Methodological Innovation in Community Development Project Evaluation: Theatre for Development as a Qualitative Evaluation Tool


By

Folorunsho Moshood A (MMP)
Admin/Programme Officer
Educare Trust, Nigeria,
Coordinating Consultant
Relevant Actions for Community Engagement & Development (RACED), Nigeria
And
Alumnus, International Civil Society Fellowship Programme
Charles. F. Kettering Foundation, Dayton, Ohio, the USA
folorunshomoshood@gmail.com, educaretrust@hotmail.com, relevantactions.consult@gmail.com
+2348023865772
Purpose and objective

Purpose: To explore the effectiveness, relevance & credibility of TfD as an evaluation tool by weighing its usefulness, pros, cons and challenges.

Objective: Engaging the participant in the use of an evaluation tool that encourages proactive and active participation from the wider spectrum of beneficiaries.
Methodological Innovation

What innovation? Theatre for Development

What type of data? Qualitative


Suitable platform? Community Driven. Community based platform can also be considered
What is Theatre for Development (TfD)?

Conventionally, TfD is a process of collating and using data about community development project for live performances.

Use as Project Activity or to augment Project Activity

To strategically:
• Create/increase awareness
• Mobilize people & resources
• Give out-of-classroom Education
• Edutainment and infotainment.
Conventional uses of TfD
Collating data through Deliberative Discussion/Storytelling

Collating data in different communities
What is TfD? Contd.

TfD has been described under different names:

• Theatre for Community Animation
• Popular Theatre for Community Development
• Community Theatre
• Street Theatre
• Theatre for Integrated Rural/Social Development
TfD as a qualitative evaluation tool

Is a process of collating and using data about CD project for live performances that will help in the assessment of the overall achievements.
Why TfD as a qualitative evaluation tool?

Serendipitous thinking after using TfD in its conventional roles for many years.

Aided by the need:

• To get immediate feedbacks/responses in a unique way.

• To purge/validate data in a participatory manner.
The Process of TfD as an evaluation tool

Three steps:

A. Before the project – Situation analysis / Baseline Assessment

B. During the project – Built into project activities as outcome evaluation.

C. After the project – To assess the overall achievement as impact evaluation.
Before the project

- Idea generation and planning meetings
- Collating the existing data
- Identifying a Community Theatre Group.
- A live-performance based on the existing data
- Using the findings of the performance as Baseline Assessment
- Putting TfD into project activities
During the project

• TfD workshop for the Theatre Group.

• Collating new data using other qualitative tools

• Pre-activity test for members of the audience

• An improvised drama based on the data and outcome of activity.

• Turning of spectators to spectactors.

• Post-activity test for members of the audience
SPECTACTORS

Participation by members of the audience in a live performance.
After the project

• Review the reports

• Retrain the actors

• Collating data on impacts. Use control study technique

• New drama on the initial problems, intervention issues, achievements, challenges and lessons.

• Allow the audience to end the drama

• Feedback/Interactive session
Validating and purging of data – Do you agree and what are your impression?
The usefulness of TfD.

• Contributing to learning & development process
• Building ownership & sustainability of the project
• Strengthening the existing networks
• Encouraging immediate feedbacks.
• Makes real findings since ‘seeing is believing’
• Assesses the past, the present & uses the findings to forecast the future
• No technicality in report writing and dissemination.
Suitability of TfD as an evaluation tool

It is suitable for Community Driven projects

More suitable where there is an existence of:

• **Community Theatre Group**

• **Existing networks** – Community Development Associations and Community Based Organisations.
Before TfD can be credible...

- Engage members of the beneficiaries
- Reasons behind TfD must be stated – consent form.
- Built into the project from the conception stage
- Must be gender sensitive.
- Transparency and accountability
- Swift transmission of data
- Interesting and engaging performance
- Flexibility in approach
Using TfD: Major challenges

Difficulty:
• Arising from improvised performances
• In keeping actors together
• In making the entire process interesting
• In controlling the crowd
Using TfD: major pros and cons

Major pros:

• Total purging of irrelevant data
• Combining the elements of other qualitative tools.
• Guide against evaluator’s bias
• Creating enough room for reflections
• Identifying acceptable cultural norms and best practices
• Sustaining connections with emotions & sensory experience
• Capturing some ‘wicked’ dimensions of a project
Major cons

- It may not be economical
- It can’t be used in isolation
- Technicality of drama
Major limitation

Just like other qualitative tool, it cannot use mobile phones to transmit data
Conclusion

TfD as a qualitative evaluation tool...
Already used by Educare Trust, Nigeria in Developing A Positive Approach Project.

Conclusively, the future of evaluation work lies...
In ‘think-out-of-the box methodology’ and not the usual ticking of the boxes.

We need to encourage the use of other holistic & more participatory tools such as ... Deliberative Discussion & Storytelling.

THANK YOU!