, and a content analysis of audience responses to performances of both plays. I returned for a final ten days in November 2013 to conduct follow-up interviews. Using the snowball sampling technique, I completed thirty-four semi-structured interviews with a range of artists, human rights organizations, theatre groups, political analysts as well as an academic and a political activist. I also facilitated one focus group comprising three artists, one protest theatre director and one academic that allowed me to triangulate some data sources. The high levels of fear and ongoing state-sponsored violence, however, had a significant impact on collecting data as most people did not feel free to discuss sensitive topics in public places, including taxis, restaurants, or even on the street. There were times when I sensed people withdraw in these interviews, and at that point I would change the line of questioning or end the interview. I also informed focus group members to let them know in advance who had been invited to participate, so they could suggest additional participants.

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[29] The March 2008 election polls showed that the combined opposition MDCs won the House of Assembly and the local government councils. However, after a month's delay, the Zanu-PF-controlled Zimbabwe Electoral Commission announced that no candidate had secured an outright majority, thus requiring a run-off election.

3. Context

Zimbabwe has suffered from decades of state-sponsored violence, beginning under the government of Ian Smith, and continuing soon after independence with the government of Robert Mugabe.[30] After the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) gained power in 1980, it became apparent that the ruling party had no tolerance for opposition, and dissent was met with military force and repression. This violence began with the Matabele Massacres in the mid-1980s and continued with the violent land seizures and Harare slum clearances.[31]

In addition to the political violence, Zimbabwe was pulled into an economic disaster marked by hyperinflation and resulting in severe poverty (Machakanja 2010, 1–2). Zimbabwe rated 140 out of 153 on the 2011 Global Peace Index, and 173 out of 187 on the 2011 Human Development Index. With the formation of the political party Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), ZANU-PF had to deal with a viable opposition party, with subsequent elections (June 2000, March 2002, March 2005 and March 2008) marked by severe violence. The government response to the disputed 2008 election involved particularly brutal terror tactics, including intimidation, arrests, disappearances, torture, and murder of opponents. With mediation assistance from South Africa, ZANU-PF and MDC signed a Global Political Agreement in September 2008. While this reduced the state-sponsored political violence, it introduced another set of challenges for nation-building.[32]

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[30] Ian Smith was Prime Minister of Rhodesia's white minority government from 1964-1979.

[31] The Matabele Massacre involved the killing of approximately 20,000 people from Zimbabwe's Ndebele people by state security forces in the early 1980s. With Operation Murambatsvina, tens of thousands of shanty dwellings and illegal street stalls are destroyed as part of an urban 'clean-up' programme. The UN estimates that the drive has left about 700,000 people homeless. [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa, Accessed March 23, 2012.] See also Deborah Potts, '"Restoring Order"? Operation Murambatsvina and the Urban Crisis in Zimbabwe,' Journal of Southern African Studies, 32.2 (2006): 273-291.

[32] 'This was particularly evident during the 2008 elections where the army played a major role in supporting widespread and systematic abuses that led to the killing of up to 200 people, the beating and torture of 5,000 more, and the displacement of about 36,000 people.' Tiseke Kasambala, 'Can Another Election Bring change to Zimbabwe?' (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2013, 2)

In April 2009, the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) was formed by the unity government, and was co-led by ministers from all three parties, including the Minister for MDC, Sekai Holland, herself a survivor of torture during the 2008 post-election violence. She states that the mandate of the ONHRI was to advise the three national leaders on how to address transitional justice and the needs of victims from different eras in Zimbabwe's past, starting from before independence (Holland, Interview, 12 November, 2013). There was a degree of cynicism, however, that this initiative was more concerned with serving the interests of the state and political elites than being truly concerned with the welfare of victims, given that some prominent members of the OHNRI were themselves perpetrators of state violence. Indeed, in the play *Heal the Wounds*, tribal elders dismiss the OHNRI as a centralized Harare initiative, with little relevance to village people. By the 2013 election, ZANU-PF had learned its lesson, choosing a strategy of decreasing overt violence but maintaining intimidation, and this time their election win was uncontested.

4. Protest Theatre in Zimbabwe

Many human rights organizations (including Savanna Trust, Heal Zimbabwe Trust, and ZIMRIGHTS) and theatre companies (such as Rooftop Productions) responded to this state-sponsored violence through artistic practice that exposed state repression. Theatre, in particular, became a venue for protest and was variously described as: "contributing to public discussion and debate on the necessity of a coherent healing process for peace to be achieved" (Rodrigues 2010, 29); "increasing community capacity to understand human rights and to articulate their vision and hope" (Maposa, Interview, May 3, 2011); "resisting human rights abuse and to build a culture of resistance" (Chivandikwa, Interview, May 5, 2011); "assisting communities to develop strategies for their own healing" (Maposa, Interview, May 3, 2011); "providing a venue for victims and perpetrators to communicate" (Chivandikwa, Interview, May 5, 2011). The question posed by many of these organizations is what role the community can play in its own healing? "In situations of entrenched conflict, where debate and historical analyses rarely serve to change minds, [theatre] unlocks the creative power of individuals and

communities to adopt new perspectives and develop novel solutions. Not only is [theatre] a powerful tool for transforming attitudes, it also provides a platform for practicing conflict resolution strategies."[33]

My research focused on the tour of two specific plays: *Rituals* and *Heal the Wounds*, both written by Chifunyise and produced by Daves Guzha of Rooftop Productions. *Rituals* was written to explore how communities were dealing with post-election violence, and specifically the tension between traditional reconciliation methods of local communities versus those sponsored by the state through ONHRI. The play comprises five scenes, including the stories of how a young girl who is raped during the violence is later forced to marry the perpetrator to mediate between two families; a troubled man tries to appease avenging spirits by calling out the names of those he murdered; and a local politician participates in a traditional process of asking forgiveness by wearing a sack-cloth, against the wishes of her national political party. *Rituals* played in sixty-one different venues across the country and I attended two performances in Harare, after which I interviewed two actors, an audience member, the producer, the playwright, and the post-show discussion facilitator. I also conducted a content analysis of reports from the seventy-one post-play discussions from both tours. Although the exact number of audience members who stayed for the post-show discussion was not specified, there was an average of approximately ninety persons at each performance.

Heal the Wounds is shaped around the tensions between a father and a son-in-law from different political parties; and a brother and sister, one of whom was a victim of violence; the other, a perpetrator. This domestic scenario was a dramatic microcosm of painful political divisions affecting wider society in Zimbabwe. *Heal the Wounds* toured Zimbabwe at the end of 2009, and was performed in seventeen communities around the country. The play was primarily concerned with highlighting how victims of violence had felt excluded from the national healing initiatives like the ONHRI, and that such state-

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[33] Irex-Europe, 'Theatre to Promote Peace and Understanding Among Kenyan and Somali Communities' http://www.irex-europe.fr/Somaliland-Theatre-to-promote.html www.irex-europe.fr [Accessed 17 April 2011]

sponsored schemes seemed to "benefit politicians more than victims" (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 1).

In these plays, audience members watched scenes portraying acts of violence that many had themselves experienced. Chifunyise, a well-known playwright, and Guzha, actor and director of Rooftop Productions, are institutions within the Zimbabwe arts community. Chifunyise writes from a protected position, having been a senior government bureaucrat for a number of years. Guzha comes from an activist background, but has been able to translate his artistic activism into a successful business. He independently produces plays, often in collaboration with Chifunyise; then he looks for sponsors who will fund a certain number of plays that will run in communities. They have collaborated on over twenty plays, and use a similar style of presenting well-researched scripts that give voice to community experiences through the use of traditional dance, song, and cultural ceremony that often address pressing social issues.

5. Findings

The *Heal the Wounds* tour of 2009 came in the aftermath of intense post-election violence in Zimbabwe, as evinced by the rawness of the emotional responses articulated by audience members. Some respondents called for institutional reform and compensation for victims, and others for retributive justice. During the tour of *Rituals*, there were reports of threats and of people fearing retribution for attending the play, as well as a high degree of anger, bitterness, and cynicism toward the government. Organizers intended post-show discussions to involve the entire community, including victims and perpetrators. However, an actor working with *Heal the Wounds* observed that most audience members were members of ZIMRIGHTS, a human rights organization. The facilitation report also noted that perpetrators often left before the discussion took place (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 4). The following is a compilation of data collected from interviews related to *Heal the Wounds* and *Rituals*, as well as from reports on these post-show discussions. The themes delineated below were derived after reading these reports.

N= 210 responses	Responses		Indicative Quotations from Discussion Participants
Themes from Audience Feedback	#	%	
Not ready to forgive	48	23	"It is hard for people to forgive knowing that the perpetrators are not remorseful and will still do more harm come the next election." "Forgiveness is more than just a play by people who do not know what it feels like to fall victim".
Call for acknowledgement and compensation	38	18	"The perpetrators of violence were encouraged to ask for forgiveness, and the victims were encouraged […] to respond positively."
Call for justice, institutional reform	21	10	"People complained about the police; they emphasized the need to reform the security sector at large so that it protects the interests of the nation not only politicians and certain members of the community."
Re-traumatized	11	5	"What the play did was sort of re-open the wounds and expose that survivors are still haunted by the dreadful violence."
Threatened, fear of reprisal	48	23	"A ZANU-PF youth leader called all the people and threatened us that we should leave immediately or he would deal with us. We [company] were arrested at gunpoint and spent the night in cells." "The environment was very tense and people would not speak […] The moment they grasped the theme of the play they decided not to watch". "They are so scared of violence they fear for their lives."
Community participation, positive communication	39	18.5	"The audience were very interactive and made very meaningful debates that demonstrated their knowledge and understanding of national healing".
Reduced isolation, assisted with healing and reconciliation	5	2.4	"The play's […] capacity to restore the lost confidence of the people […] The students were quite moved by the play […] some of them were deeply affected."

Figure 9: Data Collected from Interviews and Post-Play Discussions

After analyzing these audience responses in conjunction with other data (interviews, observations, and reports), certain factors became relevant in understanding the role of theatre in peacebuilding. Firstly, while many comments related directly to personal feelings engendered by the plays (healing or re-traumatizing, fear of reprisal, being

threatened), other comments referred to the social reality of ongoing violence in Zimbabwe (lack of justice, call for acknowledgement of perpetrators). Secondly, while some responses implied that attending the performances had positive effects, others had a more negative response. Consequently, one has to be careful to distinguish negative or positive reactions to watching the play from the negative or positive consequence of living through the post-election violence in Zimbabwe. The responses can then be categorized as below:

	Related to the General Context of Violence (Personal)	Related to Watching Play (Social)
Negative Effect	Not ready to forgive	Contributed to re-traumatization Increased people's insecurity, and fear of reprisal
Positive Effect	Call for acknowledgement and compensation Call for justice and institutional reform	Contributed to community participation and communication Dialogue between victims and perpetrators Reduced isolation, healing and reconciliation

Figure 10: Positive and Negative Effects by Cause

5.1 Negative Effects

The plays became a trigger for people to express their anger toward the ZANU-PF government, as they spoke about state-sponsored violence. Many expressed bitterness and cynicism, and confirmed that they are not ready to forgive the perpetrators. The following is a sample of poignant comments from audience members: "forgiveness takes much more than just a play done by people who did not know how it feels to fall victim"; "I know who did me wrong. As a victim no one should tell me that I must forgive. If he is sorry he will come personally and ask for my forgiveness"; "I am not ready to forgive;

when he attacked me he had the backing of power. Now he comes to ambush me with an apology; I will just fight him"; "…forgiving and forgetting is difficult when you see the perpetrator free and not remorseful, and also when you know that at any time you stand the risk of being revictimized" (*Rituals*: Report 2010, 14). One victim stressed that it was not simply a matter of having belongings replaced, but that she needed to have her dignity restored. True remorse would be made evident by a change in attitude and behaviour: "If I simply forgive them and they have not repented, they will keep on doing these [violent] things" (*Rituals*: Report 2010, 10). Not only are some victims unable to forgive, they are instead awaiting an opportunity for revenge (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 15).

Many audience members exhibited a strong emotional reaction after seeing the plays. Facilitators remarked that while some victims felt a sense of solidarity and reduced isolation, others felt re-traumatized. The report on the post-show discussion included five instances of victims being visibly upset after watching the play, as exemplified by one distraught woman: "My daughter was raped and she got infected with AIDS. She got pregnant and she has a child from rape. The man who raped her is walking in our community and he has paid no compensation. What would you do if you were me?" (Interview, April 28, 2011). For some, being involved in these discussions re-opened fresh wounds.

Guzha reported after the first few performances of *Heal the Wounds* that some audience members were being re-traumatized, and that the actors did not have the skills to address this. A counselling service was then brought in; however, a short debriefing session at the end of the play was insufficient. One actor reported: "We just opened their wounds again; they were not healed. Painful memories were stirred up, issues were raised but not processed, and then the troupe left for the next town" (Anonymous, Interview, April 28, 2011). Although people could speak more freely in the public forum about experiences of healing, those who were traumatized either did not speak (though they were visibly upset) or they came to facilitators privately after the public discussion: "Some victims could be seen sobbing as they remembered what they had gone through. They encountered torture, abductions, and raiding their property [sic]" (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 11). The

facilitator observed that one could be re-traumatized in a moment, but that healing is a long-term process.

There was also a high degree of fear reported in 2009, which had not diminished by 2011, with twenty-three percent of audiences reporting they had felt threatened and feared reprisals. In several locations, the police did not allow the play to be performed, or hecklers interrupted the performance. Even in communities where they were allowed to perform, it could be dangerous for both actors and audiences, as village chiefs had asked for reports on those who had attended, and what they had said. One respondent sarcastically noted: "Of course there is freedom of expression, but the freedom after expression—that's the problem. You try to go one hundred metres outside of Harare and then see how free you are!" (Interview, May 5, 2011).

Facilitators noted that for both plays, perpetrators often left as soon as the theme of the play became clear to them. In locations where perpetrators were present, it was reported that they had also threatened the theatre company and audience members, making it unsafe for victims to share details of their experiences. In these venues, audience members were too scared to participate in meaningful discussion afterwards, with some leaving as soon as the theme of the play became obvious. In follow-up interviews with ZIMRIGHTS in 2013, they confirmed reports of violence in which these perpetrators 'made good' on their threats. Significantly, near the end of the tour of *Rituals* in 2011, the whole company was arrested at gunpoint and detained in jail overnight, charged with "undermining authority and insulting the President" (from brochure advertising the play *Rituals*). Eventually all charges were dropped.

5.2 Positive Effects

Facilitators confirmed how the plays "empowered the audience to confront social problems and deal with violence" (Chivandikwa, Interview, May 5, 2011). Audience members discussed what actions could prevent future violence and lead to reconciliation. Through these exchanges, community participants felt that they had been asked for their opinions: something that had not happened through the formal mechanism of the ONHRI.

In those venues where open discussion was safe, participation was high. Both plays provided a platform for people to talk about what happened to them, and their hopes and fears for the future. In many communities, the actors were thanked for coming and encouraged to continue performing the play, and to engage with communities in discussion. At one venue, the audience "applauded the way in which theatre was used to bring people to a common ground of understanding as a way of moving forward as Zimbabweans with a vision" (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 13).

It was important to those participants involved in post-show discussions that perpetrators acknowledge their actions and ask for forgiveness from victims. One of the characters in *Heal the Wounds* observes: "It's as if people are walking around with axes in their heads," referring to the fact that everyone can see the wounds, but no one speaks of what is so obvious to all. Victims felt that perpetrators should demonstrate their remorse through concrete actions, such as paying compensation for property stolen or destroyed during the violence. In a traditional healing ceremony presented in *Rituals*, a perpetrator acknowledges his guilt before his victim and the community as a whole, and offers reparations. If the village elders think that the perpetrator is not truly sorry, they will refuse to accept these offerings. In this scene, the perpetrator calls out the names of his victims, but some village chiefs try to stop him for fear it could implicate them or others. Facilitators reported how audience members sometimes shouted the names of locals who were guilty of the acts described in the play.

Audience members also expressed their cynicism that the government responsible for dispensing justice was also responsible for state-sponsored violence, and they called for political leaders to be held accountable and removed from office: "[they] should come here to this village and gather the people and apologize—personally!" (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 6). There were also calls for retributive justice (charging perpetrators through the formal legal system) and, to a lesser extent, calls for restorative justice (reconciliation between victims and perpetrators). In addition to legal retribution for individual perpetrators, there was a call for institutional reform of the legal system.

In those instances where victims and perpetrators were able to engage in dialogue, the former expressed the need to tell their story, and to hear directly from those who had targeted them. When perpetrators were included in audience discussions, they were more able to see the traumatic impact of their actions and to express regret and an intention to make reparations. In the experience of Savanna Trust, the most successful peacebuilding processes are ones in which perpetrators are not singled out and where victims and perpetrators can listen to the same message together. Daniel Maposa, director of Savanna Trust, warns against simply demonizing perpetrators and getting stuck in a victim narrative: "It is not enough to simply say to one side of the political divide, 'you are evil'; the point is to help perpetrators understand that what they did was wrong, and enable them to change" (Maposa, Interview, May 3, 2011).[34]

One of the most difficult repercussions of violence for victims were feelings of isolation and, in some cases, becoming ostracized from their family and community, which often happened in the cases of rape victims. Listening to other victims and sharing their stories reduced this sense of isolation, while having a safe environment in which to speak and share helped them to recover and heal. It also had a positive effect since they stopped blaming themselves for being victims. Reduced isolation became the first step in rebuilding community: one in which survivors no longer struggle alone, but support and assist each other.

Among such positive responses to the plays and post-show discussions, one audience member stated that she wanted to forgive in order to heal and regain her dignity, however, as Chivandikwa observed, "the suffering they went through was deeply personal—their bodies, their spirits, their small possessions, as well as the suffering of people close to them. The healing also must be personal" (Chivandikwa, Interview, May 5, 2011). Many victims sought to speak directly to those who harmed them, and forgiveness was seen as a way to break the cycle of violence: "It is the time for

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[34] Maposa's argument for including perpetrators would not be supported by all Forum Theatre proponents, where 'one preferentially works with the person on the receiving end of the display of power and not the perpetrator'— the assumption being that it is difficult to change the perpetrator's position (Sliep in Balfour, Michael 2014, 10).

forgiveness. There is no compensation that can be enough for these kinds of hurts. Apology mends relationships" (*Heal the Wounds*: Report 2010, 5).

Reconciliation at the community level required addressing the role of traditional chiefs in instigating violence. The approach taken by Savanna Trust was to present traditional leaders in their plays in civic roles they should now ideally perform within their communities. Maposa explained that providing a positive role model to leaders, rather than targeting and antagonizing them, would allow them to see themselves in a key position to assist with community reconciliation. The play itself became the venue not for retributive justice, but for community dialogue and healing.

One of the biggest issues in Zimbabwe today is the lack of acknowledgement by the state of atrocities it has committed. Inevitably, victims have had little real recognition of their suffering. Many respondents stated that the most important element of healing and reconciliation is truth telling, and that speaking publically about the violence communities have endured is the first step to healing. It is important to note that this does not mean condoning past violence or denying justice to victims: "Speaking publically about violence suffered is the first step to community resilience. The most important element of reconciliation is truth telling; without truth the process of healing would not be complete" (Machisa 2010).

6. Analysis

Based on the analysis of audience response to the plays, and in conjunction with the other data, I identify the following conditions, which affect the ability of theatre to contribute to healing after the post-election violence in Zimbabwe.

6.1 Platform for Communication within Affected Communities

Perhaps the most significant direct contribution that theatre made to healing was to provide a platform for communication within conflict-affected communities. Theatre became the tool where dialogue was possible and a venue for people to interact with sensitive topics, to understand each other's experience and the impact of violence on all

concerned. Being able to share stories was reported to reduce isolation and consequently could contribute to the ability to heal. Theatre companies should find ways to include all sides of a conflict in the process, rather than using the plays to blame perpetrators. Perpetrators also needed a safe setting in which to express themselves, and listen to the victims.

Theatre is effective because it depends on performance, and thus removes the situation from being too personal. The story in a play provides a critical construct of people's experience and an opportunity to analyze what happened to them and why they feel so stressed and afraid. Theatre is more than a technique, or strategy, or tool: "A true performance, acted with sincerity, touches people in a deep place. It is a process that leads to better understanding of others and self" (Lovemore, Interview, November 20, 2013). One respondent eloquently observed: "When I understand my own story, I understand others better. It helps me to see things I couldn't talk about or admit, even to myself" (Interview, November 20, 2013).

6.2 Participation of the Local Community

The extent of community participation has a significant impact on the long-term effectiveness of theatre as an intervention. Maposa stresses that this participation is best initiated locally, rather than centrally: "What is the point of bringing a Harare play performed by Harare actors to poor rural areas, especially if they [do not speak the local language]? You are viewed as outsiders who have come to poison the people" (Maposa, Interview, November 8, 2013). One community leader spoke about how traditional leaders and youth have been manipulated in the past, and how there is a need for local community ownership and positive involvement:

> They need to learn to resist this abuse of power, they need to learn values that community relations and human rights are more important than being given a car. When they learn this, they build resilience in the community—they become subjects in control rather than objects used by those seeking to protect their own positions of privilege gained through violence (Machisa, 2010).

The theme of the play *Rituals* was how the community would take the lead in its own healing, and during discussions audiences noted that if an initiative begins in the village they will have a stronger connection to—and ownership of—the play.

6.3 A Safe Environment for All Participants

Using theatre in a volatile environment can put audience and performers at risk of reprisal. According to those experienced in psychosocial trauma healing, the environment for participation needs to be safe emotionally as well as physically, where all can share freely (Fuertes 2008). Ideally victims would have assurance that the violence will not happen again: "Those who have suffered unjustified violent attacks have an enduring fear of their trauma re-occurring; a fear which undermines the possibility of developing renewed trust in their victimizers, and inhibits any true negotiation or eventual (re)integration with them" (Lerche 2000, 1).

And yet one cannot wait for the violence to end before taking any action—that is the point of an intervention—to intervene. When I asked interviewees in follow-up interviews in 2013 if they still use theatre even with this security risk, and ongoing violence, all respondents replied positively. They believe that communities coming together, breaking the silence and isolation weighs positively in the balance. Nevertheless, communities and organizations must use a risk management approach to reduce risk as far as possible. In the experience of Zimbabwe Human Rights organizations, the best approach to mitigate risk is to work through local community members who know how to manage relationships and increase the likelihood of a positive reception of the play.

6.4 The Timing of the Intervention in the Cycle of Violence

Most examples from the literature on using arts-based initiatives such as theatre are in a post-conflict context. Although my research question refers to communities that have been through violent conflict, this is not to suggest a permanent end to political violence. Zimbabwe went through another troubled election with human rights abuses in July 2013 (Human Rights Watch, Zimbabwe Report 2013, 1). Theatre is best established in times of

relative calm so that communities are strengthened before another wave of violence arises. However, theatre can be used effectively at all points in the cycle of violence. As Maposa observes, "the question is not whether to use theatre, but what type of theatre to use at what stage. Theatre should engage, but not inflame" (Maposa, Interview, November 20, 2011). My data confirms this assertion in demonstrating how theatre facilitates dialogue and decreases the isolation of victims on an individual and community level. However, as Maposa also acknowledges: "We cannot say that the country as a whole moved toward healing and reconciliation" (November 11, 2013).

6.5 Recognizing what is Beyond the Scope of Theatre

Though the most recent elections in 2013 were less violent, it would be difficult to claim that this had much to do with theatre; it was more to do with the Zanu-PF's policy of non-violence. Intimidation and fear, however, remained very high. With on-going threats of reprisal and revenge, and the risk of re-traumatization, it is obvious that the stakes remain high for communities and individuals. In such a context, it is unsurprising that Maposa wonders: "Sometimes I ask myself: are we really making any difference? Are we expecting too much of theatre?" In spite of his ambivalence, theatre initiatives like those of Rooftop Productions reveal how arts-based approaches can contribute towards the slow process of healing broken community relations and moving toward reconciliation. Lederach affirms this sentiment from his decades of experience: "Not one of the peacebuilding and conflict prevention programs on its own had much of an impact on global security…taken together, however, their effect has been profound" (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 99).

7. Conclusion

Do the positive outcomes evidenced by the majority of audience members outweigh the risks of harm? At the conclusion of my research in Zimbabwe I propose that theatre literally and figuratively has a critical role to play in dealing with painful experiences of political violence. In many instances theatre in Zimbabwe directly contributed to healing

and reconciliation because it provided a powerful platform for communication within conflict-affected communities.

Theatre became the tool for dialogue as well as a civic forum for people to explore sensitive issues; to understand each other's experiences; and to engage with the impact of violence on all concerned. Being able to share stories in a safe environment reduced the isolation experienced by victims and consequently, contributed to healing. One of the difficulties in realising this goal is that theatre companies must find ways to include all sides in the process, rather than using theatre to simply blame perpetrators. Perpetrators also need a safe setting in which to express themselves, and to listen to victims.

Although my research started as 'seat of your pants', I ended up having fascinating interviews every day with actors, writers, directors, and human rights activists. It was intense and captivating; I connected, I made friends, I entered deeply into the context. The scientific and social relevance and my personal engagement deepened, then it burst into dance:

I have come to the last free HIFA concert at night. I stand at the area in front of the stage and watch a few young children dancing. Damn they are good! I start moving my shoulders to the rhythm, then my hips, and finally I am dancing full out. One of the little boys comes over and starts shadowing my moves, so we pantomime dance together, then a few little girls join us, and we create this circle of joy. Several people take pictures of us. The next day I read a story in one of the newspapers and I realize that it is a description of us dancing: "HIFA scenes that will remain etched in my mind are those of the street children dancing elbow to elbow with people they would ordinarily never interface with except when probably begging for food leftovers or coins. They stole the show with their fancy footwork and clearly endeared themselves with many revellers" (Zimbabwe Independent, May 6-12 issue, 2011). They did, indeed, and I saw that little boy several times on the streets in the week after HIFA. He never asked for money or food, but always greeted me with a big smile and a 'high-five'. This spirit is summed up in a defiant line from a play by Patrice Naiambana (2007): "I have the right to tell my story in any way I need. You can kill me all you want but I will never die" (Field Notes, April 28, 2011).

Chapter 5: Analysis

1. Introduction

In this chapter I analyze the data from my three research settings: I provide a consolidated summary of the positive and negative effects of the theatre projects, and a deeper examination of the conditions under which theatre can contribute to healing and reconciliation. I then identify issues that would merit further exploration, and conclude with a detailed list of recommendations.

Because of the distinctiveness of each setting, my research was strongly influenced by location, and my access to resources was unique in each country. The richness of the Uganda study was due to assisting in two days of village evaluations of community theatre. This gave me first-hand access to villagers who had been participating in a community theatre project for a number of months. Thus, although I did not have the opportunity to watch a play being developed or performed, I gained valuable information from theatre participants and audience about the impact of the theatre project in a village setting. The richness of the Kenya research was in having on-going access to both refugee groups over a period of nine months. Since I was living in Kenya at the time, I was able to observe the development and performance of their plays. In Zimbabwe, I attended the performance of one of the plays, and I had access to the key players involved in both plays: the producer, writer, actors, an audience member, and the discussion facilitator. Access to detailed reports on two national tours of the plays provided me with audience feedback from a much larger group of people.

Thus although this is not formally a comparative study, the similarities and differences between the three contexts are illuminating. I used 'Truth Tables'[35] to review the

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[35] A truth table is a tool that can be used to examine the complexities and relevance of different variables. Originating in formal logic where each row denotes a different unit of observation, the rows in a truth table list possible variables or conditions and whether they are present or not. The difference between cases in different rows can have a strong explanatory power, in particular for a comparative analysis. (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, accessed 30 Jan 2016)

differences, detailing the unique contexts of each country, as well as the variables within my areas of analysis (positive and negative effects and conditions). The Venn diagram below is a visualized illustration of features of uniqueness and similarity between the three country sites. If I were to choose a single word that encapsulated each country setting it would be trauma-healing for Uganda, identity for Kenya and insecurity for Zimbabwe.
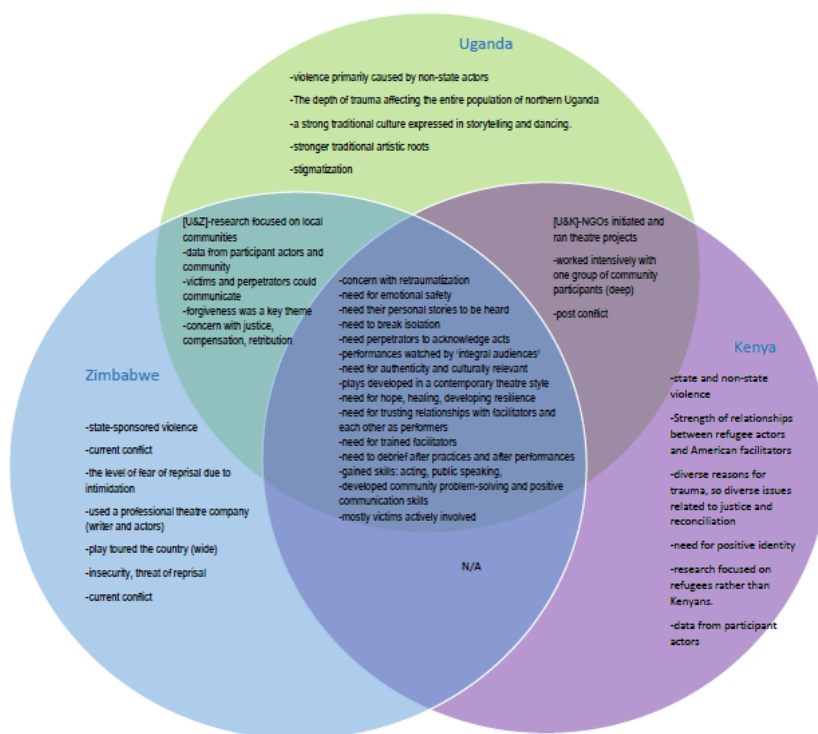
Figure 11: Comparability of the Three Research Settings

A striking aspect of this analysis is that there are no features that Kenya and Zimbabwe share that are not common to all three settings. During data collection Kenya and Uganda could be considered post-conflict contexts, whereas conflict and intimidation has continued in Zimbabwe. [36] This meant that the level of fear and threat of reprisal was much higher in Zimbabwe. Although Zimbabwean respondents spoke of the need for healing, the possibilities for healing, whether through theatre or other means, were limited due to this on-going violence. The need for healing was a very strong theme in Uganda, and among refugee participants in Kenya, the need for hope for the future.

Because the refugee participants in Kenya were from different countries, they did not share the same causes of violence, and therefore issues of justice and reconciliation did not emerge as strongly as in Uganda and Zimbabwe. Rather, Kenya respondents focused on the broader theme of peacebuilding and hope for the future. The other two settings were also more concerned with communication between victims and perpetrators. Conversely, issues of identity, a fundamental question for refugees, came to the fore in Kenya in a way that was not apparent in the other two settings.

The Uganda and Kenya projects were coordinated by non-government organizations, while in Zimbabwe the plays were run by a professional theatre company. Thus questions of donor control and NGO influence were less relevant in my Zimbabwe research, and the theme of sustainability was seen in a different light. Although the Kenyan project was sponsored by a non-government organization, the facilitators were professional actors, and so the actor training that they offered to their amateur participants was of a high calibre.

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[36] Dadaab refugee camp re-entered a conflict phase with attacks from Al Shabaab militants just as I was concluding my research, so although this insecurity had a significant impact on the continuity of DTP, it did not enter into my interview results which predated this time of insecurity.

Another significant difference was what I refer to as the 'deep' vs. 'wide' approach to theatre projects. The organizations in Uganda and Kenya worked intensively ('deeply') with a small group of participants from affected communities, while the Zimbabwe theatre company of professional actors took the plays on tour ('widely') across the country. Issues of community ownership and dependency were therefore not the same in Zimbabwe. The theatre project participants in the Kenya and Uganda studies developed the scripts, and were deeply influenced by the process (affect) as well as the product (effect).

2. From Violence to Reconciliation

Because my research focused on situations of large-scale violence, certain themes relating to the process of moving from violence to reconciliation were repeated by respondents from all countries. Variations on these themes also appear commonly in literature on peacebuilding and conflict transformation.[37] Cohen identifies the themes that emerge through the Acting Together cases as: memory, identity, justice, and resistance (Cohen et al. 2011, 164). Respondents in my research spoke about the relationship between forgiveness, healing and reconciliation, of the need for acknowledgement, justice, and moving towards resilience. Certainly the relationship between such concepts is complex and not necessarily linear (Lederach 2005, 43).[38] Nevertheless, the movement from violence to reconciliation can be depicted in this way:
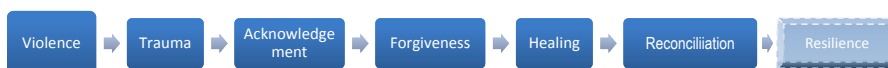
Figure 12: Movement from Violence to Reconciliation

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[37] See Yoder, 2001; also, Schirch 2005, 14; Cohen 2011, 164; Yoder 2005; Staub et al. 2005.

[38] Lederach bemoans seeing social conflict (and reconciliation) as a "linear progression of phases".

Even though these processes are usually schematized as ending in reconciliation, I have included additional comments on resilience since this concept was expressed in my research. In my introduction chapter I identify the concepts of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience as outcome components. Although the ultimate goal is to move toward peacebuilding, this broad concept was addressed more concretely through these outcome components. I therefore review these key concepts separately from other effects of theatre projects, which follow in the next section.

2.1 Forgiveness

Victims of violence want to heal and to regain their dignity, and many of them believe that this is related to forgiveness. What do they need to forgive? They wish to speak directly to the individuals who harmed them. Over and over again the same themes arise: acknowledgement from perpetrators, and a sincere apology, made concrete with reparations and a change of attitude and behaviour. The hope is that the violence does not continue, but is replaced by resilient communities that work on a healthy future together. And how does theatre play a role in this? It offers a crucial venue to speak of the violence in a safe context where the long road to reconciliation can begin.

After my interviews with affected individuals who spoke about forgiveness and in conjunction with other readings, I ascertained that there are three possible actions (to ask for forgiveness, to forgive, to receive forgiveness), two participants (victim and perpetrator), and two possible responses (to forgive, to withhold forgiveness). The diagram below illustrates different scenarios within these dynamics:
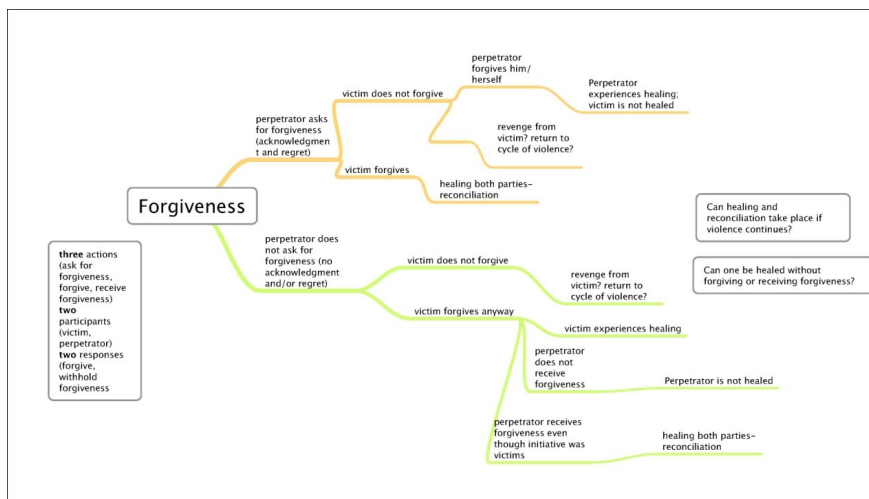
Figure 13: Components of Forgiveness

All stakeholders need to remember, including the broader community. And all parties need to change: for perpetrators to resist a violent response, for victims and communities to resist human rights abuse and build resilience. Victims stressed that it was not simply a matter of having belongings replaced, but of having dignity restored. However, not only are some victims not ready to forgive, some are waiting for an opportunity for revenge, which takes communities back into the cycle of violence: "I am not ready to forgive; when he attacked me he had the backing of power. Now he comes to ambush me with an apology; I will just fight him" (Rituals Report, 2010, 14). 'Moving on' to healing was sometimes expressed as a pragmatic choice of victims who may not have forgiven the perpetrators but simply need to move forward with their lives.

2.2 Healing

Most peacebuilders would agree that healing and reconciliation stand at the very heart of social recovery. When trauma is not addressed, it may manifest itself as violence against others and/or oneself. This is more likely to lead to revenge and back into the cycle of violence, where victims may become perpetrators (Yoder 2005, 30). Another consequence of not addressing trauma is an increase in mental health challenges. A

UNDP mental health report in Uganda (Deleu and Porter 2011) noted a high prevalence of negative mental health indicators (e.g. domestic violence, suicide attempts, anger management difficulties) in the post-conflict period following the LRA abductions.

A number of respondents proposed the advantage of the physicality of acting in a play as enhancing the healing process. Holden suggested that as victims of physical violence the refugee participants would benefit from connecting to their bodies in a positive way (Holden, Interview, June 23, 2012). The same was maintained by Chivandikwa in Zimbabwe: "…the suffering they went through was deeply personal—their bodies, their spirits, their small possessions. The healing also must be personal" (Interview, May 5, 2011). Littig also observed that as participants physically found their voice, their confidence increased at the same time (Interview, June 21, 2011). The creative expression becomes a physical release of trauma, in addition to a community activity that victims do together. This builds resilience and healing. Lederach affirms through his experience that social healing doesn't come from one individual, but it develops from the interaction of many people within a community context. Social healing and reconciliation therefore emerge as a collective process (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 101).

2.3 Reconciliation

How can communities move toward reconciliation rather than relying on retributive justice? Theatre provides the platform for communication, which is the first step to understanding and to establishing relationships. Victims do not want to be controlled only by past events, and there is the hope of moving from victim to survivor. They also express the need to be in control of their own healing, and not held hostage again to perpetrators who may or may not acknowledge and apologize for their acts. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that not every victim will want or need a relationship with a perpetrator; and the perpetrator may not be known.

In order to move toward reconciliation, respondents expressed that they needed to tell their story, and to be heard by an 'integral' audience, as previously defined by Schechner.

This reduced their feelings of isolation and cultural shame, in particular victims of sexual and gender-based violence. The public performance acted as a form of acknowledging what happened in the community, especially as the audience considered the contents of the play in the post-play discussion. One Ugandan participant affirmed, "the play was like a light that comes in the dark to expose things". Dr. Natacha Joubert, a senior mental health researcher at the University of Ottawa affirms the importance of positive relationships as a basis for healing:

> What brings true healing that moves the person beyond victimization and humiliation, beyond fear and past suffering to a place of strength and a healthy identity? We need to develop a new paradigm of health that recognizes our common humanity, not just 'adapting', but moving beyond and reconnecting with who we are, as individuals and within community. We need true empathy that is based on trust, healthy identity, and honest human expression. As we go through this kind of healing we express and awaken our inner desire for beauty (Joubert, email correspondence, September 15, 2015).

Healing and reconciliation are long-term processes that include many challenges. One of the most difficult questions that arose through my research is whether victims can heal while the intimidation and violence persist. Lovemore responded with a definitive 'no' (Interview, November 20, 2013); Lederach also raises this issue, leaving it as an open-ended question (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 71). Many victims expressed that reconciliation could not take place without justice, that perpetrators must be held accountable, whether by the legal system or through traditional community processes. Regardless of whether reconciliation seemed presently attainable to affected community members, project facilitators often spoke of how resilience developed in the midst of the recovery from violence.

2.4 Resilience

Resilience moves people beyond the identity of victim. As Freire articulated, when formerly oppressed people become Subjects in control of their identity and future, rather than Objects, their resilience can threaten power structures (1970, 12). Chivandikwa observed this in Zimbabwean communities that had hosted protest theatre performances. He noted that these communities voted for opposition candidates in the next election, and

although he could not ascribe a causal connection, he believed that theatre contributed to their gaining the confidence to vote independently (Chivandikwa, Interview, May 5, 2011). This however, was not seen in the subsequent 2013 elections, where intimidation tactics were successfully used to ensure an uncontested successful election of ZANU-PF. In this situation resilience did not necessarily translate into overt resistance (Human Rights Watch Zimbabwe Report, 2013, 1).

Storytelling contributed to resilience as affected individuals and communities were able to claim their own narratives, which became a tool for healing and hope. This was testified by the Survival Girls and DTP participants in Kenya, and also by former child soldiers in Uganda. Project evaluations in Uganda also reported tangible results in communities which participated in theatre projects (for example, less alcoholism, less domestic violence).

I often found the coping mechanisms of individuals and communities beyond the capacity of what I would expect.[39] At the beginning of my research I stated that resilience is not about simply 'hanging on' or making the best of it; it is about transformation— rising like a phoenix from the ashes. However, sometimes hanging on is not simple at all; it is heroic. In the experience of McKnight, resilience moves beyond simply coping, to be transforming. He posits, "The stories of a [resilient] community are a narrative...[that] gives body to the collective...the beginning of myths that memorialize and remind us of the epic nature of our journey together" (McKnight and Block 2010, 95). Littig remarked that even more than hope, which could be fleeting, the refugees relied on determination, which translated into resilience. In the follow up interviews they spoke of their determination to continue gaining and using skills, to work toward a better future.

In the previous section I described the key outcome concepts of forgiveness, healing, reconciliation, and resilience. I will now summarize the positive and negative effects of using theatre that arose in my research, as well as the conditions by which theatre can

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[39] See also Watters 2010, 87; Thompson, Balfour, and Hughes 2009, 305; Lovemore, Interview, 2013.

contribute to these outcomes. I will then situate my findings relative to my review of published research.

3. Positive Effects

3.1 Increased Positive Communication and Community Problem-Solving

A number of positive effects of using theatre were identified by facilitators and participants. These included a community's ability to identify issues and develop problem-solving skills, and increased positive communication. This refers to both communication between stakeholders within affected communities and communication skills gained by participants, such as acting, public speaking, writing, and having the confidence to present concerns to authority figures.

Theatre became a tool for dialogue between different stakeholders in a conflict, a venue for people to hear and understand each other's experience and the impact of violence on affected individuals and the wider community. After watching the play, communities were able to identify together priority issues, and to brainstorm local solutions, rather than resorting to violence, or depending on police to solve disputes, as was the case in the past. The play also became a vehicle for the children of victims to hear the stories of what their families survived, to better understand parents and older community members.

3.2 Increased Confidence and Positive Identity

The skills gained by participants served to increase their confidence, which in turn allowed them to develop a positive identity. As postulated by Levine, "traumatic events become the center around which identities are constructed" (in Knill, Levine, and Levine 2005, 63). One's identity is relevant not just to cultural tradition and personal characteristics; it is fundamental to security. Belonging to a particular group can determine who will protect a person and who will harm them. This narrative of belonging can develop into a narrative of inclusion:

> The outcome of deep engagement with the Other does not have to be a common narrative. Rather, this process can be understood as a co-creative process in which

the individuals are challenged to extend their notions of self beyond the boundary of their existing narrative… this positive engagement of the Other forms the basis for recasting individual and ultimately group narratives (White 2003, 281).

After participating in theatre projects, including post-play discussions, people reported better understanding and empathy for what others had suffered. [40] As one person expressed, "because I know who I am, I am confident enough to let you be who you are" (Littig, Interview, June 21, 2011). Identity and belonging, inclusion or exclusion are factors directly affecting conflict resolution or escalation. When one considers the tragic impact of identity-based violence,[41] contributing to healthy self-image becomes even more critical to peacebuilding and reconciliation.

3.3 Storytelling and Reduced Isolation

One of the most significant benefits of participation in theatre was for victims of violence to tell their stories and have their stories heard. People would disclose their stories in a safe and confidential environment, then a shared narrative would be developed into the script of a play. This script gave the critical distance necessary for affected individuals to analyze what happened in their communities. Once the rearranged stories took on a composite narrative form, this helped to achieve a higher degree of objectivity and anonymity for affected people to participate in performances.

For these participants, being able to speak about what happened to them, often events that they had not spoken of previously, was the beginning of a long healing process. Reduced isolation became the first step in building another community—the community of survivors who no longer struggled alone, but supported each other. Sharing stories among others who had experienced similar situations decreased their feeling of isolation: "The play was a trigger. We have been suffering in silence but the play made visible things that were wrong in our community. Now we speak openly about these things; we

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[40] Boal reminds us that "Empathy in Greek means the vicarious experience of feelings and thoughts of others-characters in the performing arts or a real person in daily life" (2008, 23).

[41] Sandole defines identity-based violence as "…cycles of violence fueled by notions of identity and difference-- a collective fixation on the dangerous Other…fostering a readiness to address grievances through violent means" (2009, 59).

are even composing songs on how to peacefully solve conflict" (Ugandan village participant, 2013, Nov). They remarked on the importance of being able to share the stories with integral audiences—audiences to which they had some significant connection, such as communities within which they needed to reintegrate, including family members, and sometimes former perpetrators.

3.4 Victim and Perpetrator Communication

In addition to facilitating sharing between victims of violence theatre became a platform for victims and perpetrators to talk together. In particular in the Zimbabwean context, victims expressed the need to speak of what happened to them and to hear directly from those who had targeted them. It was mostly victims who were involved in the theatre pieces, but perpetrators were often in the audience. Thus watching the play opened up dialogue between victims and perpetrators in a community, allowing for mutual understanding. Perpetrators were able to watch a story being acted out and listen in a non-threatening venue, rather than being singled out and condemned. This enabled them to reflect on the impact on the victims.

Perpetrators also needed a safe setting in which to express themselves. They were able to speak more openly about why they committed violent acts, which was often after being threatened that they themselves would be targeted if they did not comply. In Uganda the former child soldiers who started as victims of abduction became perpetrators, as they were forced to commit atrocities against their families and communities. Therefore the complexity of the victim-perpetrator cycle (victims who become perpetrators under duress) blurred clear distinctions, and meant that community re-integration was more challenging.

In Maposa's experience, rather than targeting and antagonizing traditional leaders, providing them with a positive role model would allow them to see themselves in a key position to assist with community reconciliation: "It is not enough to simply say to one side of the political divide, 'you are evil'" (Interview, May 3, 2011). This strategy reduced defensiveness and avoided highlighting past dividing factors. However it is

imperative to be clear that involving perpetrators does not mean condoning past violence, or denying justice to victims. The challenge is to include perpetrators, yet still acknowledge the experience of the victim and call for justice and reparations.

3.5 Entertainment

The observation was made by some individuals in all three of the country settings that one cannot underestimate the sheer entertainment value and stress relief gained by watching a play. Oryema is convinced that without this entertainment outlet there would have been even more violence in northern Uganda. Zimbabwean respondents also maintained that even as the plays provided a critical construct of people's experience, they needed to do so in an entertaining way (interviews with Lovemore November 2013; Guzha November 2013). This is supported by other research, which notes that refugee youth theatre participants were "sick of issue-based work, and really just wanted to do some drama" (Balfour, 2014, xxi). As well as the entertainment value for audiences, the physicality of the act of creative expression was a release for the performers: "Somebody who is dancing does not think of anything except following the music and following the rhythm" (Okeyma, Interview, November 18, 2011).

U   3.6 Unexpected Positive Effects

I had not anticipated some of these positive findings. It was surprising how positively traditional leaders in Uganda accepted contemporary forms of creative expression, such as 'Break dancing for Peace'. The depth of the relationships in Kenya between refugee participants and American facilitators was striking. The facilitators continued to be in touch with many of the refugees. The word 'authenticity' kept arising in interviews and in secondary readings as both a requirement of successful theatre, and a positive effect when theatre was done well. Most impressive to me was finding that (at time of writing) the Survival Girls continued unsponsored as an active theatre group.

4. Negative Effects

4.1 Retraumatization

The most widely reported potential negative effect in all country settings was the risk of retraumatizing those who had been through violence—both participants and audiences. One Zimbabwean actor reported regarding the audience: "We just opened their wounds again; they were not healed. Painful memories were stirred up, issues were raised but not processed, and then the troupe left for the next town" (Interview, April 28, 2011). In his book *Refugee Performances* Balfour makes the same observation: "Too often in refugee performance work it is the well-intentioned practitioner/agency that unravels a social dynamic and leaves behind scar tissue, hidden behind silent, polite smiles" (2014, xx).[42]

The risk of retraumatization increased if there was not some form of debriefing after rehearsals as well as after performances. Facilitators in Uganda admitted that without discussion immediately after a performance, they were unaware of who was affected and needed follow-up assistance. One Ugandan audience member reported that she left unseen in tears because a scene portrayed exactly what she had gone through. A more in-depth post-play follow up is necessary to avoid, as one actor observed, "opening up a can of worms then leaving." The Zimbabwean company, Rooftop Productions, actually stopped performances for a period of time when they became aware that some audience members were having strong emotional reactions. Rooftop contacted a local NGO that assists victims of political violence, and post-play debriefing was then put into place. However these debriefing sessions were later suspended due to security concerns, after the arrest and release of the acting company.

In addition to retraumatization of survivors of violence, facilitators who did not directly experience the violence may undergo vicarious traumatisation.[43] I was struck by the

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[42] Magelssen (2006, 296) provides an example of negative reactions from an audience when a slave auction was acted out, which was also emotionally draining for the actors.

[43] Yoder defines Vicarious (or secondary) traumatization as "The effects experienced by others who…attend to victims firsthand". An example is the journalists who covered South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

depth of the feelings articulated by the American facilitators of the Kenya project. Four years after the project came to an abrupt end, Littig shared his feelings of working in the refugee camp: "Dadaab was a purgatory; I was haunted…my involvement in DTP shattered my belief system in commercial theatre. After my involvement in Dadaab, I kept asking the question, 'for what…? I do this play, for what?'''

One purpose of theatre was to provide a venue to safely share stories, to provoke thought and elicit discussion on topics related to healing and reconciliation. This purpose could be compromised unless there was a safe place to discuss difficult topics with the various stakeholders, and unless there was support for performers and audience by trained and caring facilitators. Minimally this would involve a discussion after each performance, in the case of a national tour, but ideally a community would benefit from longer-term support and training. Having such resources in place was seen as a way to reduce incidences of retraumatization.

4.2 Insecurity

Because my research is specific to situations of large-scale violence, inevitably insecurity—both physical and emotional—will be a topic of concern. In contexts of widespread violence, the stakes are high—for risks and for benefits. Sometimes plays dealing with politically sensitive subject matter were disguised as community celebrations in order to avoid being shut down by local police. In Zimbabwe the actors of the play *Rituals* were arrested and detained twice in 2009 as they toured the country with the play. In several locations police did not allow the play to be performed, or hecklers interrupted the performance. Audience members sometimes left the venue as soon as they became aware of the subject matter of the play. Also in Kenya attacks by the Somali militant group Al Shabaab in 2011 forced the project to end prematurely. It was no longer safe for the American facilitators to go into the refugee camp, nor for refugee participants to meet.[44]

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[44]This atmosphere of insecurity was not reflected in my reports from Kenya as I had completed my data collection in 2011 prior to the impact of the increased insecurity.

Although the actors in Zimbabwe were committed to freedom of speech, it was unclear whether the Zimbabwe troupe continued to perform after their arrest because of their commitment or because they had to finish the tour before getting paid. The risk was different depending on the position of the individual. High profile members of the arts community could not be arrested without media attention, but less famous actors were an easier target. Nevertheless, despite the physical insecurity of these conflict settings, most artists agreed that it was worth the risk for them to speak out against human rights abuses.

I commented on the fear of reprisal expressed by audience members in Zimbabwe. One facilitator observed that the organization would not know what threats were actually carried out unless they return to the communities. There is a need for follow up to communities, unless the presence of an external agent increases the risk, which is one advantage to local initiatives. As Lederach observed of community members from another context: "Though always watching and assessing with eyes and wisdom born from years of surviving cycles of violence, they still reached out, never knowing whether extending their hand toward those who wished them harm would be the opening to constructive change or their last act on earth" (2011, 5).

4.3 Lack of Community Ownership

A number of respondents were wary of organizations which seemed more motivated by sustaining a program (and thus their own employment) than with the needs of the individuals or community.[45] When the community was not involved in identifying the need for the project, or how it would be run, they lacked a sense of ownership. A very blatant example of this is seen in a Rwandan project, where the coordinator from Kigali only hired people from the capital city, and did not involve or gain the support of the local community. The community gave the project the nickname 'Centre ya bazungu', meaning 'Foreigner Centre'. Prior to the arrival of external donors for a site visit, the coordinator paid local people to pretend to be involved in the project, including bribing

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[45] This was not a concern expressed about any of the organizations I focused on for my research, but was articulated about other organizations.

local politicians to come and express their support (Shyaka, email correspondence, 2016, Jan 10).

Several respondents raised concerns about community members who would only participate in an NGO-run project if they were paid 'sitting fees'. This practice of paying an allowance was seen to create dependency, as normally community members would freely join in activities that were seen to benefit the community. One respondent described it as shameful that individuals would not participate without some form of compensation: "Now the communities say that they can't do theatre without the support of an NGO" (Aceng, Interview, November 16, 2011). This is why the American facilitators in Kenya chose not to pay any kind of stipend to participants. They left the choice to refugees to participate if they felt that the project was of value to them and to their communities. They initially attempted to involve 'master artists'—people from different refugee communities identified as leaders in performing arts, but these artists refused to participate unless they were paid.

4.4 Donor Control and NGO Opportunism

A related concern was the influence that could be elicited by donors, who may have an agenda different from the community's. Critical theorists such as Boal and Freire raise concerns about the hegemonic control of donors who serve their own agenda. In the case of Zimbabwe, Savanna Trust refused to accept funding from American donors, whose agenda seemed to focus more on regime change than on issues identified by the community. Thompson et al. make reference to the influence and intrusive practices that external experts and the 'trauma industry' can have on local projects, citing examples from post tsunami Sri Lanka (2009, 304–5). This concern is also supported by contributors to Prentki and Preston's Applied Theatre, who give examples of participants' refusal to engage with the project format.[46] Rama Mani also warns against "international

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[46]For example: "Who's Got the Power? Performance and Self Advocacy for People with Learning Disabilities" and "Child Rights Theatre for Development with Disadvantaged and Excluded Children in South Asia and Africa" in Prentki and Preston, 2009).

organizations and eager donors inadvertently instrumentaliz[ing] the arts to serve their political purposes" (Mani and Weiss 2013, 122).

I introduced the term 'NGO-speak', referring to the practice of community participants reproducing terms that will please facilitators, rather than communicating authentically their feelings and concerns (Dadaab Theatre Project, June 2011). JRP *Community Theatre Toolkit* encourages community facilitators to try to avoid "moralistic messages". It stresses that the play should be "…authentic and not force a public education message that is externally imposed" (JRP Theatre Toolkit 2013, 9).

Prendergast and Saxton observe that projects led by inexperienced people can "…result in experience of little impact or value for anyone, either for those involved or those attending" (Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 17). In Kenya the project facilitators with DTP were professional actors, which was evident in the quality of the training that they offered. Another NGO running a theatre project during the same time used development specialists rather than artists. Their approach produced the 'NGO-speak' type responses as the facilitators admitted that they did not have the skills to teach participants how to 'dig deep' and develop their stories (Graioni, Interview, April 16, 2011).[47]

4.5 Unexpected Negative Effects

I did not expect that the arts community would be seen as such a threat to a government. Conversely, I expected that the high degree of insecurity would be seen as negative by artists but it was not. They had become accustomed to high levels of risk, which had become normal for them. Perhaps the most unexpected negative effect was the depth of the vicarious traumatization experienced by the facilitators in Kenya. Like the Zimbabwean artists, habituated to insecurity, I did not consider how the reality and hardship of refugee life could impact those unfamiliar with this setting.

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[47] Interview at Irex Europe, 2011.

5. Conditions for Theatre to Contribute to Healing and Reconciliation

My research question asks under what conditions theatre can assist affected individuals and communities to move toward healing and reconciliation. More specifically, what are the conditions that make a positive change more likely, rather than continuing in the cycle of revenge and further violence? Taking into consideration the risks (including negative effects) I determine what conditions will derive positive effects for the majority of affected community members (participants and audience). Below is a consolidated analysis of my three research sites, augmented by relevant published research.

5.1 A Safe Environment

It is the responsibility of the sponsoring organization to provide, as far as possible, a safe environment—physically and emotionally—for project participants and audience members. Organizations should use a risk mitigation strategy to reduce risks to participants and audiences. I deliberately include the proviso 'as far as possible'. Those in western countries often refer to 'zero tolerance' of risk, which is simply outside the reality of communities in violent contexts. These communities tend to have a far higher risk tolerance than people external to the country. On my first research trip to Zimbabwe I concluded that the security risk to participants was a negative effect of theatre. But when I returned, this conclusion was challenged by respondents who declared that the benefit was worth the risk. Nevertheless, it is still advisable to think carefully about how to protect people, even when they have a high threshold for risk.

Ideally victims would have the assurance that the violence will not happen again: "Those who have suffered unjustified violent attacks have an enduring fear of their trauma re-occurring; a fear which undermines the possibility of developing renewed trust in their victimizers, and inhibits any true negotiation or eventual (re)integration with them" (Lerche 2000, 1). Lovemore also suggests that victims cannot heal in the midst of continued violence: "Trust for the state needs to be built up before fear can reduce and people can heal" (Lovemore, Interview, November 2013). A caution must also be raised

regarding the timing for sharing painful and traumatic events. Watters warns against "…speedy interventions counselling survivors within days…retelling or reworking the memories of the trauma, often in emotionally charged group settings" (2010, 73). Balfour also suggests that stories be allowed to "emerge in their own time and their own way" (2014, xxiv).

Theatre cannot make the external environment safe; that is outside its control or influence. Nevertheless, some risk mitigation measures can be taken, such as involvement of the local community. Maposa reported that his organization would rely on local communities to know how to manage police, and to advise them of the safest approach to moving forward with a theatre project. Respondents still reported that their participation in theatre was transformative. It gave them determination, confidence, stronger identity and self-esteem, and this enabled them in some cases to resist further human rights abuses, and to become more resilient people. One of my most encouraging experiences was seeing the courage and creativity of members of civil society, who find ways to 'speak truth to power', and if that is not yet possible, they speak truth to each other.

5.2 Community Ownership

Whether the theatre project was initiated locally or externally, the impact will be far more sustainable if the affected community supports the project. The process of creating and performing the play, and the product of the play itself is more likely to be experienced as a positive vehicle for healing and reconciliation. The fact that performing arts (drama, dance, and music) were incorporated into the school curriculum in one district in northern Uganda is a significant positive outcome of community ownership and sustainability. This moved the intervention from a one-time externally sponsored project to having a base in the community infrastructure.

Although the Kenyan refugee projects were initiated externally by an American organization, participants developed a strong sense of ownership. In my Kenyan research I referred to 'participant' rather than community ownership, since the refugees came from

diverse communities. Even though the refugees were not a physical or geographic community,[48] they created their own community because they shared similar experiences. Only in Uganda were geographic communities part of my research, and even in that context, women theatre participants who had been ostracized from their families and villages formed their own 'community of survivors'.

A related question is what group will be considered as external by the local community involved in the project. Maposa observed that even being from the capital city was considered as external to people from a rural community: "What is the point of bringing a Harare play performed by Harare actors to poor rural areas, especially if they do not speak the local language? You are viewed as outsiders who have come to poison the people" (Interview, November 8, 2013).

5.3 Cultural Relevance

Cultural relevance of the creative expression is closely related to community ownership as expression that is familiar to participants connects in a profound way. It restores to the victims positive aspects of their identity by helping them remember previous contexts of agency, security, and belonging: "In our everyday life there must be music in everything we do. If there is music then life becomes good. It helps me forget the bad things that happened in the past" (Dominic, 14 years old; he was abducted as a 9-year-old). Transit centres for war-affected children used culturally relevant cleansing rituals with the ex-child soldiers.

Ugandan poet and anthropologist Okot p'Bitek has written extensively about the negative impact of violence on cultural transmission. He posits that the interruption of a community's oral transmission of culture during such violence had negative repercussions on social relationships (p'Bitek in Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 42). This was

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[48]Researchers and project coordinators sometimes consign a group of people to a category and assume that this constitutes a community. Fuertes uses the term community in two distinct ways: "first as a value, [including] solidarity, commitment, mutuality, and trust". He also uses the term community to refer to a physical place, or a set of variables where people have something in common—interest or distinctive traits (e.g.: religious beliefs, cultural practices, ethnic origins) (2008, 23).

seen by the breakdown of relationships in Ugandan IDP camps, and the difficulty of cultural transmission in the refugee camps in Kenya. The reverse is true as well, that the preservation and reintroduction of cultural expression is part of the social healing process. There has been increased attention to the need for cultural preservation in complex emergencies, as evidenced in its inclusion in discussion papers on the UN initiative, 'Responsibility to Protect'.[49]

The theatre projects in all three countries used a contemporary theatrical format, although the plays had a foundation in traditional cultural expression. A central message of the Zimbabwean plays was to remind communities of the richness of traditional rituals; these plays included traditional healing ceremonies in the script. It was noteworthy that contemporary creative expression was well accepted, even within villages and by traditional cultural leaders. The theatre games used in Kenya and Uganda had a decidedly Western approach, yet this approach was well received by participants.

Language and cultural issues must be considered when a play tours the country. In what language is the play performed, and what groups does that exclude? This was a complaint raised by some of the Zimbabwean audiences, notably in Matabeleland. In Uganda JRP was very well received by local communities because the decision-makers and coordinators were from the local community, and thus there was a high level of cultural understanding and relevance.

5.4 Authenticity

The notion of 'authenticity' kept arising throughout my research, directly and indirectly, though it was one of the most difficult concepts to articulate. Comments from my research respondents and secondary data sources refer to the need for authenticity of the storytelling, and the need to avoid "didactic, goal-driven message-centered productions" (Cohen 2011). Lovemore maintains that "[a] true performance, acted with sincerity

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[49] The concepts of Responsibility to Protect ('R2P') and Human Security were developed and adopted in resolutions at the 2005 UN World Summit. They have become international human rights norms to address the international community's failure to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. (http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide, accessed 6 Feb 2016); also Mani and Weiss 2013).

touches people in a deep place, and communicates very effectively" (Interview, November 2013).[50] Littig contrasts authenticity with what he calls 'NGO-speak': "Authenticity and truthfulness is a huge aspect in the face of all the NGO-speak. NGO-speak is false promises, banalities, lack of care or respect for words or stories or the humans in front of you" (Interview, 2011). This is supported by experienced community theatre practitioner David Diamond, who emphasizes the importance of authentic voices in community theatre, which are the voices of affected people: "The people from the community who are living the issues under investigation and who are the experts in their own lives, create and perform the theatre" (2007, 77). How a play is constructed and understanding the historical, political, and cultural context is necessary to create a truthful performance (Prendergast, Lecture, February 4, 2014).

Participants also spoke of the need for authenticity in relationships. A trusting relationship with the theatre facilitators, who truly had the best interest of participants and community members in mind, reduced the risk of retraumatization. Authenticity in the approach of the sponsoring organization was evident when they focused on the needs of participants and community, above the agenda of the organization. Authenticity in the motivation of participants also influenced the effect of the project. This became evident by the depth of the participants' engagement and the level of their sharing, and from moving away from involvement for the sake of 'free sodas or certificates', as observed by DTP facilitators.

Many victims emphasized the need for an authentic apology and acknowledgement of violations before they could move to forgiveness and reconciliation. Authenticity of an apology was marked by a change in attitude and behaviour: Perpetrators needed to express a sincere regret for their actions, rather than lip service for the sake of amnesty. As one Zimbabwean victim declared, "forgiving and forgetting is difficult when you see the perpetrator free and not remorseful, and also when you know that at any time you stand the risk of being revictimized" (Rituals: Report 2010, 14). As Lederach contends,

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[50] Also see Prendergast and Saxton 2009, 190: Community theatre must combine participation, aesthetics, ethics, to create scenes that are authentic and work aesthetically.

"The real challenge of moral imagination and authenticity is how to…find ways that social change translates into changed attitudes and behaviors" (2010, 59). One role of theatre is to provide a venue for perpetrators to understand and admit the impact of their actions on victims.

5.5 Acknowledgement from Perpetrators

Related to the need for an authentic apology, a number of respondents stated that perpetrators must acknowledge their violent acts against victims before communities can fully heal. In Zimbabwe acknowledgement in the form of truth telling was seen as a precursor to healing and reconciliation. Speaking publically about violence suffered was the first step to community resilience. Authenticity of the apology was related to acknowledgment from perpetrators, which was a key condition for communities to be able to move to healing and reconciliation. Many participants felt that communities would not be able to move forward until people spoke openly about the acts that had been committed and what victims had suffered (Heal the Wounds: Report 2010, 24). The Zimbabwe play Rituals included a traditional healing ceremony in the first scene of the play, where the perpetrator must admit to the victim and the community what he had done, apologize for the act, and offer reparations. As in real life, if the village elders thought that he was not truly sorry, they would not accept the sacrifice.

The narrative of a fictional play can be the vehicle for a community to speak about actual events in a public forum. Theatre is a first step to storytelling, but it is a fictitious genre, so the real 'story' needs to be acknowledged by perpetrators to victims: "The most important element of reconciliation is truth telling; without truth the process of healing would not be complete" (Machisa 2010). In some instances, after watching the play community members who had been manipulated into committing acts of violence were moved to acknowledge their actions and apologize.

Conversely, a lack of acknowledgement on the part of perpetrators sometimes resulted in a bitter response from victims, who withheld their forgiveness. This may bring the community back into the cycle of violence, moving from bitterness to revenge, rather

than to forgiveness and healing. Acknowledgement did not always occur, since the perpetrators may not have been known or present, or in the case of state-sponsored violence. Nevertheless, even when acknowledgement from the actual perpetrator was not possible, through theatre at least the integral audience can recognize events that occurred.

5.6 Trained and Motivated Facilitators

Facilitators of theatre projects need to be sensitive to when, how, and in front of whom trauma survivors are ready to share their story, to avoid putting participants at emotional risk. An emotionally safe environment will mitigate against retraumatization by providing trained and caring project facilitators who are sensitive to the timing of disclosure on the part of victims. Since emotional readiness will depend on the individual, and since trauma memories can be triggered without warning, participants must feel free to refrain from sharing or performing. Participants in Kenya had this choice, which reportedly increased their feeling of emotional security. Participants need follow up and support during practice time and after plays are performed.

Staff with sufficient training in trauma counselling are often not available in developing countries. In Zimbabwe actors were initially asked to lead the audience discussion at the end of the play. This was problematic because the actors did not have relevant training, and because they may themselves be experiencing some form of retraumatization or vicarious traumatization.

However it became evident that professional training alone was not sufficient. One participant recounted her experience with an NGO worker who, although he had professional psycho-social training, treated her with disrespect and a lack of care. Consequently, she vowed that she would not divulge any personal information to him. This was in stark contrast to the facilitator of the Survival Girls who, though lacking professional training in trauma counselling, truly cared for them as individuals and developed a supportive, trusting relationship. Aceng in Uganda also affirmed that the person in the position of assisting trauma survivors needed to sincerely care for them as individuals, and this was more important than their professional designation.

Zimbabwean trauma specialist Dr. Lovemore stressed the importance of recognizing internal resilience and community resources. In her experience the most important resource is often other family and community members who have been through similar experiences: "It can be patronizing to assume that an outside facilitator…is the right person to deal with individual pain and trauma…don't be condescending, community is more resilient than you think" (Lovemore, Interview, November 20, 2013). Yoder suggests that it is not necessary that facilitators assisting trauma survivors are trained psychologists. In her experience 'trauma-informed' facilitators can provide the assistance needed. Such facilitators understand the impact of trauma and act on their knowledge to help others safely (Yoder, 2001).

One also has to be cautious regarding the quality of training provided to facilitators, and the nature of counselling they offer to participants. A concern raised from Uganda was that agencies claimed to be offering counselling to former child soldiers but what was referred to as counselling was simply collecting bio-data. A similar example is offered from post-tsunami assistance in Indonesia, where an international organization claimed to offer training on how to counsel children with PTSD, when in fact the two-day training was limited to how to fill in a PTSD symptom checklist (Watters 2010, 82).

5.7 Timing in the Cycle of Violence

What is the optimal timing for reconciliation initiatives using theatre? Although my research question refers to communities that have been through violent conflict, and indeed most examples of using arts-based initiatives are in a post-conflict context, this is not to suggest that there will be a permanent end to the violence. The cycle often continues from conflict to post-conflict and back into violence again. Some respondents suggested that theatre is best established before the violence in order to give communities the tools they need to prevent more violence: "We do these initiatives too late; plays need to perform in a time of relative calm, not in the heat of the moment" (Chivandikwa, Interview, November 13, 2013).

Situations of protracted violence will require difficult choices. Thompson et al. note in their research ethical dilemmas in trying to decide whether theatre should take place in

the midst of violence (2009, 303). If the violence is ongoing then neither participants nor audiences can be assured of safety—physically or emotionally. And yet one can't wait for the violence to end in order to take positive steps to support affected communities. Although the safest time for theatre may be after the conflict has ended, program directors attest that theatre is still effective at different points in the cycle of violence. As Maposa believes, "the question is not whether to use theatre, but what type of theatre to use at what stage" (Interview, November 20, 2013).

There is also the risk of focusing for too long on past events and getting trapped in victimhood narratives (Balfour 2014, xxiv). Long after the violence has ended, there comes a point in time in which survivors are fatigued with hearing and retelling the same narrative from a traumatic past and are ready to move on. I invited a Rwandan genocide survivor to a theatre festival in Kigali. He replied that he was reluctant to come because he dreaded watching more depressing plays about the genocide.

5.8 Sustainability

Sustainability of the project at the community level did not have the same relevance in my Zimbabwe research, since I focused on a professional company that toured the country. In Uganda, JRP continues to run theatre projects in different villages. Consequently, the feedback I received on this question is focused on my Kenya research. Refugee participants expressed concerns about the sustainability of the theatre project. The camp-based DTP members only managed to meet a few times after the departure of Littig and Bloodgood. Amazingly, at the time of writing the Survival Girls in Nairobi have continued to meet and perform. The fact that the Survival Girls did indeed survive with no external support or sponsorship is remarkable, and a testament to the ownership and commitment of the founding members.

I asked the question, 'what needs to be sustained?' Littig's reply in the case of Kenya was their source of creativity, positive identity, and peacebuilding skills. In Uganda, individual and social healing needs to be sustained, and communities need to build resilience. In Zimbabwe the process of healing and reconciliation must be founded on

social justice, acknowledgement, and compensation. Ideally, such goals will be sustained by supporting local communities to run projects on their own, and to incorporate elements into existing vehicles, such as school curriculum, and community programs. The fact that performing arts (drama, dance, and music) were integrated into the school curriculum in one district in northern Uganda is a significant positive outcome in support of community ownership and sustainability. This moved the intervention from a one-time project to having a base in the community infrastructure. As two of the founding members of the Survival Girls are in the process of being resettled to Canada, they are now exploring how they may be able to continue assisting refugee women in their new home: "Our vision is to take this brand beyond borders, we feel many girls need this to really know themselves better and their esteem to be boosted always."

Why did the Survival Girls survive and DTP did not? Both groups had the desire to continue as well as dynamic refugee leaders who put effort into leading the groups. The security crisis in Dadaab refugee camp was the cause for DTP to terminate early, and also making it unsafe for the refugees to meet.[51] Also several DTP members left the camp in the year after the project. Conversely, the Survival Girls had a free location to meet monthly. Although some members left Nairobi, those remaining were able to recruit new members to the group. The greatest motivation for their success was reportedly because they continued to be asked by UNHCR and Nairobi-based NGOs to create and perform plays. One member confirmed, "we have created a brand, so anytime they have an event and are in need of a group to perform, survival girls becomes first option" (Email communication, Jan 14, 2016).

Littig made two comments related to sustainability of DTP that seem contradictory on the surface. When interviewed in 2011 near the end of the project, he stressed that he did not want DTP to be another broken dream, or an isolated project (referring to NGOs who run a six-month project, and leave). Then in 2015 he stated that he was not interested in: 'DTP: The Sequel'- That is, he was not interested to repeat the same project so that Great

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[51] Al Shabaab militants assassinated refugee camp leaders, kidnapped aid workers, and killed a number of Kenyan police.

Globe could continue a presence in Dadaab, simply because they could obtain funding. How does one reconcile these two comments—what is the broken promise and why not a sequel? Although they did not want to do a short term 'hit and run' type of project, neither were they interested in continuing only for the sake of the funding. They wanted to provide sufficient skills and support for the participants to have a platform for future personal development, and so that they could themselves assist other groups. The lack of a 'sequel' may also have been related to the vicarious traumatization expressed by Littig. In 2015 he shared that it took him four years to recover from the DTP project in Dadaab. Based on this statement, he may not have had the emotional energy to continue.

6. Comparison of my Research with the Literature

Having analyzed the effects of theatre projects and conditions by which theatre can contribute to facets of peacebuilding, I now conclude with a chart which provides a comparison of my research findings across the three country settings, with the literature review and analysis. This allows me to situate my findings relative to the published research drawn on in my introductory chapter.

	Positive Effects	**Negative Effects**	**Conditions**
Uganda	- positive communication increased community problem-solving - reduced stigmatization and isolation - healing and reconciliation	- retraumatization - lack of community ownership - funding or NGO-driven	- trained and motivated facilitators - authenticity - culturally relevant creative expression - community ownership
Kenya	- concrete skills (communication) - Increased confidence - self-esteem - positive identity - healing	- retraumatization - lack of participant ownership - lack of project sustainability	- participant ownership vs. NGO/donor control - trusting environment vs. retraumatization - story heard vs. isolation - resilience

Zimbabwe	- community participation and communication - reduced isolation - dialogue between victims and perpetrators - healing and reconciliation	- retraumatization - insecurity and fear of reprisal - lack of community participation	- communication within affected communities (acknowledgement) - participation of local community - safe environment - timing in cycle of violence - recognize what is beyond the scope of theatre
Literature Review	- begin trauma healing - examine emotional wounds - resist human rights abuse (speak out) - exchange between those on all sides of conflict - work toward reconciliation - prevent further violence	- retraumatization - lack of sustainability - lack of training - lack of participant agency - lack of community ownership - western techniques - material gain as motivation - insecure environment	
Analysis	- increased communication - community problem-solving - increased confidence - positive identity - storytelling - reduced isolation - victim and perpetrator communication - entertainment	- retraumatization - insecurity - lack of community ownership - donor control, NGO opportunism	- trusting environment - community ownership - cultural relevance - authenticity-acknowledgement from perpetrators - trained and motivated facilitators - timing in cycle of violence - sustainability

Figure 14: Comparison of Effects and Conditions

My research corroborates the findings of previous studies describing the role of theatre in the process of trauma healing after violence. Theatre provides a venue for an exchange between conflicting parties working toward reconciliation and preventing further violence. The risk of retraumatization is a recurring theme throughout the literature, and

in all three of my research sites. Several studies also note the risks created by insecure environments. I emphasize the need for emotional as well as physical safety, which is critical to trauma healing and developing trusting relationships.

Although the term authenticity appears in other studies, my research provides a more nuanced description of what it means in this particular context. Authenticity applies to relationships (between participants and facilitators), to the storytelling (in contrast to NGO-speak), and to motivation of participants and of organizations. I expand on the need for facilitators who are not just trained, but committed to mentor, respect, and care for participants.

It is important to distinguish between the effects of the theatre project and the context of violence. I highlight the need to determine which of the two caused each variable (hope, bitterness, healing, anger, etc.)—a distinction that I have not seen elsewhere. This point became most obvious in the Zimbabwe research, where audience members in post-play discussions spoke of their anger and bitterness toward the perpetrators of violence. The play was the venue to vent such frustrations, rather than causing them.

Some studies observe a lack of participant agency in theatre projects, evidenced by a lack of community 'buy-in'. Consistent with the theoretical foundation of Freire and Boal, this is related to the need for affected community members to become Subjects determining their issues and actions, rather than passive Objects of others' initiatives. The need for participant or community ownership was also a central theme in my research. I draw out the issue of NGO opportunism, which came out most strongly in my Uganda research. I underscore the importance of culturally relevant forms of creative expression, including language of performance, which is also relevant to community buy-in.

Timing of when arts-based initiatives are most effective in the cycle of violence did not appear to be dealt with in other research. This question, addressed in my Zimbabwe study, was considered in conjunction with the issue of physical security, and with the participants' tolerance for risk. In most settings, theatre programs are used in a post

violence context to move toward healing and reconciliation, with the hope of preventing future violence.

7. Issues that Arose and Future Research Topics

Inevitably a number of issues and questions arise in the process of research, which, although relevant and interesting, are beyond the scope of the study at hand. The following section identifies such issues, which merit further exploration in future research projects on the topics related to arts-based peacebuilding.

7.1 Deep or Wide

I identified two broad approaches to using theatre for peacebuilding that I refer to as 'Deep vs Wide'. The 'deep' approach involves working over a number of months with a small group of affected people who develop a play based on their life experiences. The value of this approach is in the depth of experience by a small group of affected people in a specific community setting. The limitation is the lack of exposure to larger numbers of people, as participants and as audience, since the play will often only be performed once. The 'wide' approach occurs when a play is created and/or performed by professionals and taken on tour to a number of locations across the country. Using this approach a large number of people benefit from seeing the performance and partaking in the post-play discussion. However the play will lack local community involvement, and may be considered as having an externally imposed agenda. Maposa suggests that the most advantageous approach is a combination of the two: use a national theatre tour to open up discussion of issues related to violence and reconciliation, then follow up with theatre projects in targeted communities, where affected people can develop their own plays.

For further research: What are advantages and disadvantages to each approach, and when is one more appropriate?

7.2 Narrative or Truth Telling

Because scripts for plays were based on the real life experiences of victims of violence, the line between fiction and documentary becomes very thin. This is the case when a professional writer develops a script from interviewing victims of violence, and even more so when victims themselves participate in developing the script. As the Survival Girls facilitator aptly observed, "I was not working on a trauma piece; I was working with trauma victims…It's not a play; it's their life" (Holden, Interview, June 23, 2012). Whether narrative or truth telling, it can be a dangerous business— physically dangerous if the violence is on-going, and emotionally dangerous if revealing sensitive information leads to stigmatization rather than acceptance.

For further research: What are the considerations affecting emotional security and the avoidance of retraumatization when trauma victims and/or perpetrators are storytellers?

7.3 Artists or Peacebuilders

In each of my research settings the coordinators with training as artists seemed more able to bring out authentic performances that touched the audiences, in particular when the actors were amateur community participants. Interestingly, a number of human rights and peacebuilding projects using theatre were being run by coordinators who had a background in acting. Conversely, another NGO using theatre in Dadaab, was run by development experts with no theatre background. Although well intentioned, this theatre project produced refugee scripts that were limited to didactic 'NGO-speak' narratives. The project and the relationships ended at the same time, and there has not been a lasting impact reported by their participants.

I put the question to Zimbabweans who were involved in protest theatre, 'what is more important, the protest or the theatre?' referring to the quality of artistic expression or the message portrayed. The reply was consistently that the impact on the individuals and the community was the most important element, and that when the art and the message are authentic, they work together to increase the likelihood of a positive impact. They affirmed that amateur community actors who relayed their story with sincerity and

commitment would communicate most effectively and that the authenticity of the storytelling gave the quality to the art.

For further research: Is there a difference in the impact of the theatre programs whether they are coordinated by artists or by peace-builders?[52]

7.4 Performers or Audience

In all three countries I had limited or no direct access to interviewing or surveying audiences after performances.[53] One would suppose a differential impact on participants, who would be intensively involved in the process of play-building, as compared to the impact on the audience, who would watch the play once. The type of audience (integral or accidental) and audience reaction would also be a key element in the reception and impact of performances. There is a related issue of whether performers should be objective— that theatre should not be a personal therapy session for performers; rather, catharsis is for the audience.

For further research: What is the nature and scope of the differential impact on performers and audience members, and the impact on different types of audiences?

7.5 Goal or Actual Outcome

After analyzing my interview notes and reports on theatre projects, it became clear that one has to pay careful attention to distinguish between the actual outcome of using theatre as reported by participants and community members, and the desired outcome (goal) as expressed by organizers. While some reports included baseline information on concrete changes in the community, often when I would ask a question about the impact of the theatre project, the respondent would instead reply by stating goals that the organization had for the project.

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[52] Lederach's the Moral Imagination is an excellent resource for this question, as in this book he explores the different roles of artists and peacebuilders.

[53] Although in Zimbabwe I did have access to detailed reports of post-performance discussions with audiences, I was not able to conduct live interviews with audience members around the country.

For further research: Is the researcher distinguishing between reports on the goal the organization has for the project as compared with the actual results?

7.6 Gender issues

A number of gender-related issues arose during my research, though I was not able to examine them in sufficient depth. Girls and women had a greater likelihood of stigmatization if it became known that they had been raped during the violence, and in particular if they had children as a result of rape. Many women were ostracized by their families, and children of rape would not be able to inherit land. In both Uganda and Kenya women's groups spoke of the support that women were able to give each other: "what some times amazes, as being ladies, we all get involved in helping...Survival Girls has become more than a community group, rather a sisterhood" (Survival Girl member, email communication, 2016, Jan 14). Men and boys also experience the sexual violence of being raped, though it was more difficult to estimate the extent, as they so rarely disclosed this abuse. Because men were less able to talk about traumatic personal events, they did not experience the same support reported by women's groups. This unhealed trauma resulted in an increase in gender-based violence against women by men who had not been able to find healthy ways to express their anger.[54]

For further research: To what extent is gender a factor in the arts-based intervention, for men and boys as well as girls and women?

7.7 Theatre or the Context of Violence

It is essential to distinguish the effect of the theatre project from the context of violence within which it resides. While many responses may be traced directly to having watched the play (e.g.: healing, retraumatization, stories heard, being threatened), other responses were related to the context of violence (lack of justice, anger, inability to forgive, call for

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[54] Reports stated that the increase in domestic violence and high prevalence of mental illness in post-conflict Uganda was in large part due to the breakdown in social networks (Rosenoff Gauvin 2013, 35; Deleu and Porter 2011, iv).

acknowledgement by perpetrators). Consequently, one has to be careful to distinguish reactions to performing or watching the play from the consequence of living in a context of violence.

For further research: Is an observed effect the result of the dependent variable of the arts-based intervention or of the independent variable of the context of violence and its abatement?

8. Concluding Comments

My motivation to conduct this research was witnessing the remarkable resilience of people who had survived decades of violent conflict. I couldn't understand how they found the courage and determination to work toward a more hopeful future, when I could see little basis for hope. A personal interest in creative expression as the vehicle was based on my own experience as an artist, and the development of my creative spirit with African artists. I did start with a bias, convinced through this experience and through my initial reading (Lederach's Moral Imagination was my bible in this search) that moving out of the cycle of violence requires a personal, relational, and creative response.

Out of this interest and reading, I formulated my research question: How do communities that have been through violent conflict use creative expression to move toward healing and reconciliation? After identifying specific locations and organizations that could be sites for my research, I eventually focused on theatre. The advantage of theatre is that it can include various forms of creative expression including storytelling, poetry, dance, drumming, and singing.

Now at the conclusion of my investigation I can confirm through my research, which is supported by secondary data, that theatre contributes to the healing and reconciliation of affected communities in contexts of violence. Participants in theatre projects were able to tap into their source of creative expression as they communicated their stories in a safe environment. They gained skills, they had a sense of being heard and understood, which increased confidence and empathy. Several respondents asserted that theatre is more than

simply a technique or tool; it is a process that leads to better understanding of others and self. It is this understanding that paves the way for healing, reconciliation, and resilience. Cohen and Varea describe the reality that communities face as they struggle to recover from large-scale violence:

> In zones of violence and oppression, suppressed truths about abuse of power, unexpressed stories of suffering, unmourned losses… unspoken feelings of remorse, and unreconciled relationships, are all screaming-in silence and in deafening roars— for focused, creative attention that might lead to healing and justice, and, perhaps, to peace (Cohen et al. 2011, 163).

However, it is also clear from the risks articulated (retraumatization, fear of reprisal, lack of sustainability) that the stakes are high when using theatre in violent contexts. Working toward healing and reconciliation in such a context is a long-term process, requiring a multi-faceted approach of which theatre will be one tool. Lederach articulates this complexity: "[We] circle over and again through the questions that have no answers, up and down as if on a staircase that rises from lived experience without words, yet requires one to continuously navigate the Lived moment. People experience and feel things that have no name or sound; yet they feel it in their bones" (Lederach and Lederach 2010, 98).

Now several years and many miles later, I am struck by the rapid increase globally in arts-based strategies for peacebuilding. In addition to my research sites and the extensive secondary data, I spoke with genocide survivors in Rwanda and visited communities in eastern Congo which use theatre. Arts-based strategies and theatre in particular are becoming core programs of a number of organizations focused on peacebuilding. I am also struck by the strength of enthusiasm expressed by participants in local communities. They truly did take ownership of the projects, as was evident in their motivation to find ways to continue, and to involve more communities. I was able to watch performances of the refugee groups in Kenya, and of the professional theatre company in Zimbabwe. They were powerful performances, which elicited a strong positive response from their audiences.

Although theatre is not a panacea to independently resolve protracted conflicts, it is a means to allow stories to be told and to be heard between different sides in a conflict, to

reduce isolation, to increase positive identity, and to increase community control over these processes. And if all of this is not enough, it is entertaining, providing a welcome respite to affected communities. So I end at the same place that I started— with deep admiration for the resilience of those who have survived the pain and trauma of violent conflict, who have begun the journey of addressing bitterness and revenge, and whose journey toward healing and reconciliation has been assisted by using creative expression; using theatre.

9. Recommendations

Creating and Performing Plays

-The community participants should determine what issues the play will address, including culturally appropriate modes of expression.

-There should be a facilitated debriefing after each practice and each performance.

-Ensure mechanisms for follow-up to play performances for communities that are ready for continued dialogue and problem-solving.

-Create standardized tools to collect audience feedback in a detailed and systematic way.

-Project facilitators should be encouraged to report on the negative as well as positive impact of the play.

-Target youth for involvement in any arts-based initiative as in past violence youth have been manipulated to become perpetrators of violence.

Community Involvement and Sustainability

-Involve at the outset and throughout the project local community stakeholders, including traditional leaders, women, and youth.

-Find ways to incorporate theatre into on-going community activities, and to involve local institutions e.g.: include drama and singing in school curricula.

-Start the planning with an exit strategy that identifies what can be continued after funding ends, and how to best support the community in this.

-The project should use only basic supplies that the community will be able to sustain on its own, to avoid creating dependency (e.g. costumes they can put together themselves, ensure they have access to traditional instruments, no sound or light systems).

-Plays should be performed more than once to increase community exposure and make best use of the play as a valuable resource for community dialogue.

Trained Facilitators

-There should be debriefing times after each practice, and a facilitated discussion after each performance.

-Ensure trained and caring, motivated facilitators are available to assist with these discussions and debriefing times.

-Monitor the quality of training provided to facilitators, and the nature of debriefing they offer to participants and audiences.

Cultural Sensitivity

-Involve cultural leaders in the planning and if possible implementation of theatre projects.

-When there are a diversity of languages and ethnic groups, these should be represented in the actors chosen and language of the script.

-Be aware of traditional practices, and consult as to how they could or should be incorporated in the project.

<u>Security and Safety</u>

-Trauma survivors must be in control of when, how, and in front of whom they are ready to share their story.

-Participants must feel free not to participate in practices or to perform if they experience a strong emotional response or flashback from previous violence.

-Find ways to include perpetrators in community discussions rather than isolating and targeting them.

-Be aware of the best timing to use a theatre project in the cycle of violence.

-Ask local community supporters to develop strategies to address security issues unique to each unique community.

-Involve the local community to determine the current environment, and be flexible for rapid adjustments. The political climate in a country or region can change rapidly and dramatically, making a strategy suddenly unsafe.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

I developed an initial list of questions for each country to serve as a guide for interviews. Since the interviews were semi-structured, I adapted questions according to the responses provided by that individual or group at the time of the interview.

Uganda Interview Questions

Community Theatre Participants:

What was your experience of the conflict in northern Uganda? (Formerly abducted child, internally displaced person, living with family…) What are the sources of conflict in the community that need to be addressed? What needs to be healed?

Why/how did you join this theatre project? What were you hoping for from the experience?

Who initiated the project, who participated, who did not? Why?

Where have you performed the plays? What was the reaction of the audience?

What has been the impact of the play- on you personally, on the group, on the community?

What did you learn from the experience (preparing and performing the play)? How did it change you?

What is the impact of using artistic tools? How do you know- how is this measured? Have you seen negative impacts from using artistic expression/theatre?

What do you hope could happen next with this project, and what will that accomplish? How will you know? How can it be sustained?

If you could describe a picture of your hope for your future what would it be?

Program Coordinators:

What is your position and how long have you been in this position? What relevant training have you had? What was your personal experience of the conflict?

What has been the impact (past and present) of the conflict on the community? What are the current issues/things that need to be healed?

Why did your organization engage in this type of project? Who participated (who did not) Why? How has it changed over time?

What type of theatre did you use? What theatre methods used in creating the play with community participants?

What was the interplay between contemporary and traditional creative expression in the genre and development of the play?

Where was the play performed? What was the reaction of the audience? Who do you wish could see the play?

What has been the impact of the theatre project on the community? Who has been most affected? How (positive and negative)? Have victims and perpetrators been brought together? Has it created factions? Retraumatization of participants or audiences?

What are the good/best practices and lessons learned from implementing your projects?

What needs to be sustained? How can the creative initiatives be sustained by the community and local government?

Kenya Interview Questions

Refugee Participants:

Why did you join this theatre project- what were you hoping to experience/learn?

Were your expectations met- what did you gain?

How were the plays developed?

Where did you perform? What was the audience reaction?

What was the impact of performing the plays on you? Did it contribute to peacebuilding as hoped? If so, how?

How did this project build your resilience, help you to heal, give you hope? How does it help your refugee community?

What is your hope for the future? What do you want to see happen after this project ends?

NGO Coordinators:

What is your goal for this theatre project?

What are the peacebuilding goals and how do you address these?

How do you select participants?

How are the plays developed- what theatrical approach/training methods are used?

How do you incorporate traditional creative expression, especially with refugee participants from a variety of countries?

Where are they performed? Who is the audience?

What is the impact on participants and on their community, and how do you measure this? Did it turn out as you expected- what unanticipated outcomes?

What do you hope will be sustained after the project is completed? Do you have an exit strategy?

How do you manage the possibility of retraumatization?

What are the unique elements of working with a refugee population?

How has your involvement with this project affected you personally?

Zimbabwe Interview Questions

What genre do you consider your plays to be?

Comment on contemporary and traditional cultural expression in developing plays.

What is the purpose of Protest Theatre- what are you protesting?

If your stated purpose is building community resilience and engagement, how does theatre do this?

What was the impact on actors/participants vs audience? How is the impact of the plays measured? How do they contribute to community healing?

What is the purpose post-play debrief discussions? Did it fulfill its purpose? How?

What needs to be healed? What conflict [specifically 2008 post election violence?] What about the risk of retraumatization? How does reconciliation happen?

How did your involvement in the plays impact you personally?

What is the space in Zimbabwe for freedom of expression through the arts, in particular Protest Theatre?

How can you be strategic in involving those in power and perpetrators? What is the balance between seeking justice, and supporting victims?

Is there a role for theatre (and if so, what role) in the prevention of violence, in community healing, in building civil society capacity?

What are your thoughts on what will happen before, during, and after the next election? Can community theatre prevent future violence? Is it possible to impact perpetrators who don't seek forgiveness?

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