

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**DEvised THEATRE AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE SDGS IN THE LA**

**NKWANTANAN MUNICIPALITY**

**SOLOMON YAW DARTEY**



**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**2021**

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

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**SOLOMON YAW DARTEY**

A thesis project in the Department of Music Education, School of Creative Arts,  
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment

of the requirement for the award of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

(Arts and Culture)

in the University of Education, Winneba

**OCTOBER 2021**

## Declaration

I, Solomon Yaw Dartey, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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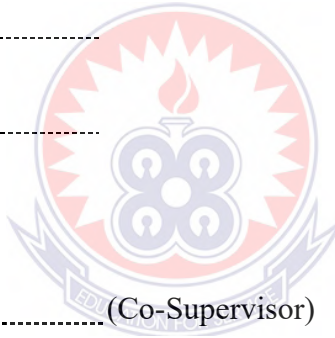
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We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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## **Dedication**

To my family and the *Chaskele* team for keeping faith alive.



## Acknowledgements

To my supervisors Prof. Mary P. Dzansi-McPalm and Dr Faustina Brew, I am immensely grateful for all the advice and guidance you have offered me from day one to the completion of this thesis project. For being the great supervisors, I say I am forever indebted to you for your dedication and selflessness.

I am indebted to Mr. Africanus Aveh, Dr Evans Asante, Dr Johnson Edu, Prof Ernest Amposah, Dr Samuel Yirenkyi, Dr Ebenezer Brew Riverson Jr., Dr Latifa Osei, Mr Iddrisu Seidu Kananzoe, Mr Ebenezer Asime, Mr Isaac Adamptey, Mrs Margaret Amo Lamptey, Peter Owusu Agyei, Alfred Baiden, Mrs Margaret Numekevor, Mr Senyo Okyere, Dr Samuel Benagr, Mrs Akua Abloso, Abigail Ameley Quaye, Mr Baffour Awuah, Nene Oseidu, Charles Garshong, Mr Frederick Asiamah and Mr Elikem Kunutsor for their continuous presence and needed advice. I am also thankful to the staff of the Department of Theatre Arts of the School of Creative Arts, UEW and the staff of the School of Performing Arts, UG for their support and space for rehearsals and technical rehearsals during the creative process. I am grateful to the Management team of Al Rayan International School for granting me permission to pursue this PhD program alongside working for them.

The Chiefs, the MP, the MCE and the people of La Madina Nkwatanang Municipal Assembly have been of abundant support for this project. I am honoured to have had your support for the project. I would also like to acknowledge Plastic Punch for their abundant support and opportunity given me for their on-grounds observation and collaboration. The community members in La-Nkwatanang who participated in the project especially Nenesenor Abloso, Abigail Sena Atsugah, Samuel Appiah, Emmanuel Adinkra Ntiamoah, Dodzie Aveh, Abena Gyanewa Anin, Dede Gjanmaki, Wendy Mamiya Aku Sika, Agnes Adomako Mensah, Lena Agbenyeke, Kelvin Apeti Goodnews, Christian Sunny Agbetsiafa, Phaniel Parbey, Amir

Abdullah Gbankulso, Afotey Nii Odai, Richard Dartey, Michael Dartey, Kwesi Owusu Poku and Sika Koomson who served as co-devisors of the play and performers I say God bless you.

I am also forever grateful for the love and support I got from my amazing wife, Portia Fafali Haimeley Dartey, kids - Jedidiah Dartey and Nkunim Dartey for bearing with my absence during family time. To my parents and siblings, thanks for the unflinching support throughout this journey.

I would like to recognise the invaluable assistance, encouragement and comfort from friends during the research process. In a nutshell, I would like to show appreciation to everyone who in one way or the other contributed to the success of my work. I say thank you.



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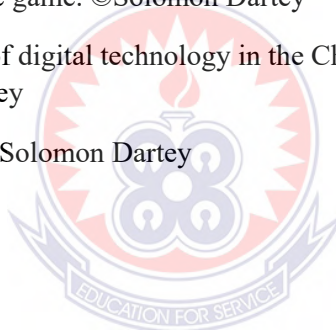


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## Abstract

This study sought to promote three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly for agenda 2030 using devised theatre in the La Nkwantanang Municipality as a case study. Devising techniques draw, on the micro level, some practice-based research methodology, and on the macro level, artistic research methodology. Its efficacious process engages research, collaboration, rehearsals, reflections and performance as tools. It draws on an Interpretivist Paradigm/Constructivist Paradigm within the qualitative research design, and a theoretical framework of Practice-based Research. The research focused on developing the *Chaskele Devised model* as an advocacy tool for promoting Goals 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land) within communities using folklore as stimuli. Some participants from the Municipality volunteered for this project. The findings established that, theatre has the transformative power to reach and impact the masses. The folkloric elements used as the stimuli in the creation of the *Chaskele* performance enhanced the performance output and made the subject relevant to the audience. From the foregoing, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the efficacy of the *Chaskele Devised Model* in promoting the SDGs in Ghana.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background

Most often, capital investment and goodwill play an integral role in the drawing of strategic plans and policies. These plans and policies are mostly geared towards improving the lot of the people. The United Nations (hereafter refers to UN) on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2015 launched a new set of global goals - Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which is aimed at *ending poverty*, *protecting plants*, and *ensuring prosperity for all* after a broad consultation with civil society groups, businesses and governments. These groupings and individuals subscribed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This is a 15-year development agenda with 17 specific goals to be achieved by 2030, with the interest of the ordinary person as its core. It is worth noting that the Agenda 2030 is an upgrade of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which sought to improve the lives of the poorest people in the world by 2015 using 8 achievable goals (MDG Achievement Fund, 2017). As the MDGs were not able to achieve its targets, the world body decided to expand its target to enable them achieve their objectives as against the strides made with the MDGs. The UN of which Ghana is a member purports that “for the goals to be reached, everyone needs to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and people like you” (United Nations, 2016a). The ‘people like you’ implies every living being, thus everyone has a role to play, in our bid to achieve those goals. This call for all hands-on deck is a magnanimous one that requires a multidisciplinary approach in the quest to achieve these targets.

The call by the UN for all to get involved is pragmatic and revealing. It is my quest to contribute to the achievements of these goals, that I explored a more participatory approach in disseminating information. In my approach, I infuse folklore into the dramatization of Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land), which

could serve as a model for devising the other global goals. Folklore as defined by The American Folklore Society(n.d.) is “the traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioural example.” Even though the American Folklore Society professes that folklore is largely communicated via oral communication and behavioural example, it is important to note that folklore transcends that, especially in these contemporary times, where material and written culture are key means of manifestation and communicating folklore. Some examples of written and material folklore include epitaphs, totems, masks and traditional letters (Dundes, 1965). Richard Dorson (1972) for instances argues that material culture is an integral part of folklore. He espouses on this idea with how traditional oriented homes are built, clothes are made, preparing food, and the design of furniture and utensils. Even though there is the tendency of some material and written cultures not to be classified as folklore, it is important to note that the means of transmitting these from one generation to another of a particular culture or groupings qualifies it as a folklore. Allan Dundes (1965) in his book *The Study of Folklore* gives some clearer perspectives on what should be classified as folklore and where folkloric materials can be sourced, the examples include but not limited to the following:

myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, riddles, chants, charms, blessings, curses, oaths, insults, retorts, taunts, teases, toasts, tongue-twisters, and greeting and leave-taking formulas. It also includes folk costumes, folk dance, folk drama (and mime), folk art, folk belief (or superstition), folk medicine, folk instrumental music, folksongs, folk speech, folk similes, folk metaphors, and names. Folk poetry ranges from oral epics, to autographs-book verse, epitaphs, latrinalia (writings on the walls of public bathrooms), limericks, ball bouncing rhymes, jump-rope rhymes,



finger and toe rhymes, dandling rhymes, counting-out rhymes and nursery rhymes. The list of folklore forms also contains games; gestures; symbols; prayers; practical jokes; folk etymologies; food recipes; quilt and embroidery designs; house, barn, and fence types; street vendor's cries; and even the traditional conventional sounds used to summon animals or to give them commands (p.3).

It is worth noting that folklore as an aspect of culture is core to the cultural identity of a nation. It is a medium used to transmit good tenets and practices from one generation to another and kept active by the people in their culture.

Folklore is an amalgamation of tales, stories, songs, games, myths, history, material culture, etc. of a particular community which is largely transferred through oral tradition, behaviour and written culture. A society that transfers its rich folklores from one generation to another fosters growth and development. Most of these stories, legends, songs, and games imbibe good tenets and attributes into the younger generations through play. It is believed that play is part of human and as such is a desire that continues throughout an individual's life (Lowe, 1988). Lowe, further notes that "play is not just a filling of an empty period, or just a relaxation or leisure activity, but it is an important learning experience" (1988, p. 7). This project took advantage of the concept of play<sup>1</sup> and conscientize the citizenry of the benefits of the SDG's and why all should be involved. Ghana can boast of several folklores, mention could be made of storytelling like Ananse stories, folk games like *Ampe*, *Tuumatu*, *Maame ni Paapa*, *Sansankroma*, *Aɲuti kple Atɔtɔ*, *Antru3kyer3*, *Piloloo*, *Oware*, *Chaskele*, *Tubɔ Tubɔ*, *Police and Thief*, *Kpiting3*, *Chemp3*, *Nkuro*, and *Stay for you* and folk songs like *Tuu! Tuu! Gbovi*, *Kyekye kule*, *Senwa Dedende*, *Yoomo ko hi shi*,

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of play is seeking to learn about self and others, while enriching oneself through experiences. As play is important to human development, it advances learning without a teacher. The benefits of play is exciting and spontaneous. These benefits are achieved behaviourally, socially and psychomotoric.

*Bambabaliika*, etc. These human development activities which are well crafted to advance learning without a facilitator, and can equally serve as a stimulus for devising a performance to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aforementioned.

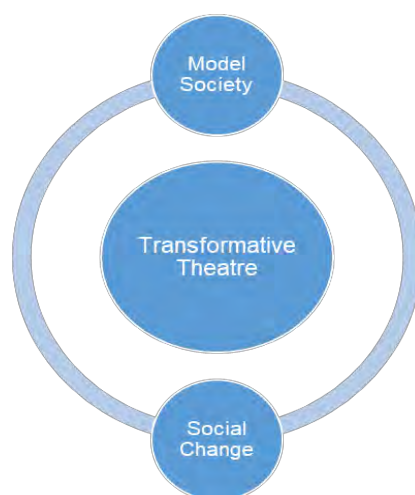
Devising (Devised Theatre) is one of the contemporary theatre approaches that have been developed in performance studies. It is an experimental theatre that focuses on research, improvisation and collaboration to create a performance. Asime(2015) defines Devised Theatre as “the creation of an original performance through the creative and collaborative works of an ensemble, with a well-defined source material.” The defined source material is not necessarily a published or certified document, but could be a painting, sculpture, book, article, theme, or a subject. The ensemble can be any interested participant who buys into the vision of the facilitator or is hungry for change. Devising is experimental in nature and allows all participants to contribute to the creative process. It is a collaborative creation where ensemble members are challenged to create out of *nothing*. The performative nature of Devised Theatre gives room for research, collaboration, originality, improvisation, and spectacle. The environment and its surrounding issues always guide members. From my perspective, it is more edifying than forum theatre and could serve as a constructive tool for propagating the SDGs in Ghana. The aim is to make sure that participants and audiences who will be compelled through intuition to propagate the goals to their friends and family appreciate Goals three (3), six (6), and fifteen (15).

I have experimented, participated and been commissioned to direct some performances of which Devised Theatre was used at the School of Performing Arts (SPA), University of Ghana. These include: *Facta Non Verba Reloaded*(Dartey, 2013), a Devised piece that used miming and Shadow Theatre as Stimulus, *Wise Up*(Dartey & Kunutsor, 2014), a devised piece on the environment; a commissioned work for visiting Clemson University Scholars, and *Body Words*(Dartey, 2014), a devised piece that relied heavily on improvisation, games and folk songs. The post-performance reflections and experience reveals people are connected to their

culture and easily identify with it, hence the need to use devising to propagate the SDGs in Ghana.

The focus group for this project included some youth members from La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA) in the Greater Accra Region. Some volunteers from the communities under this Municipality were engaged in devising the creative piece and performed to audiences from these same LaNMMA communities and other stakeholders. The selection of people from the LaNMMA community was because I wanted the issues and solution emanating from the people, as the participants are also being empowered to be advocates for the SDGs. The advocacy calls for a radical change, which must affect generations. This change and advocacy drive seeks to have an emotional attachment that will extend for more than twenty (20) years, hence the choice to engage the youth of the LaNMMA community. There is also the possibility of a ripple effect, where the folklores and activities learnt by the participants and members of the community who witnessed the performance especially the community youth will be played at school, and home with friends and family, hence heightening the advocacy.

## 1.2. Conceptual Framework – Transformative Theatre and Performance Effects



*Figure 1: Concept of Transformative Theatre*

The research is situated within the concept of transformative theatre as seen in figure 1 above. It seeks to apply theatre as a pedagogical tool towards self, socio-economic, and cultural

development. The concept of transformative theatre is hinged on the understanding and practice of theatre for its instrumental value. The instrumental value has to do with the impact that the performance has on the participants, as well as the audience. This impact has the tendency of modeling the society if the participants and audience are able to imbibe as well as put into practice what they learnt or acquired from the theatre/performance experience. This societal model has the prospects of provoking the society to change their ways of doing as theatre reenacts and professes ways of doing and what could make the place habitable for us, with respect to this project, how to keep the LANMMA Community clean and safe for us as SDGs 3, 6, and 15 professes.

The phrase “when the play ends, what remains?...when the play ends, what begins?” (Bharucha, 2011, p. 366) underpins the concept of transformative theatre. “Transformative theatre is rooted in the work of Augusto Boal who substantially developed the theory and practice of using public theatre to create social change” (Hughes et al., 2006, p. 294). Historically, the concept of transformative theatre can be traced to the advancement of Popular, Community and Political Theatres of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Stalwart theatre practitioners like Augusto Boal and Bertolt Brecht through their experimental theatre practices have been instrumental to the advancement of the concept of transformative theatre. Both Boal’s *Theatre of the Oppressed* and Brecht’s *Epic Theatre* were aimed at empowering actors, and audience to instigate social, and political change. Brecht holds the view that the arts should not only be used to reflect what society is, but also to model it. Theatre is thus engaged for its utility value and not necessarily for entertainment. This concept of theatre, as an inherent power to transform, is considered by (Western) postmodernist theatre practitioners as a new aesthetic (Ficher-Lichte, 2008). Transformative Theatre is synonymous with such terms as ‘theatricality’, and ‘performativity’, and well placed in Performance Studies.

In this project the concept of performativity is to translate performativity as daily behavior in professions, on the internet, the media, in the arts and in language. The concept of performativity covers the broader possibility of distinguishing media from live events, performing on stage from performing in ordinary life. The term increasingly covers the social, political, economic, personal and artistic realities that takes on the quality of performance. The framework will interrogate performativity and its contemporary social relevance from the discourse of post-modern, post-colonial and critical theory. This concept will be explored in the well-known work of Judith Butler, *Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*. Furthermore, the word performative in this work is used both as a noun and as an adjective. In the usage of performativity as a noun, it indicates a word or sentence that does something or what is referred as the doing approach. Then as an adjective, the word inflects what it modifies with performance like qualities. Largely, the concept of performance and performativity draws on Richard Scheners (2006) approach to performance studies. Schener defines how meaning is derived through perception during the theatrical act. Performance changes according to the content of the performance and also the character of the audience. Theatricality on the other hand is the non-textual elements of a theatrical play, that often become more important than the external language. This is evident in performance art<sup>2</sup>, especially where the text is not engaged, there still is evidence of performance.

Though the two terms, transformative and performative, are not entirely interchangeable, the understanding of the latter, reinforces the practicality of the former. Barbara Bolt in her article, *A Performative Paradigm for the Creative Arts*, stresses that

...the aim of the performative paradigm is to recognise and ‘map’  
the ruptures and movements that are created by creative

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<sup>2</sup> Performance art is a time based art form that has to be acted out in front of an audience. It is usually a live performance presentation to audiences, but in recent times the mode of performance varies as it could be live, recorded, scripted or improvised. These art forms could be drama, music, poetry, dance and painting.

productions. Here the work of art is not just the artwork/performance or event, but also the effect of the work in the material, affective and discursive domains (2008).

Furthermore, Igweonu & Okagbue posit that “African theatre and performance is functional. In other words, is not just entertainment, it is often geared towards fulfilling particular social or aesthetic function – hence, it is performative at its core”(2013, p. 2). The concept of transformative theatre can also be traced to many African ritual and cultural performances. Transformative theatre is also captured in applied theatre practices like, Theatre for Development, Theatre for Social Change and Theatre/Drama for Education.

The concept of “Performance Affects” in the thinking of James Thompson (2009) provides a rich, complex and theoretical set of ideas to this devised theatre performance. The project’s outcome could be considered as one modelling an applied theater outcome although the methodology takes on a devised approach. From the notion of Thompson (2009) Performance Affects, focuses on the aesthetics and politics of performance in sites of war, disaster, and crisis. *Chaskele* draws on environmental and sanitation issues as crisis that has befallen the capital of Ghana and the larger part of the country. The project further utilizes the idea of “disaster” to contend the existing political unwillingness and/or less proactive interventions from government and stakeholders to address environmental and sanitation menace that leads to loss of property and life annually. The aesthetic interrelations of this applied theatre has discovered that the ‘affective’ and beautiful is provocative and thus invites the realities of behavior reflexivity.

Performance Affects sought to remedy the widely held perception that contemporary theatre and performance in conflict zones ought to be understood primarily in terms of the effects it has on community development or social change. Whereas Thompson examines De Certeau’s concepts of “strategic” and the “tactical” to analyze the uneasy politics of a participatory project with child soldiers in the hills of Bindunuwewa who were subsequently massacred. *Chaskele* on the

other hand did not use the “strategic” and the “tactical” participatory approach to achieve “The End of effect” of theatre, and therefore aligned with the theoretical assumption that challenges the assumption that those who suffer need to tell their story of pain or speak of their trauma. By reason of this, the devised approach focused on theatre “affect” rather than “effect” and thus avoid the tendency to fix or predetermine intentions of participants. The author has updated my level of familiarity on the concept “affective turn’ in applied theatre practice and research by allowing me to pay attention to the experiential, sensory and, in broader sense interrelations. the author further problematizes the too easy use of trauma as a paradigm for dealing with peoples’ stories and narratives, thus implicitly assuming that telling stories must be a precondition for ‘healing’ or ‘relief’, whilst ignoring the culturally specific modes of coping.

Erika Fischer-Lichte, in her book, *The Transformative Power of a Performance: A New Aesthetics*, cites Beeman who argues that “a performance is intentional, and if successful it does cultural work in the world. It strives to affect human affairs. And as a transformational force, performance behaviour has the power to restructure social order”(2008, p. 9) This research thus sought to explore this transformative power of theatre to (re)structure social order to engender knowledge of the SDG’s among Ghanaians.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

There is often a yawning gap between policy and practice thus most people only hear of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on television, radio and other media. Hence, the appreciation and readiness of most stakeholders and individuals to work towards achieving the seventeen (17) SDGs has become a daunting task that requires other creative approaches such theatre, and music. Currently, the existing standard practice of revealing the realities and disseminating these goals is through workshops, public lectures, radio, and television, and these seem inadequate. This calls for an alternative approach such as getting the facilitator and team to

collaboratively contribute in finding ways to alleviate poverty, fight inequality and injustice, as well as tackle climate change and environmental degradation. Theatre has the efficacy of breaking language and cultural barriers, when used as a communicative tool. It appeals to our emotions, passions and prejudices as the engagement communicates with the whole person. Theatre forms like Theatre for Development, Drama in Education, Documentary Theatre, among others can be used to propagate these goals. In this study however, devising, a contemporary performance style is employed to propagate the SDGs. The devise process breaks down the complex ideas into minute tangibles as well as draw attention to the intangibles that also constitute the goals enablers. In this project, the combination of folklore and devising will be employed as advocacy and dissemination tools to educate people on the Global goals and get them involved for further action.

### **Purpose of the Study:**

To develop a creative process model for advocating the SDGs using a devised theatre approach with folklore as stimulus.



### **1.4. Objectives:**

The objectives of this study are:

1. Explore devised theatre as a tool for propagating the SDGs.
2. Identify processes and resources that effectively aid the propagation of the SDGs
3. Examine the participatory nature of devised theatre in community mobilisation
4. Assess the impact of folklore as a stimulus in devising.



### **1.5. Research Questions:**

The research questions for this study are:

1. How can devised theatre be used as an alternative tool for propagating the SDGs?
2. What innovative and effective processes and resources could aid in achieving the selected SDGs?
3. How participatory is devised theatre as a community mobilisation tool?
4. What is the impact of folklore as a stimulus in devising?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study:**

The transformative power of theatre has the ability to achieve the selected SDGs. In addition, it offers a communal environment, which fosters a sense of belonging, encouraging participants to be fully engaged. Hence the need to include the creative process

Another significance of the study is the use of folklore, which has the ability of making citizens value their worth and responsibilities. Folklore is used to enforce the SDGs reach all and sundry, thus for all to be aware of the Global call of ending poverty, protecting the planet and promoting peace and prosperity.

This study will also serve as a reference material for researchers, policy makers, industry players and students by contributing to literature in the area of alternative approaches to performance studies curriculum in Ghana.

### **1.7. Delimitation:**

Even though it would be interesting fusing all the 17 Global Goals into a performance, time and resources did not permit that, so the study limited itself to three goals, being *Good Health and Wellbeing* (Goal 3), *Clean Water and Sanitation* (Goal 6), and *Life on Land* (Goal 15). The message of the SDGs are meant for everyone, but for the purpose of this research, this project was restricted to the LaNMMA: where some members of these communities were part of the creative process of the devised piece. The study focused on the Madina in the Greater Accra Region because of its cosmopolitan nature and its challenges in the areas of sanitation, water, and environment. It is believed that the challenges mentioned above affects most part of the country, but the study was limited to the Madina community due to its cosmopolitan nature, time constraint and proximity to researcher and team. Although there are different performance styles, such as forum theatre, site specific, theatre for development, documentary theatre, commedia dell'Arte, children's drama, and devised theatre, meanwhile, the study used the devised theatre approach. This is because this style afforded the opportunity to create an original performance and offers opportunity to engage members of the community on issues pertaining to them.

### **1.8. Definition of Terms Used:**

**Devised Theatre (Devising):** Is the collective creation of an original theatre or performance that is conceived with the aid of a stimuli and giving a theatrical life through the equal collaboration of group of people (company).

**Stimulus:** Anything, which excites your imagination and sown the seeds of a piece of drama. It could be a piece of fiction or non-fiction, a poem, an object, a picture, a newspaper or web article, or a piece of music.

**Total theatre:** Is the amalgamation of different theatre and performance elements to create a complete production that excite moods by giving the audience overwhelming experience or

catharsis. These elements include; music, drama, mime, ritual, dance, film, multimedia, and advanced technological effects.

Experimental Theatre: It is a theatre type that is experimental and innovative in nature, and rarely follows the acceptable theatre conventions for writing and producing plays. This theatre type usually births new performance techniques and engages non-traditional storytelling modes.

### **1.9. Outline of Chapters**

This thesis project is segmented into six chapters. Chapter one – Introduction dealt with the introduction of the study. Chapter two – Review of Selected Related Literature introduced the concepts of devising, devising as a contemporary theatre, the one who leads in devising, the perspectives on improvisation and devised theatre, folklore, and advocating the Sustainable Development Goals through devised theatre by referring to literature on these five discourses and deconstructing the concept of development and sustainable development. Chapter three – Methodology presented a description of the research process and the stages of the research process. Chapter four – *Chaskele Production Process* presented a detailed production process; the outset, the core and the product for the research project. Chapter five – Analysis of Data presented an analysis of the research from the perspectives of performance analysis of the product and an analysis of the creative process. Chapter six – Conclusion and Model provided an integration of the research findings by providing a summary of the overall research, stating the limitations of the research and recommendations for future research. This chapter further presented details on how to engage the *Chaskele Devising Model*.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF SELECTED RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Introduction:

This Chapter seeks to review relevant literature on the topics on devising, folklore, and SDGs from the Ghanaian and Global perspectives. The first part of the Chapter presents the conceptual background on Devised theatre under the following sub strands Devising as contemporary theatre; Devising who leads? and Perspectives on Improvisation and Devised Theatre. Devised theatre is relevant to the study because it addresses the objective of study and the research approach. This study aims at identifying, describing and understanding the concept of devising and its relevance in contemporary theatre practice. The study focuses on using devising and folklore to promote the SDGs in Ghana.

Depending on who you communicate with, devised theatre seems to have numerous definitions making it possible for some theatre practitioners to look down upon it, partially as a result of the cacophony of voices that claim to be the best way to devise a piece of theatre. No matter where you sit on this issue, devised theatre does not appear to be going anywhere anytime soon. As it is unstructured, different companies use different approaches to begin a performance. Some engage the narrative driven approach while others use the character driven. Honing devised theatre as a novice is mostly challenging. The enterprise requires not only highly developed 'people' skills, but an understanding of the entire world of theatrical craft, from writing, to designing, to directing, to acting, and beyond. Owing to the above, there is the need for a leader to hone novices and professionals alike to make meaning of devising. This leader is no other person than a director; however, there is the quest to create a theatre, which hitherto will not conform to the statuesque.

Remember that the [theatre] director has already achieved the greatest degree of power he has ever had in history. And our aim is to move beyond that situation by creating a form of theatre where it will be possible for everyone to collaborate without there being directors, technicians, and so on, in the old sense. (Ariane Mnouchkine as cited by (Williams, 2005, p. 1)

It could be inferred from Mnouchkine that performance making has taken a different trajectory in contemporary times. These could be due to how creators, practitioners and companies want their creative works to be received by their audiences. Thus, audience performance reception has continued to influence some of the varied approaches in performance making. Performances such as Pantomime, Commedia dell'Arte, Documentary Theatre, Site Specific, Documentary Drama, and Devised Theatre are some contemporary forms of community arts, performance art, political theatre and live art used by practitioners in their creative enterprise. It is important to note that the production process of these theatre-making forms evolve and change based on certain specific relations and cultural context.

Devised theatre is one of such contemporary theatre making style used by many theatre companies and also taught as a key component in schools and universities across Europe, America and Australia (Heddon & Milling, 2006). Even though, devised theatre is widely practiced across most part of the world, there is still dearth of literature on the practice. Alison Oddey the mother of devising alludes to this assertion in the preface of her book *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* where she notes that “there was lack of information on the subject of devising theatre” (1994, p. xi). Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling corroborate these assertion ten years later in the introduction section of their book *Devising Performance: A Critical History*, where they also state that:

after what turns out to be surprisingly quick survey of books or articles that specifically concern themselves with this enduring and prevalent practice, it is apparent that very little has changed. Given

the widespread use of the mode of practice that we might call ‘devising’, it is curious that the conversation that Oddey hoped would result from the publication of her book has never really taken place (2006, p. 1).

Surprisingly, up until now, devising is not popular in Ghana (Africa) but some practitioners latently use it in their creative workshops under the disguise of experimental theatre. Practitioners like Efua Sutherland, Mohammed ben Abdallah, Yaw Asare and Nii Yartey who are noted for developing their creative works collaboratively with their groups engage extensively with the structures or elements of devising (this will be discussed later in this chapter). For them, even though the ownership is individual, there was the group collaboration and collectivism. The membership composition included performers, musicians and technical crew, who are engaged in the creative process from development<sup>3</sup> to execution, where their opinions are appreciated and implemented. Although, their activities espouse devising tendencies it will be difficult to classify their activities under devising as the forerunners used experimental theatre approach in their quest to theorise *Anansegoro and Abibigoro*.

This research project seeks to create a devised theatre model for promoting the SDGs using folklore as a stimulus. The outcome of the research could also be used as a pedagogical tool for advancing the discourse of devising, (especially where there is no existing script) in Ghana based on the process and the cultural milieu.

Devising and its practice is predominantly an engagement of United Kingdom, and other countries like America, Canada and Australia. Contemporary Theatre companies and its practitioners will be among the subjects of discussion in the next section.

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<sup>3</sup> It is worthy to note that these creators mostly have their draft, which they present to the group at the development stage for development based on their interpretations, feasibility and relevance. Most of them write their plays with their theme in mind and assign roles accordingly.

## 2.2. Devising as Contemporary Theatre:

In contemporary times, theatre making has metamorphosed, birthing different approaches, which mainly concentrate on the message and audience. These performances are advocacy and community focused and aims at contributing to the social capital of the people. Applied Theatre is the larger umbrella under which these advocacy and community-focused performances are used to transform humanity. Devising is a theatre that *usually* takes place in alternative, non-theatrical settings, working with audiences to confront an event, a legit issue or question (Taylor, 2003). These applied theatre practices have gradually found their way into theatre spaces through experimental theatrical forms, with devised theatre being one of the forms. The latter will be the subject of discussion in this section.

Devised Theatre or Collaborative Creation<sup>4</sup> stems out of a postmodernist thinking of theatre creation that seeks to push the boundaries of what traditionally constitutes theatre studies and practice (Dijk, 2011; Heddon , D., & Milling, 2006; J. Wilson & Manchester, 2012). Devised theatre has introduced a significant shift from the traditional text-based theatre which placed emphasis on a single authored play as a basis for making theatre to a much more collaborative approach; where all players in the theatre – actors, designers, directors, - are engaged equally with the creation of content and form of theatre. It is simply another approach to playmaking that collaboratively involves all participants. This thinking, that collaborative creation is informed by the ideals of consensual democratic practice, advocates a plurality of voices for the making of decisions (Asime, 2015). The need, to involve all players equally in the process of theatre making is also aimed at empowering all, and not just a select few. Premised on the assumption that there is no singular process for its creation as it applies to its outcome. The plainness to the manipulation of elements and mechanics of live performance in active experimentation during

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<sup>4</sup> Practitioners or Companies from the United States usually refer to Devising as Collaborative Creation or Collaborative Process. These terms can be used interchangeably meaning the same thing, but this research will stick to Devising or Devised Theatre.

creation to communicate the right message to the audience who are engaged is anchored on a devised approach. Devised theatre also opens up what can be used as source material for the making of theatre, aside a script. Whereas the traditional text-based theatre seemingly limits this to a scripted text, be it a play-text or novel, devised theatre allows for just anything to be used; a play-text, a prose, an image, an abstract concept, an object, a piece of music, a site, a poem, or a current topical issue (Dijk, 2011).

Owing to the above, this project also engaged with folklore as a vessel to promote the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, due to the personal attachment and sense of embodiment that devised theatre provides, it readily translates into a transformative power for both the creators and the audience.

The practice of devised theatre arguably became popular between the 1950s and 1970s with the political and cultural revolts in the West (R. H. Wilson, 2012). That said, devising could also be traced to some indigenous African theatre genres like storytelling and ritual theatre, both of which thrive on spontaneous creation and not bound to a text. Whereas the practice of devised theatre is catching on with many Western theatre companies and institutions, it is yet to gain much ground within the Ghanaian theatre space, especially in academic institutions. The United Kingdom (UK), Australia, and the United States (US) are noted to be the forerunners of Devised Theatre. For instance, *The People Show* is one of the oldest devising companies in the UK with about 120 original performances to its credit (Riccio, 2012). Other Western theatre companies and institutions have evolved overtime engaging devised theatre in creating their performances. Some of these groups from the UK include The Frantic Assembly; The People Show; Theatre de Complicité; Lone Twin Theatre; and Fevered Sleep. The United States also boast of Looking glass Theatre Company (Chicago); The Wooster Group (New York); Tectonic Theatre Project (New York); PUSH Theatre Company (Rochester); The Wooster Group (New York); Dog and Pony Devising Company (Washington); Forced Entertainment (Sheffield); Goat Island (New



York); and Third Angel (Sheffield). Radix; The Electric Company; Sidetrack Theatre; and Melbourne Workers' Theatre are other examples from Canada and Australia. There have been a few attempts made in the theatre institutions in Ghana to explore the practice and studies of devised theatre. These include Asime's research on the devising process, where he explored the practice of directing and collaboration in devised theatre (Asime, 2015). Also, a number of devised works have been produced in the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana, as Acting and Performance workshop classes. These include, *Facta Non Verba* (2012), *Wise-up* (2014), *Screams and Whispers* (2011), *Body Works* (2014), and *Samantaase Village* (2015). Elikem Kunutsor as an acting Tutor with the Department of Theatre Arts initiated and guided most of these workshop performances. With his background in Physical Theatre, I observed him encouraging his acting students to go beyond learning lines to creating their own content. Their final year projects were mostly original works based on their preferred themes or site-specific creation. *Unshelved*<sup>5</sup>(2012) is a typical example of a devised work that spurred my interest in devising, as I was part of the creative process as a stage manager. *Unshelved* is an autobiographical performance on self-discovery into what constitutes an individual. Lab DC<sup>6</sup> a group he was part of has also created their performance pieces using devised techniques, worthy of mention is *Snakes and/or Ladders* (2012).

Devising thrives within a communal spirit, which makes it very effective for the creation of community theatre. Its all-inclusive approach calls for the participation and recognition of all players in the theatre such as directors, actors, designers, and playwrights. Hence the need to engage it in community development as "Community theatre enriches the lives of those who take

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<sup>5</sup> *Unshelved* is a thesis project by Alfred Elikem Kunutsor, which he first performed at The Nunnery (Wits University) on 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> March, 2009. This performance was re-enacted twice at the ETS Drama Studio, University of Ghana, when he became an Acting and Directing Tutor in the University.

<sup>6</sup> Lab DC is a non-profit, intercultural and cross-cultural program of the School of Performing Arts, UG. It was initiated in 2012 by Petra Kron and developed with artists from Ghana, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Turkey and Germany. It is made up of students from the Departments of Music, Dance Studies and Theatre Arts of the University.

an active part in it, as well as those in the community who benefit from live theatre productions.” (American Association of Community Theatre, 2017). It is on this premise that this project seeks to engage devise techniques in promoting the SDGs in Ghanaian communities, as the views and perceptions of the community members are essential to the creation of the performance.

Devising is a contemporary creative approach, which involves research, collaboration, improvisation, workshop, etc. This approach cannot be classified as an eccentric aesthetic or a performance style, even though it engages in a collective. The possibility to defend one’s opinions is highly possible in devising, as it also allows team creativity within a framework, with the help of a mediator (Director) who reconciles imminent misunderstandings (Felseghi, 2017). The openness, transparency and level playing field in devising appeals for a cordial working environment, as the approach requires intimacy due to creative circumstances and existence. The performance output, which is usually an original production, is normally presentational rather than representational, as the creative team is actively engrossed in the process and product. It is difficult to understand Devised theatre if it is not appreciated contextually. Radosavljević Duška alludes to this notion when he says, “devising, therefore, must be understood by reference to its own context – as a term and a practice...”(2015). Felseghi demystifies the complexities in understanding devising by suggesting we look at devising from two perspectives:

aesthetic-methodology (which refers to the creative process, and to the script which is not pre-existent to the production) and political (as a revolutionary method, born under the auspices of a practice against the traditionalist ways of thinking in theatrical processes). In effect, no matter how apolitical an independent artistic group considers itself to be, their art will never be separated from politics (2017, p. 65).

From the above, devising could be perceived from two perspectives: aesthetic-methodology and political, without these, it would be difficult to appreciate the nuances of devising, as it is akin to some other theatrical techniques.

Alison Oddey (2017) as cited by Alexandra Felseghi notes that Devised theatre “is concerned with the collective creation of art and it is here that the emphasis has shifted from the writer to the creative artist” (p. 62). The collective creation of art by the collective is a juggle over ideas and aesthetics as there is no end to what feeds into a devised performance, which is usually created out of the banal of everyday life perceived by the collective.

The process and structure of devising can be exhilarating and terrifying owing to its milieu, which is very diverse and unending due the void of clear organizational model that creates limitations and boundaries. This if not curtailed has the tendency of making the devised process cumbersome leading to conflicting artistic opinions. The emptiness is real, as there is no script and boundaries. The emptiness that makes the journey laborious and frustrating usually results from poor structural planning. It is important to also note that conflict over ideas and aesthetics are common and valuable to the process as the team is not a perfect entity.

The characteristics, which makes devising distinct from other theatrical forms are well expounded by Tim Etchells’ as cited by Mia Perry (2010), where he notes that:

Key elements of devised theatre that differentiate it from other types of collective play creation include the commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities (specifically those of the creators involved), to multi- modalities (specifically lending equal weight to movement, sound and visual technologies as opposed to the traditional dominance of text), and by extension to performances that are not led by a “sing[ular] vision,” or an “authorial line”(p. 13).

The commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities details how devising opens up discourse when it comes to the creative process. The idea and subject do not offer an end in hand, where the creative team perceives the end of the product. The varied array of the team also influences what drives the team. A surrealist designer or actor will like a design based on that ideology, while a realistic director or writer will be looking for bulk objects to depict the ideas. The ability to harmonize these nuances into a concrete product is achievable through teamwork.

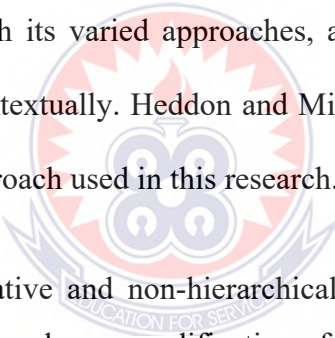
Devising is not restrictive to a type of medium; it rather encourages multiple-modalities such as the use of multi-media approach, which can be movement (including dance), sound, visual and creative technologies, symbols and other performance forms. This research project which aims at promoting the SDGs using devising, engaged key elements like movements, spoken word, folklore (storytelling, games, and songs), multimedia and documentary to produce the *Chaskele* performance.

The amalgamation of these creative varieties is the hallmark of devised theatre, even though recent scripted productions engage the use of multimedia. Perry Mia (2010) further expounds on what makes devising discrete from other traditional theatre forms. She notes that:

[I]ntertwined with circumstance, technology, and the dynamic of performance, the linear narratives of traditional theatre forms are rejected in devised theatre. In their place, narratives are often cyclical, disjointed, abstract, or conflicting. In this way, a devised theatre performance is reflective of lived experience and its attendant textualities considered holistically, rather than the Aristotelian story arc (that characterises classical and traditional theatre) that portrays stories as individual “truths” distinct from the myriad other stories inevitably starting and stopping and moving and interrupting around and within it (p. 15).

Devised theatre is not solely dependent on verbal text, as movements (use of physical bodies) also become a medium of expression intertwined with sound and visuals. The amalgamation of the diverse mediums like a collage makes devising have a unique dramaturgy. The collage technique is an aesthetic strategy that is largely used by devisers of which this research project applies. It is important to note that the output of this technique does not birth an independent script, rather a performance script. Owing to the complexities involved in its development, a successful devised performance has a unique way of satisfying its audiences. Mia Perry (2010) succinctly notes that “[w]hen successful, spectators will emerge from a performance provoked into thoughts, self-reflection and awareness of their own position of spectator and their own process of making meaning”(p. 16).

The seminal nature of devising, with its varied approaches, affords practitioners the space to explore and interpret the process contextually. Heddon and Milling’s perspective on devising is comprehensive and relates to the approach used in this research. To them, Devised Theatre is:



[A] model of cooperative and non-hierarchical collaboration; an ensemble; a collective; a de commodification of art; a commitment to total art; the negating of the gap between art and life; the embodiment of the death of the author; a means to reflect contemporary social reality; an escape from theatrical conventions; a challenge for theatre makers; spontaneous; experimental; non-literary (2006, p. 29).

This research project rode on the cooperative notion in assembling like-minded people, particularly, people concerned with their environment to collaborate, research, and create an advocacy performance that touches on the core societal issues and advocate ways to overcome them. As the need was to make sure SDGs are well understood and appreciated, cultural attachment was a must, of which element of folklore were engaged with in this project. With

regard to reflecting contemporary social realities, Alison Oddey suggests devised theatre as the driving wheel. She posits that:

Devised theatre is a contemporary reflection of culture and society. It is continually addressing new theatrical forms, making original contributions out of the existing interests and considerations of the time. It is about the relationship of a group of people to their culture, the socio-political, artistic and economic climate, as well as issues or events surrounding them. Devising allows for a constant re-definition of theatrical performance, and for work to begin from any starting point (1994, p. 23).

Inclined by my experience with devising along the path of being a teacher, a practitioner, a spectator and a researcher, my understanding of devised theatre has been enlightening over this period. Devised theatre as a division of applied theatre focuses on using experimental theatre approach to create an original total theatre<sup>7</sup> performance that prescribes and reflects contemporary social realities through the use of research, improvisation, unordered collaboration, design, rehearsals and reflection, through cooperative engagement of the people by a director who acts as a facilitator.

### **2.3. Devising – Who Leads?**

With the advent of Devised Theatre, there have been concerns over the (continuous) presence, and even much so, the significance of theatre director in a devised performance. This is under the precept of devised theatre being an all-inclusive creation. If devised theatre advocates a collective creation, then by argument, there is no need for a director, as the directing is to be done by an ensemble. The argument purports that the rise of devised theatre is the demise of the theatre director. Though this argument might sound logical in principle, it is problematic in

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<sup>7</sup> Total theatre is the amalgamation of different theatre and performance elements to create a complete production that excite moods by giving the audience overwhelming experience or catharsis. These elements include; music, drama, mime, ritual, dance, film, multimedia, and advanced technological effects.

practice. The role of the director has certainly not seen a decline but has been re-imaged for the purposes of devised theatre.

Directing is as old as the concept of play making. The playwright, even without staging a play, directs characters when writing a script. The playwright also directs the sequence of events. Thus, the art of directing is embedded in the art of script writing. Aside from this rather philosophical attempt to establish the genesis of directing, it is worth mentioning that directing also existed under different terminologies in the history of theatre studies and practice. Wilson (1994) notes that, “although the title, director, may have been new, the function of the director had always been present in one way or another” ( p. 128).

In ancient Greece, the ‘choragus’<sup>8</sup> functioned like a director. The ‘choragus’, who was the head of the chorus, often directed and coordinated songs and movements of the chorus. In the Roman era, wealthy citizens organized performances, and these wealthy citizens functioned like directors. The mediaeval era brought with it the ‘master of secrets’ who oversaw special effects in the theatre. The keeper of the register, also in the same era, kept a copy of the master script. However, the function of the director evolved later in the Elizabethan era, with the rise of the actor-manager. Notable among the British actor-managers of that era is David Garrick. He was an actor-manager of the Dury Lane Theatre from 1746 to 1776. His achievements include ending the practice of wealthy citizens sitting on the stage while performance was ongoing. He also advanced the practice of natural acting, as well as the importance of scenic design.

However, these attempts by contemporary directors to directing had a common limitation. They were more of administrative and managerial rather than the artistic creation of performances. They could not unify all elements in the theatre for performances, hence the search for an entity in the theatre that would be able to unify all the elements that had become prevalent. The 20th

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<sup>8</sup> Choragus is a term used to describe wealthy persons who took up roles of producers or financiers of dramatic performances in ancient Greece.

century, noted as the century of the director, created the role of the director as a central independent individual in the theatre. As Wilson (1994) notes, "It was towards the end of the nineteenth century that the term director came into common usage and the clearly defined roles of the director was first recognized" (p. 128). George II (1826-1914), Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, is recognized as the father of modern directing. His practice of directing unified "every element of his theatrical productions – rehearsals, scenic elements, and other aspects – coordinating them into an integrated whole"(E. Wilson, 1994, p. 128). He took an interest in historical drama, emphasized accuracy and realism – particularly in costumes, settings, and pictorial style – and had long rehearsal hours. George II also gave value to directing and "revealed the creative contribution to be made by a single autocrat in charge of production". (Cole, Toby & Chinoy, 1953, p. 1)

The evolution of directing did not end with the 20th century even though it is noted as the century of the director. The end of the 20th century and the period after World War II birthed a new group of directors: the 'auteur-director'. There began a shift in the role of the director from merely interpreting a playwright's work, to a director as a creative artist and the author of the performance. 'Auteur' in French translates as author. The term was used to describe the works of some French filmmakers. Francois Truffaut first introduced the term in his essay, *A Certain Tendency in French Cinema* (1954). Critics and practitioners have argued that film directors were the authors of the creative films. Thus, viewers get to see the point of view of the director, not the scriptwriter. The Director's vision is what is brought to bear through his creative interpretations and unique identity or style of which some theatre directors practice in recent times. Bradly and Williams, as cited by H.R. Wilson (2012), argue that "in today's theatre – or at the time of writing in 1988 – the director is the main creative force" (p. 10). It is crucial to note that the role of the stage director had evolved from transferring a script onto the stage, to



becoming the author of the performance on stage. Hence, the theory of the author-director, which started in French cinema, has caught up with stage directors. E. Wilson (1994) argues that:

The term [auteur] has since been used to apply to a type of stage directors as well. I am not speaking here of directors who simply alter the time or place in which the action occurs, but retain the original script – the playwright’s words, the sequence of scenes, and so forth. I am speaking rather of directors who make drastic alterations in or transformations of the material. Once the director had become a full-fledged member of the creative team, some directors took the responsibility for shaping every element in the production, including the script (p. 135).

Notably, avant-garde directors like Vsevolod Meyerhold, Jerzi Grotowski, Peter Brook and Robert Wilson have contributed largely to the establishment of the author-director. Wilson asserts that, “the script was only one of many aspects that Meyerhold used for his own purpose. He would rewrite or eliminate text in order to present his own version of the material” (1994, p. 135). Thus, whereas modern – before World War II - directors served the purpose of the script, the script served the purpose of post-modern – after World War II – thus ‘auteur –directors. The latter considered the script as the least essential element in the production.

A more prominent auteur-director, and perhaps the most contemporary devised theatre director is Robert Lepage. As a theatre director, “Lepage creates from intuition, asking his performers to be free to ‘write’ their text through associations, spontaneous discovery and playing with resources, accepting that meaning comes after the fact.” (Dundjerovic, 2009, p. 40) This freedom to create given to the performers does not necessarily imply that Lepage does not get to direct the performance. Rather it presents a creative and a much more collaborative way of weaving the performance, with Lepage harnessing the creative pieces into a whole. “Lepage sees himself as facilitator and editor, and although Lepage and more established members would have more input, decision making is always a collective process of the production team” (Dundjerovic,

2009, p. 46). The key element that makes devised theatre unique and democratic is decision making. When it comes to taking decision, all are involved in this process, as it is meant to benefit the collective.

The idea of directing a devised performance requires that the director relinquish the traditionally held views of having the final say, when compelling the cast to do what he/she wants, but assumes a facilitating role. Dymphna Callery explains the role of the director as a facilitator in her book, *Through the Body where she observes that* “devising is rooted in the concept of the creative actor developing ideas from tasks. Usually, the director translates ideas into tasks (which may be games or improvisations)” (2001, p. 165). Sara Amini, the Artistic Director of Seemia Theatre corroborates the important role of the director in devised performance by noting that a director helps in avoiding “wasting lots of energy and ideas of the team which leads to not being able to make a coherent piece of work” (Amini, 2020). Her working experience over the years with traditionally structured theatre companies and ensembles made her come to the conclusion that “the creative team of a theatre company needs to have someone as a director, or let (sic) say the outside-eye” (Amini, 2020). This person leads and creates an avenue for equal opportunities for all members of the ensemble of which the director is a member.

This understanding of directing in devised theatre was applied to the creating of all performances in this project. As the director, I encourage group participation at all levels and times in the production process. Using a workshop approach, my work mainly was to facilitate group discussions, and assigned group and individual works for the team.

In Lepage’s theatre, “the creative process typically begins with group brainstorming sessions, which are often followed by individual drawings of the performer’s impressions on the starting resource, and extensive individual improvisations that produce a number of scores” (Dundjerovic, 2009, p. 51). It is important to equally prioritize and respect the views of the creative team, as you work against any form of a vertical hierarchical structure, and allowed for a

consensual democratic environment when it comes to decision-making. This service-oriented approach to directing in devised theatre is highlighted by Rémy Charest in a conversation with Robert Lepage. In this conversation, Robert Lepage (1998) points out that directing is not;

[T]he sole property of the director. With our approach, it comes out of a collective effort. When we rehearse with actors, we discover and uncover the play. When I direct, my approach is closer to that of a student than that of a teacher. I think this is what makes the play continue to evolve right until opening night and even beyond it (p. 167).

Lepage's main goal when directing in a devised theatre, is to be able to create an environment that his performers can reach out into the (un)known and recreate a sense of self and other. He hopes for his performers to approach the creative process as a journey of discovery. The directorial approach in this creative enterprise has been to put team first by creating a safe environment to harness courage and trust. The Director's role in harmonizing ideas and vision through collective creation is achieved through being sensitive to the needs of the team as a collective, and making room for creativity and challenges.

The collective creation process in the milieu of endless creativity with the director as a facilitator is worked out through collaboration; the director set out tasks for the ensemble, who through games and improvisation, develop moments of performances. The next section will focus on improvisation and its usage in performances narrowing down to devised theatre.

#### **2.4. Perspectives on Improvisation and Devised Theatre**

Devised Theatre employs a 'create-as-you-go' approach to theatre making. Although research is a bedrock in devised theatre, spontaneity is a central driving force in the creation of performance moments. This need for spontaneity could imply then that devised theatre is improvised theatre. Whereas devised theatre and improvised theatre do share a key commonality, being

improvisation, the two are not necessarily the same. This section will focus on discussing some perspectives on devised theatre and improvisation, and highlight the role of improvisation in devising.

According to Zaunbrecher (2011), improvisation can be viewed either as a “category of action or a method of action” (p. 49). The former perspective on improvisation (as a category of action) relates to humans’ innate responsive nature to do things, to bring things into being, or react spontaneously to situations. The second perspective, a method of action, is what is central to the theatre. In this sense, improvisation can be viewed through many lenses; as a concept, a practice, a form of theatre, or a pedagogical tool. Improvisation is essential in the traditional text-based theatre making, where actors and directors use improvisation techniques to build and develop character by exploring a character’s backstory or subtext in a script. Stanislavski’s *Magic If*<sup>9</sup> makes use of this improvisation technique. During performances, a performer will improvise to keep the performance going when things go otherwise. This use of improvisation is more of a skill, required to ‘keep-the-ball-in-the-air’. David Alfred Charles in his PhD dissertation *The novelty of improvisation: towards a genre of embodied spontaneity* highlighted that, “improvisation has often been viewed and valued in terms of its service and resemblance to scripted traditions of theatre, [however] such a stance seriously undermines the significance and impact of this global performance modality.” (2003, p. vii) Improvisation as a method of action, as practiced in the theatre, goes beyond its practice in text-based theatre. As a pedagogical tool, improvisation “is used in classrooms and businesses as a way to develop communication and brain-storming skills. It is sometimes used in psychotherapy as a tool to gain insight into a person's thoughts, feelings and relationships” (Popescu & ANPCDEFP, 2013, p. 1).

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<sup>9</sup> *Magic If* is a technique developed by Stanislavski to develop actors’ imaginations in order to for them to discover new and interesting findings about the character they are play.

There is more to improvisation than the rehearsing of scripts or performers using improvisatory techniques to save a failing performance, as the bases of improvisation are induced imagination and spontaneity.

In actor training programs, improvisation is a key resource. To enhance a sense of spontaneity, actor-training programs sometimes resort to improvisational exercises aimed at making acting students think, create and perform on the go. Van Dijk (2011) asserts that, “in actor training and rehearsal, improvisation is an extremely powerful tool and serves a variety of purposes. It can be used to develop a quick response to unforeseen situations, to find an element of surprise, or to make an audience laugh”(p. 23).

As a form of performance, improvisational theatre (improv theatre) performers present performances before an audience without a prior rehearsal. Zaunbrecher (2011) defines improv theatre “as the deliberate use of improvisational methods in a performance that manifests in the context of a dual matrix of immanence—that of the audience's gaze to the performers and of the performers' bodies to the audience.” (p. 49). This use of improvisation largely informed the development of the Italian Commedia dell'arte<sup>10</sup> (Allain & Harvie, 2006; Schmit, 2010). Beyond Commedia dell'arte, experimental theatre practitioners, especially devised practitioners have advanced the use of improvisation for the creation of performance, where they have developed improvisational techniques and exercises (Allain, Paul and Harvie, 2006).

In devised theatre, improvisation serves mainly as the wheel for content creation. It is the main instrument used for creating content during collaborations. Van Dijk (2011) mentions that “the overall function of improvisation in a devising process is: to probe and realise the point of departure (stimuli) in time and space”(p. 23). By ‘probing and realizing’ the stimuli, the ensemble explores their research outputs into performance moments. This is often done with

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<sup>10</sup> Commedia dell'arte is a theatrical form characterized by improvised dialogue and a cast of colourful stock characters that emerged in Italy in the fifteenth century and has gained popularity as a theatre tradition.

improvised movements, songs, games, text, and/or multimedia installations. Dymphna Callery (2001) expounds that “devising [is] rooted in the concept of the creative actor developing ideas from tasks; usually the director translates ideas into tasks which may be games or improvisations” (p. 225). During devising, the performers are not expected to produce a polished content, but explore limitless theatrical possibilities, relying on their sensory experiences, intuitions, reasoning, emotion, and playful selves. “Elements in every successful improvisation are the diverse understandings that people will bring to it, along with the misunderstandings of others’ intentions, or the accidental or unintentional words, sounds, gestures, or actions” (Perry, 2010, p. 82). According to van Dijk (2011), engaging with improvisation in devised theatre to create performance content “requires a heightened state of readiness from the actors, welcoming and exploring every conceivable possibility” (p. 24). This perspective on improvisation requires performers to be swiftly responsive to their surroundings, as the inquiry process takes place in different levels (physical or personal). Mia Perry enhances this notion, where she states that “[i]mprovisation can take inquiry beyond the realm of recognition and confirmation, and into a smooth space of encounter and discovery (2010, p. 81). A number of devised theatre companies have advanced improvisation models such as The Viewpoint Technique, Moment Work, Action Theatre, and Collage Technique.

## **2.5. Folklore in Perspective**

This section discusses and highlights on the impact of folklore for development, by drawing examples from post-independence Ghana to show how folklore has been (and can be) a crucial sustainable development enabler.

Under this section is also a reaction to the general hypothesis that: mankind’s problematic relationship with the environment has, in recent times, elicited strategic ways of making the earth a liveable place. How can we use our cultural knowledge to live sustainably without causing harm to the environment? Do we have the requisite knowledge to increase and or maintain

sustainability for current and future? These questions challenge us to search for alternative answers within our cultural and traditional knowledge repository. The dynamism of knowledge has presented options that the answer to these questions may have come from a knowledge body, which is uniquely different from modern science but can phenomenally contribute to the scientific field. From my observation, folklore is a contributing element to the building of Ghana, it can provide alternative ways of solving the world's environmental challenges, and as well contribute to sustainable development. The chapter starts by defining the concept of folklore, and how it has shaped minds to building a strong Ghanaian identity for effective developmental initiatives.

### **2.5.1. Folklore in Contemporary Ghana**

The term folklore is contentious, as the determination of a conceptual definition is still evolving, as it is difficult to come up with an all-encompassing definition for a better appreciation (Collins, 2015). The term, as suggested by Alain Gobin in Collins(2015) is 'imprecise and ambiguous'. This ambiguity makes the field of folklore problematic to find its mode in academic institutions as a grounded discipline to be appreciated by many institutions. Bendix (1997) espouses that "the effort to invoke disciplinary contours has been a constant" challenge. Nonetheless, folklore is the backbone to the survival of many traditional cultures in the world. The term 'folklore' gained disciplinary attention in England around the 19th century after W. J. Thom's coinage in 1846 as a replacement for 'Popular Antiquities or Popular Literature'(S. Burne in Collins, 2015; Kuwor, 2017; Thoms, 1965) which literally 'means learning of the people'(Burne, 1914). After Thom's coinage, folklore soon gained popularity in the 20th century, often in competition with anthropology and ethnology.

Folklore is an aspect of culture that focuses on creative expressions which happens to be part of the day to activities of humans. Folklore encapsulates oral traditions (thus music, dance and narratives), belief systems, customs, practices and crafts of a particular group of people

comprising the cultural traditions (Heavy Music Artwork, 2019). Sanja Magdalenić article in the second edition of *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace, & Conflict* espouses on how through cultural expressions folklore shapes and disseminates a shared identity (2008). The cultural identity of an individual or a group of people is very important when one endeavours to foster change or model society and folklore is one vehicle that can be used in this regard. In providing a post-modernist representation of identity to this project, and more closely to the ideas of Stuart Hall, the thinking of cultural identity will be presented in two ways. The first position which is founded on a post-colonial representation considers cultural identity in terms of a shared culture, a shared history and a collective belief which a people of an ancestry hold in common. In this view, national and ethnic identity is aroused by means of territorial ties that reflect common historical experiences such as festivals, and a shared code (religion) which provides a sense of 'one people'. Under the post-colonial assumption, identity is well-thought-out to be stable, unchanging and with a continuous frame of reference and meaning regardless of the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.

There is, however, a related but different view of cultural identity in the post-modernist sense, which qualifies, even if it does not replace, the first. This second position recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are', and/or 'what we have become'. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways



we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. It is only from this second position that this study properly situates one's experience, identity and representation. By reason of the nature in this participatory theatre and its aesthetic interrelations to 'performance affect', the production acknowledged the differences and discontinuities that constitute and precisely shape the 'uniqueness' of individual, cultural and national identity representation.

Collins noted that the controversy of defining folklore is evident in the ongoing power dynamic between Europe and the Global South as a result of negative connotation ascribed to the latter by the former. Countries of the Global South inadvertently find it difficult to protect their folklore at the international level (Collins, 2015). Although this chapter recognizes the inherent definition in the term folklore, it is however, not focus on discussing the conceptual barriers in details. Rather, the focus is to discuss a more generalized usage of the term 'folklore' and adopt a more generalised term as the intellectual tradition of a society that is transmitted in oral form. It is the identity of the people in a given community or areas. Folklore operates within the intangible cultural heritage that is the customs, beliefs, stories, riddles, festival, music, dance, and as well tangible culture. Having set the tone for folklore, is it relevant to now turn to the Ghanaian context of folklore and its impact on development.

### **2.5.2. Ghanaian Folklore and National Development**

In the Ghanaian context, folklore is defined as "the literary, artistic and scientific expressions belonging to the cultural heritage of Ghana which is created, preserved and developed by ethnic communities of Ghana or by an unidentified Ghanaian author"(D'Auria, 2009; *Copyright Act, 2005*, 2005). This definition captures the artistic creations of an ethnic community that has ordered its ways of living. It also recognizes the individual creation of works that are rooted in cultural traditions.

Ghana is endowed with a rich tradition spanning from different ethnic groups across the country; these traditions have maintained the order of societies in situ. Kwame Nkrumah remained a central figure in the discursive development of folklore in Ghana. He envisaged that it is through folklore that Ghana's development could be solidified. To him, folklore contained knowledge for developing Ghana (Kuwor, 2017). His speech during the commissioning of the Institute of Africa studies put Ghanaian culture and heritage at centre stage in Ghana's development. According to Kuwor, Nkrumah asserted that "one essential function of this institute must surely be to study the history, culture and institutions, languages and arts of Ghana and of Africa in new African centred ways" (2017). This statement inspired the creation of Ghana Theatre Movement. The aim of establishing this movement was to use Ghanaian folklore to bring people from diverse ethnic groups together, to share a unique Ghanaian heritage and pursue development. The formation of a national dance company and resident theatres to research and promote Ghanaian heritage in Ghana and beyond the borders of Ghana and Africa was a classic example of this idea.

Within the theatre and performance circles of Ghana, folklore has enjoyed considerable attention. Efua Sutherland, who emerged as one of the great idiosyncratic playwrights of post-independence Ghana 'constructed modern theatrical aesthetic' with performances that were rooted in Akan heritage (Collins, 2015). These ideas set the artistic grounds where future playwrights picked ideas for developing their stories and plays. Writers like Ola Rotimi have indicated that, it was largely through Sutherland's investigation that her drama studio was opened in the 1960s as a centre for vigorous experimentation [and] developing artist (Rotimi, 2007). Efua Sutherland's interest in experimental theatre by creating an identifiable form of Ghanaian theatre'(Collins, 2015) coincided with Nkrumah's vision for a new unitary national identity. Their visionary marriage of ideas, arguably, opened a development door for Ghana to enjoy meaningful attention within global politics and development.

The creation of Ghanaian/national identity not only brought (or brings) about pride but also serves as a reminder for Ghanaians to revisit local traditions and heritage if development is to be achieved. Nkrumah and Sutherland saw that national identity is held within a collective view, enacted through drama, dance, music, and storytelling, and it is within these performances that our forebears nurtured and groomed the young. As such, they envisioned that investment in folklore would propel Ghana's developmental initiatives. This positioned folklore as a crucial resource for both politicians and artists to have a level-headed pragmatic interaction, for the unitary Ghanaian identity. Through art, every ethnic group finds affinity with artistic works that are performed within diplomatic environments. The represented art form becomes the mouthpiece within larger interactive circles, thereby informing oneness and development. It is within this narrative of development that inspires this thesis to revisit folklore to impact development.

## **2.6. Advocating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through Theatre**

This section espouses on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by primarily examining its mandate, as well as reviewing how theatre can be used as a wheel to champion this course, especially devised theatre. The concept of development will be explored to advance discussions on sustainability.

### **2.6.1. Development:**

The concept of development has been an elusive subject, which births varying interpretations, which are largely influenced by one's perspective in engaging with it.

To some development partners and institutions, the true objective of societal improvement should be hinged on the fulfilment of the basic needs of humanity (Shah, 2013). The pursuit to satisfy the basic needs of humanity requires what is termed as development, which from my

perspective undergirds the medium that can be used to answer the questions of disparity and progress in the human race.

Under critical analysis, it would be discovered that the needs of a group of people, the poor, might be a want or a liability for another group of people who fall under the category of the rich, even though citizens are supposed to share in the national cake. Schumacher (1973) alludes to the above assertion in a reverse order where he succinctly notes: “It will not go on mechanically, saying: 'What is good for the rich must also be good for the poor.' It will care for people - from a severely practical point of view. Why care for people? Because people are the primary and ultimate source of any wealth whatsoever...”(p. 116). Inherently, class status causes a lot of disparity in society, which is not supposed to be, as the basic needs of a society should be paramount.

This requires the concepts of equity, which comes to the fore when delving into the lifestyle of humans, with shared national identity but with different backgrounds and needs. Cultural variation is one aspect that pushes for equity because a people’s difference lies in culture and identity.

Ahenkan and Osei-Kojo’s undertaking to finding an authentic definition for development, cites Todaro and Smith definition of development in their article *Achieving Sustainable Development in Africa: Progress, Challenges and Prospects* as “the process of improving the quality of all human lives, which focuses on three important aspects: raising people’s level of living, creating conditions conducive to the growth of people’s self-esteem, and increasing people’s freedom” (2014, p. 163). It can be adduced that improving human life is a process, which should focus on raising the standard of living, then improving one’s self-esteem within the framework of freedom. Although the ability to achieve such growth seems very basic, it is fundamentally difficult to attain same growth due to disparities in individual needs and cultural orientation.

Bellu's holistic explanation of development as cited by Ahenkan and Osei-Kojo (2014) is "the improvement, either in the general situation of the system, or in some of its constituent elements, which may occur due to some deliberate action carried out by single agents or by some authority pre-ordered to achieve improvement, to favourable circumstances or both" (p. 163). Bellu sees development as a means of improving a general situation or some of its constituent elements. In his view, development is providing the needs of a community. It is necessary to problematize his position and ask key question. How is the need provided? Who dictates what the needs are? Does the least person in the society have a say in this? Is development mainly the provision of roads, goods, amenities, money, etc. If the just mentioned is the case, then this is a superficial means of addressing developmental issues as it does not eliminate, but rather becomes cyclical, leading to waste of resources, as the canker continues to occur. "The purpose of development should be to develop man and not to end with developing things"(Shah, 2013). Hence my inclination to E. F. Schumacher's explanation of development in his book *Small is Beautiful*, are noted when states that "Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization, and discipline. Without these three, all resources remain latent, untapped potential"(1973, p. 115). Development requires a process of evolution, and this process of evolution must manifest itself in education, organization and discipline. This is the only caveat for sustainable development. "Education does not 'jump'; it is a gradual process of great subtlety. Organization does not 'jump'; it must gradually evolve to fit changing circumstances [as] much the same goes for discipline. All three must evolve systematically, and the foremost task of development policy must be to speed this evolution. All three must become the property not merely of a tiny minority, but of the whole society"(Schumacher, 1973, pp. 115–116).

This can be realized when the approach to be used engages and empowers a group of people in a society considered marginalised. It is worthy to note that the variety of development we have experienced has largely been a top-down approach where there is little possibility of popular

participation and decision-making (Shah, 2013). It is important to use the down-up approach, where the locals have a say in finding solutions to the challenges in their society. The collective inclusion of the ordinary births indigenous means of providing solutions, which become part of the community, hence enhancing culture.

From the above discourse, it could be adduced that the path to developing a society is through the use of what they identify themselves with, what they believe in, and what they pride themselves with.

Development should be a process, which brings transformations in people's welfare. This transformation should be systematic in order to facilitate a continued well-being. Owen Barder is his article *What is Development* proposes that "development consists of more than improvements in the well-being of citizens, even broadly defined: it also conveys something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for that well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis" (2012). Which means that development should not be only measured quantitatively but it "must be judged by its impact on people, not only by changes in their income but more generally in terms of their choices, capabilities and freedoms; and we should be concerned about the distribution of these improvements, not just the simple average for a society"(Barder Owen, 2012).

For development to be sustainable there is a need to keep a charge that promotes inclusivity and sensitivity in all facets of one's life. These fabrics are embedded in our culture, hence the need to use our culture to educate, entertain and inform. The section below sheds light on what sustainable development is, as well as the need to make all 17 SDGs known to all.

### **2.6.2. Sustainable Development:**

Sustainable Development is defined in the Bruntland Report as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own

needs.” This pragmatic development strategy does not make room for compromises, but gives credence to the needs of the next generation. It works to sustain the needs of the future generation without forgetting the present. This is amplified by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development which notes that Sustainable Development is a “development path along which the maximization of human well-being for today’s generation does not lead to the decline in the well-being of the future generation”(OECD, 2001). It could be inferred that the needs of the future and current generations with respect to their welfare and well-being must be given the same credence.

Ahenkan and Osei-Kojo (2014) suggest that for Sustainable Development to be attained, “there must be conscious efforts towards friendly environmental practices. This must be practiced in tandem with improved health, [wellbeing] and sanitation” (p. 167). Their suggestion resonates with Jeffery Sachs’ teachings on *Transformations* within the SDG’s. These teachings underpin the practical details of the SDGs as has been simplified into 17 goals.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) created the SDGs, which is a universal call for action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (United Nations, 2016b). 193 countries unanimously adopted this clarion call in 2015 to make sure that no one is left behind, while paying attention to the poorest and excluded in society (United Nations, 2016b). The objective of the SDGs is prioritized under this broad framework *Prosperity, People and Planet* or *Economic, Social and Environmental*(Michon & Machano, 2020). The policy framework can be holistically achieved if the tenets are imbibed in our way of life as well as enshrined in the development agendas of respective countries that is making sure that local communities lead the path of development.

Jeffery Sachs, The Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and an SDG Advocate under current UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has deconstructed the 17 SDGs and 169 targets into 6 broad areas, which he classifies as Transformations. These transformations

are Education, Skills and Jobs; Health and Wellbeing; Clean Energy and Industry; Sustainable land use; Sustainable Cities and Digital Revolution (EdX, 2019).

Addressing the above transformational agendas will seem like the UN objective is broad, unrealistic, and likely not to make much impact like the Millennium Development Goals. It is important to note that this time the world leaders gave cognizance to the peculiar issues of member countries. Thus, in addressing the goals, one needs to focus on what one lacks and address it accordingly.

For example, in Bangladesh, the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), an independent research organization, showed in its research that “among the 17 SDGs - 8 goals are better integrated in the existing national prioritization processes and about 20 per cent targets are not currently reflected in national list of priorities.”(Ali, Muhammad Mahboob, Hossain, Md Kamrul, Chowdhury, ABM Alauddin, Neselea, 2017) In Ghana, the SDGs have been integrated into the national development agenda (United Nations, 2016b). The CSOs Platform works in conjunction with the office of the president to prioritize the focal areas, as Ghana and Norway play an active part in the implementation; its leaders are the chairs of the Eminent Group of SDGs Advocates. (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

The mandate calls for universal action among governments, business and Civil Society to make sure poverty is eradicated and creates an opportunity and a dignified life for all (Ali, et al, 2017). The authorities are mandated to ensure that the voices and visions of all citizens are given the needed attention by all stakeholders. In terms of awareness creation, the Voluntary National Review 2019 report of the Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform notes that:

Ghana is implementing a communication strategy to increase awareness. Media sensitization and target engagements have been held with school children, street children, young people, market



women, artisans, Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), commercial drivers and farmer groups (United Nations, 2016).

The above suggestions by the Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform outlines the communication strategies that are being used by Ghana to promote the SDGs. Interestingly, Bangladesh is using diverse communication strategies to promote the SDGs in the country. The research findings by ECOFORUM note that;

... groundbreaking commercial ideas among the poor people have been generous new height and diversities of creation like arts and handicrafts, folk songs, folk dance, Skills development programs for youth living with disabilities, farming, livestock, water and sanitation, Community Theatre, nursery and botanical garden, multimedia and creativity etc., which is highly well-matched and maintainable. (Ali, et al, 2017)

The Bangladesh strategy brought to the fore the advocacy being pushed in this research, where theatre and other cultural activities are used to promote the SDGs. This project does not aim at downplaying the role of other communication mediums being used by the implementing bodies but brings to the fore the efficacy of theatre as a communicating medium. From the Bangladesh experience, it can be concluded that theatre as a communicating tool has the ability to advance language and cultural barriers, and can make a positive impact when used as a propagating tool for advocating the SDGs.

Alex Shoebridge, and Kristine Najjar (2020) in their article *From Radio to Theatre, bringing the Voices of Youth to Centre Stage in Lebanon* expound on the impact of theatre in the quest to roll out the 2030 Agenda in Lebanon;

We knew that engaging the public – especially youth – would be critical. As part of our approach, we didn't want to come in with any pre-developed solutions, but rather let young people provide the answers, even pose the questions. We wanted to enable youth-generated evidence that could be shared with policy makers and linked to national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda (2020).

Their intended objective was articulated through theatre, where the playback theatre technique was employed - “a type of improvisational and interactive theatre in which people tell stories about their lives and watch them being enacted on the spot – helped people narrate the issues, such as corruption in hiring, and gender discrimination in all aspects of daily life”(Shoebridge & Najjar, 2020).

The Theatre approach offered the youth an opportunity to create and share their experiences while finding a common ground. This approach offers the UN and its implementing partners, the prospect of learning from the young people. One major takeout from the Lebanese group with their use of theatre was “the need to focus on lifelong learning opportunities for families to support the development of youth”(Shoebridge & Najjar, 2020). Theatre can be used to demonstrate the essence of community action to achieve sustainable development. Nik Sekhran, the Director for Sustainable Development, UNDP notes that the “UNDP believe that no one actor – not governments, not companies, not cities and not NGOs – can achieve the SDGs alone. We also believe that local action will be an essential component to achieve the goals” (Sekhran, 2020).

Theatre has ability to be used to discuss delicate issues, which cannot be discussed or dealt with through other communicating tools. Tim Prentki and Claire Lacey note that:

Many sensitive issues, which may be too delicate or dangerous to discuss openly, can be explored through the use of drama. Playing the role of a different character allows people to say things that would not be possible in their own voices. Humour can sometimes help to share difficult or sensitive issues in ways that do not cause offence... Theatre can sometimes provide several alternatives in the story with their resulting consequences, rather than providing any one definite solution. This can encourage people to think through the alternatives and consider how they, personally, would respond (Prentki & Lacey, 2020).

Theatre as a sustainability enabler is feasible, especially when visiting facilitators finish their work. “Wherever possible, people within the community should be identified who can be trained in facilitation skills to enable the process to be continued by the community without outside help” (Prentki & Lacey, 2020). It is worthy to note that this idea is the reason the facilitator/director engages the services of people within the community.



## Chapter 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

The interest of most creative artists is to produce a product or an object that addresses social issues or throw light on happenings in a society through the creative work. Based on this understanding, this chapter describes the devising processes and phases used in achieving the artistic product *Chaskele*. The chapter also detail the qualitative process and the instruments that were used in generating the devised piece - *Chaskele*. The chapter further discusses the inception and creative process used in the group selection, workshops undertaken, brainstorming, and the rehearsals schedule. Additionally, the chapter deliberates on the processes on aspects of the research such as the selection of participants, data collection process and the data analysis process used to achieve the study objectives. Finally, I have thrown light on my role as the researcher in relation to the devising process of this study.

This research project aims at examining three principles of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly for agenda 2030: These being Good Health and Well-Being (Goal 3), Clean Water and Sanitation (Goal 6), and Life on Land (Goal 15). For the purpose of my study these three goals were critically explored using folklores as stimuli for creating narratives necessary for advancing the objectives of the research. Consequently, drawing on the theoretical framework of Practice-based Research, the study aimed at using creative means in developing a model for promoting the SDGs in Ghana by engaging the resources and technique of devised theatre. This section ends with a discussion of some relevant qualitative research requirements such as sampling, data collection instrument, reliability and validation, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

### 3.2. Research Approach or Paradigm

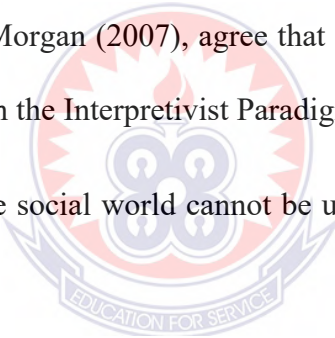
This study adopted the Interpretivist/Constructivist Paradigm. According to Guba & Lincoln (1989) the strength of this paradigm lies in its quest to understand the subject of any study using the researchers perspective of what their experiences are. In fact, this approach allows the researcher to identify with the subject's opinion and what informs those opinions against the background of the milieu they find themselves. Thus, a combination of the emic view of culture ultimately intends to focus on the intrinsic distinctions that bring about meaningful values of a cultural practice while through the etic view, the researcher avoids altering the culture but asking relevant questions from an outsider's perspective. These two approaches offers the researcher the opportunity of a detailed reports and observations whiles not compromising on biases, as "the emic helps us to understand local realities, and the etic helps us to analyze them" (American University, 2021). From the perspective of a facilitator, I engaged the qualitative data collection techniques such as participant observation, post-performance discussions, interviews, focus groups, and participatory tools to gather my emic data.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) posit that one important precept of the interpretivist paradigm is that reality is socially constructed, hence, the reason some school of thought prefer to call this paradigm Constructivist paradigm. Perhaps it is called so, because this paradigm does not allow theory to herald enquiry but collects data, analyses it and try to make meaning from both the emic and etic view of culture, thus being able to appreciate the local realities devoid of one's own cultural belief with a constructive viewpoint. Importantly, this approach is underpinned by the following elements: a subjectivist epistemology, a relativist ontology, a naturalist methodology, and a balanced axiology. Thus, subjectivist epistemology refers to a researcher's ability to make meaning out of the data collected based on individual knowledge and interpretation emanating from the field immersion. Punch (2005) explains that a researcher is most likely to construct knowledge socially stemming from the etic and emic understanding of

the research setting. This becomes possible as a result of the researcher-researched engagement in cooperative processes of intermingling, dialoguing, questioning, listening, reading, writing and recording of data collected. Chalmers, Manley and Wasserman (2005) posit that the relativist ontology refers to the phenomenon that the research setting is composed of multiple realities worth exploring through an interaction between the researcher and the participants, on one hand, and on the other hand, among the research participants in order to reconstruct meaning.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) assert that a naturalist methodology is assumed when the researcher acts as a participant observer in collecting and utilizing ethnographic data, and the use of reflective sessions among others. Whereas a balanced axiology calls on the researcher's values to allow an objectively balanced findings report as outcome of the study.

Both Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Morgan (2007), agree that certain characteristics are usually associated with studies situated within the Interpretivist Paradigm. These features are:

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- i. The admission that the social world cannot be understood from the standpoint of an individual.
  - ii. The belief that realities are multiple and socially constructed
  - iii. The acceptance that there is inevitable interaction between the researcher and his or her research participants
  - iv. The acceptance that context is vital for knowledge and knowing.
  - v. The belief that knowledge is created by the findings, can be value laden and the values need to be made explicit
  - vi. The need to understand the individual rather than universal laws.
  - vii. The belief that causes and effects are mutually interdependent.
  - viii. The belief that contextual factors need to be taken into consideration in any systematic pursuit of understanding.

In conclusion, this study adopted the Interpretivist Paradigm/Constructivist Paradigm because the researcher was interested in understanding the perspectives of the participants in order to facilitate effective communication of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **3.3. Research Design**

Durrheim (1999) posit that the design of any study is its structural guide in producing the end result. It sets the processes and procedures necessary for data collection and analysis as well as the study's findings. Thus, Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith (2011) posit that the choice of a design is determined by the research objectives and questions. The research design of this study is qualitative research design. The justification in the choice of this design is because it helps the researcher to gain an exhaustive account of events from the perspective of the participants (Mäkitalo, 2017). This Garcia and Gluesing (2013) agree that it suits the purposes when the study seeks to examine certain exclusive people. Thus, this design was used to gain a thorough understanding of what the people of LaNNMA thinks about the set objectives of this study.

This project sought to promote the SDGs through the devised theatre approach using folklore as stimuli. This work hinges heavily on devising techniques drawn, on the micro level, from the practice-based research methodology, and on the macro level, artistic research methodology. Thus, the project engages Devised theatre techniques within the Practice-based Research (PbR) approach.

#### **3.3.1. Artistic Research**

One main characteristic of artistic research is that it focuses on participant participation with emphasis on “reflection” and “a strong performative element” (Hannula et al., 2014, p. 4). This approach allowed the researcher an opportunity to operate “as a participant in the practice” or “as one of its embodiments” (p.15). Hannula et al further contend that this method generates “a body

of material that can be used as the publicly available record of the phenomena that one wants to talk about in one's research" (p.15).

In connection with this 'body of material', Boal (2006) argues that within the context of "Process and Product – for the latter to exist, the former is necessary; though the Aesthetic Process does not necessarily have to result in an Artistic Product – it can be inconclusive" (p. 18). But in the case of this particular enquiry, there was a conclusion in the form of a devised piece as process and a model for promoting SDGs as artistic product. Additionally, a process consists of advancing a viewpoint using contextual, interpretive, conceptual, or a narrative work and in the case of this project a devised piece that sought to promote the SDGs using folklore as a stimulus for the advocacy. Boal (2006) states that:

the Artistic Product – the work of art – must be capable of awakening, even in those who did not participate in the Aesthetic Process by which it came into being, the same ideas, emotions and thoughts that led the artist to its creation. (p.18)

Indeed, this project as discussed in the next chapters was able to awaken both the participants and the audience as reflected in their reflections.

### **3.3.2. Practice-based Research**

According to Smith and Dean (2009) "practice-based research the creative work acts as a form of research" (p. 5). They explain further that

towards the end of the 2000s 'practice as research' became a well-established approach to using creative performance as a method of inquiry in universities in the UK, Australia, Canada, Scandinavia, South Africa and elsewhere. In less than two decades creative processes had been established as providing crucial new approaches to research in theatre, dance, film, video, digital-media



and performance studies, complementing and in some ways profoundly challenging traditional methodologies. (p.105)

It is an emerging paradigm within qualitative methodology that emphasizes the use of creative practice to advance research which makes it possible for research outcomes to be represented not only in words and figures but also in “forms of symbolic data such as still and moving images, music and sound, live action (performances) and digital codes” (Haseman, 2006). Candy and Edmonds (2010) in their exploration of this approach contend that “Practice based Research (PbR) is an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice” (p. 1). Practice based Research is underpinned by the fact that, the phenomenon under study is the main determinant of the tools or strategies especially when current methods seem inadequate to serve the purpose of the enquiry (Haseman, 2006). Practice-as-research is an event that lasts from the beginning of the research, through the realisation of a public performance, and continues until when the research ends – if it does so. For the purpose of methodological clarity, conceptualisation and close familiarity with the contemporary usage and application of practice-based research and practice led research, it is important to draw attention to the difference and interrelations of these two approaches. Although practice-based research has become widespread it has yet to be characterised in a way that has become agreed across the various fields of research, where it is in used. So, the terms practice based and practice led are often used interchangeably, but for the purpose of this work, I create a distinction between the central practice element of this project.

In 2001, the criteria also advised that practical research should ‘interrogate itself’ and ‘be located in a research context’, but above all it should be ‘driven by a research imperative’, perhaps a default phrase for ‘starting point’ (Hero Rae 2001 as cited by Smith & Dean, 2009). They add that “the flexibility of practice as research as a methodology that can encompass many (if not all)

disciplines through the paradoxical rigour of its specific procedures and protocols” (Smith & Dean, 2009, p. 123).

### **3.3.3. Devising**

Devise theatre served as the main means through which an epistemological enquiry in advancing knowledge was explored. This was done mostly through the collecting of primary and secondary data. Hence devised theatre served as that collaborative approach to practice-based performances – used to advance knowledge on the understanding of the SDG’s. The aim was to “provide an integrated account of the social structure and a wider sense of the cultural context [as well as] focus on personal narrative as situated in practice” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003) to advance the realization of goals.

Since the goal of the study was to collaborate with the team - who were largely from LaNMMA, and to produce an original devised piece<sup>11</sup> (creative work) through devising, this approach was apt as a strategic method to achieving research objectives. It also allowed room for documenting the creative process and reflections, where some form of explanation was given to support the evolving creative piece (Candy, 2006; Communication, 2018).

### **3.4. Population**

Field (2009) states that study population of any given research is the bigger pool from which sample participants are chosen for the enquiry so the findings can be generalized at the end of the day. Terre-Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006) postulates that population refers to all the elements that make up the analysis aspect of the study. The target population for the project is the people living in the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA). The project’s focus was on engaging the youth in the community as well as soliciting consent and

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<sup>11</sup> A devised piece is the final performance shown to audience. It is also known as a devised performance, and artistic product.

advice from the community leaders. Some community youth members from the Assembly were engaged in the devised project, especially those who studied or worked at the University of Ghana. Students and scholars from the School of Performing Arts in the University of Ghana, Legon were also used as audiences aside the community members. This helped us to elicit scholarly thoughts to enhance the project. Government and UN representatives were also engaged during the development and audience reflection stages after the performance. The community according to the 2010 census has a population size of 111,926 of which 48.5% are males and 51.5% are females (MPCU, 2019).

### **3.5. Sample Size**

Malhotra and Dash (2011) states that the number of elements in any particular study is its sample size. The sample size was made up of thirty-five (35) males and twenty-five (25) females totalling sixty (60) participants. They included the creative team, who are youth members selected from the community. Other constituents included traditional leaders, municipal assembly officials, SDG stakeholders, NGOs whose activities addresses the SDGs, and opinion leaders within the communities and some faculty of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana.

### **3.6. Sampling Procedures**

Sampling enables the researcher to examine a smaller size of a bigger population in order to determine the exact generalities about the larger element (W. R. Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Sampling is also the act of choosing specific locations, times of days, various events, and activities to observe in fieldwork.

The sampling procedure adopted for this study was a multi-technique made up of purposive and snowball sampling in order to determine the sample representation of the study population (Naderifar et al., 2017). For instance, snowball sampling allowed participants in the study to use

their influence and network to help the researcher co-opt or get other participants who were capable of contributing to the research. This approach was used to identify and use participants who may not have been available to the researcher. Most of the respondents of this project were also selected based on their availability, thus, convenience and accidental sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique were also used (Saunders et al., 2012).

### **3.7. Data Collection Procedures**

The research data primarily gathered through the devising process which allowed other appropriate and accessible means of data gathering in pre- and post-performance reflections from both participants and audiences. This research consulted both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from the creative team, who were youth members selected from the community. Others included traditional leaders, municipal assembly officials, SDG stakeholders, NGOs whose activities addresses the SDGs, and opinion leaders within the communities and some faculty of the School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. The project's focus was on engaging the youth in the community as well as soliciting consent and advice from the community leaders. Some community youth members from LaNMMA were engaged in the devised project, especially those who studied or worked at the University of Ghana. Students and scholars from the School of Performing Arts in the University of Ghana, Legon were also used as audiences aside the community members. This helped the study to elicit scholarly thoughts in order to merge the discussion of paradigms stated in the work. Data collection tools such as in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussion, audience reflection, observation and field event evaluation were used to gather information from Some Government and UN representatives during the developmental stage of the project. Other relevant secondary source materials that were very relevant to the study were taken from books, journals and internet materials.

### **3.8. Data Collection Instruments**

The data gathering activities included but were not limited to in-depth and field interviews, focus group discussion, participant and audience reflection, and observation and evaluation of field events. Huawei Nova 3i is the electronic device used to conduct interviews and social media interactions. This same device was used to take field notes, pictures, videos and voice recording of rehearsals and respondents before the main performance. On performance days, Canon 7D cameras were used to take still pictures and record the production.

#### **3.8.1. In-Depth and Field Interviews**

Sarah Tracy (2013) posit that qualitative interviews provide opportunities for mutual discovery, understanding, reflection, and explanation via a path that is organic, adaptive, and oftentimes energizing. Interviews elucidate lived experiences and viewpoints from the respondents' perspective... (p.132) ...because interviews enable the researcher to stumble upon and further explore complex phenomena that may otherwise be hidden or unseen. (p.132). Through interviews, the respondents provided their opinion, motivation, and experiences (p.132). Interviews are especially valuable for providing information and background on issues that cannot be observed or efficiently accessed.

This research project used unstructured interviews to elicit information from the creative team and the audience using interview guide. This tool was selected because the approach is organic in nature and offers the researcher flexibility to gather data. Tracy (2013) notes that “[t]he advantages of unstructured interviews are that they allow for more emic, emergent understandings to blossom, and for the interviewees' complex viewpoints to be heard without the strict constraints of scripted questions” (p.139). The approach is unrestrictive, cedes control of discussion to the interviewee, and promotes creativity as it affords all parties the opportunity to adapt to varying circumstances. As someone relying on raw data to create, it is important to

engage respondents in flexible conversations that aims at probing for factual response (Tracy, 2013).

### **3.8.2. Focus Group Discussions**

Although people tend to think of interviews as dyadic face-to-face interactions, interviewing can occur in small groups (such as focus groups) and through various mediated contexts (Tracy, 2013, p. 131). This study used focus group discussion to collect data using a guide. The researcher brought his facilitator skills of summary and paraphrasing to bear on the study through probing and motivating them to contribute.

Focus groups are used to simulate informal discussions (Morgan & Spanish, 1984, 1985). Under this method, the researcher interacted with respondents in an unnatural social setting using mainly verbal discussions to collect data. The nature of this approach was such that the researcher was the moderator who created and managed the group depending on the dynamics. The group constituted about six to eight members. Additionally, the focus group had a balance in terms of gender representation Morgan and Spanish (1984) agree that the “strengths of focus groups come from a compromise between the strengths found in other qualitative methods” (p. 260). Thus, the use of focus group offered the researcher the dual opportunity of observing and interacting with participants during data collection.

### **3.8.3. Audience and Participant Reflection**

This method formed one of the key sources of data for this study. In the course of the workshops and other interactions with participants, their reflection was one of the main sources of information for shaping the devised piece. After the final performance, the audience views were elicited through post performance discussions and interviews. Prior to that, other stakeholders had also given their perspectives. The details of these encounters are discussed extensively in the next chapter.

### **3.8.4. Observation and Evaluation of Field Events**

One key method also used was the participant observation evaluation of field events to gather data. The researcher actively took part during the research project. Under this technique the researcher observed the participants in their natural setting, thus their home, market, and park. The researcher used this method because it allowed access to unfettered discussion of the phenomenon under study, observation of the traffic situation at Madina Zongo junction and the role of the loading boys. Wolcott (1995) disagrees with the assertion that observation "just observing" since it involves a whole gamut of consciously focused technique of observation.

Furthermore, Gaskins, Miller, and Corsaro (1992) note that "ethnographic research typically involves prolonged fieldwork in which the researcher gains access to a social group and carries out intensive observation in natural settings for a period of months or years" (p. 15). Thus, fieldwork is an "intensive, long-term participation in a field setting" (Erickson, 1986, p. 121). This holds true for this work in view of the long period interaction between the researcher, community and the other stakeholders. It was used to complement the observation method by using field notes, just as other techniques such as interviews with informants, archival documents, and video recording.

### **3.9. Reliability and Validation**

The devised piece was first pilot-tested at the Efua Sutherland Drama Studio, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana where faculty members served as resource persons and critics, based on their experience in the performing arts industry to ensure its validity and reliability. Other stakeholders who were mostly involved in policymaking were engaged to also make inputs towards the final devised piece.

### **3.10. Data Analysis Procedures**

The thematic approach was used in analyzing the data collected. The analysis method adopted was based on the research questions and objectives the study set out to achieve (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic Analysis is a type of qualitative analysis that is used to analyze classifications and present themes (patterns) that relate to the data. Boyatzis (1998) notes that this approach enables the researcher to illustrate the data using diverse interpretations. This study also used the five steps of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) - data familiarization, code generation, theme search, themes revision, and theme definition. The data collected from the interviews, thus from some audience and production team members were coded, recordings transcribed, and put into themes that correlate with the objectives of this study.

### **3.11. Ethical considerations**

All the necessary research ethics protocols were adhered to in undertaking this study. In line with Babbie & Mouton (2001) advise, this research observed the appropriate ethical demands associated with a study of this kind. For instance, the researcher sought verbal consent from participants who in turn offered to participate in this study out of their own volition (Leedy, 2000; Neuman, 2014). The researcher favoured the verbal consent over other ways because it enabled him to gain the trust of the people (Silverman, 2009). Importantly, the participants were assured of their confidentiality and the fact that they were free to walk away at any time without having to answer why.



## Chapter 4

### *CHASKELE* PRODUCTION PROCESS

#### 4.1. Production Process

This chapter details the stages and activities in the creation of the *Chaskele* product. It is made up of segments that describes the activities engaged in the creative process. I would like to state that the creative process hinged on the theoretical notion of “concept and realization” (Bakka & Karoblis, 2010). This concept suggests that dance has two dimensions: the realization and the concept – where the realization of the dance is the actual dancing. For a dance form, the potential of skills, philosophical understanding, and the knowledge systems or values that enables an individual dance community to dance a particular dance and to recognize and relate to that dance form is its concept. In the same light, the realization of a dance makes dance available perceptually. With that said, the production process of ‘Chaskele’ consider demonstrations, rehearsals, illustrated explanations and improvisational expressions as the concept of the piece whereas the performance serves as perceptual realization. The working structure of the production’s concept and realization was being categorized as follows (see figure 2); the outset, the core (process), and the product. Where “The Outset” and “The Core” serves as the concept and the “The Product” as the realization.

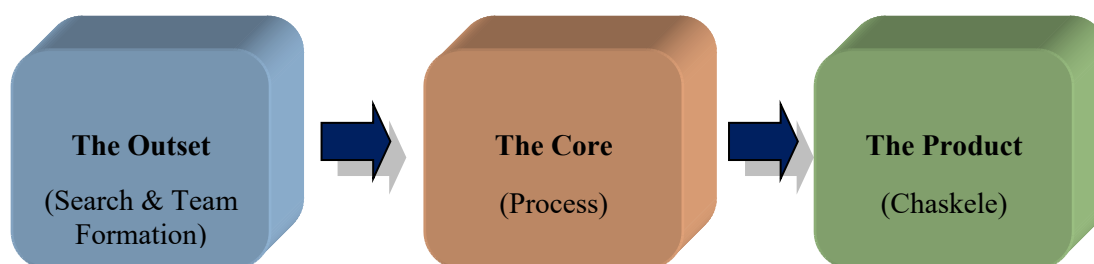


Figure 2: Research process of the Chaskele Project

Furthermore, Bakka and Karoblis argue that “each realization of a dance can in principle add to the dance concept and this *influenced concept* will in turn affect the next realization. This will be a continuous process for a dancer: her concept is not fixed, but be affected by each new

realization, whether it is her own or she is experiencing somebody else's realization”(2010). It is to this end that the essence of devise theatre methods or collaborative process is being honed on. The subsequent deliberations will deliberate on the activities that constitute the project process: the outset, the core and the product.

#### **4.1.1. The Outset:**

The Outset was considered as the preliminary phase of the project. This entailed–community entry such as seeking permission from appropriate authorities within the municipality, engaging with stakeholders, and constituting the production team.

There was the need to seek permission from the LaNMMA authorities as the SDG’s focused project was within their jurisdiction. This was also needful due to the recruitment of some participant who were members of the community. After the community entry, proposal and partnership letters were sent to the Assembly on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2019. The Municipal Director delegated Mr Fredrick Asiamah, the Planning Officer for the Assembly to guide me. When the Director of LaNMMA consented to the project, other partnership letters were sent to the following entities: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative, Zoomlion, Folklore board, Civil Society Platform on SDGs, National Development Planning Commission (NDPC)-Ghana, Plastic Punch, SDGs Implementation Coordinating Committee, SDGs Philanthropic Platform, and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-Ghana as these key institutions and organizations were very integral to the implementation of the SDGs. (Appendix 1: Sample letter to Assembly and proposed partners).

My community entry allowed me to meet assembly members, presiding members of the assembly and municipal heads. This interaction moment provided me the opportunity to engage respective stakeholders and to share insight into the project. Significant to this project is the

emphasis placed on collective creation – as a method thus; having access to willing participants (youth members) who would individually and collectively contribute to the creative work was of greater importance. Honourable Rashid Osei Bonsu, Assemblyman for West Adenta Electoral Area in this light recommended some of his community members who were staff and students on the University of Ghana Campus.

Residents of the LaNMMA Community on the University of Ghana Campus were my immediate contacts because of proximity and they could be good leads in sampling people for the project. Mutala Mohammed and Ruhiya Saddick<sup>12</sup> of the Ghana Dance Ensemble were informed about the project and in so doing assisted in convenient sampling of key informants and participants for the project.

Finally, I met Chief Guma – the Madina Dagbamba Chief, who eventually gave his blessings by willingly asking his Dagbamba community members to support and participate in the project. Chief Guma introduced me to other Chiefs within the Madina community and, most of these Chiefs also introduced me to their cultural troupes. It interests me at this juncture to share on the notion of power and subject. In that, for us as humans, power is not only a theoretical question but a part of our culturally and socially lived experience. In reiterating this stance, Michel Foucault expressed that “it soon appeared to me that, while the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations which are very complex” (1982, p. 778). This outset process has clearly showed through the researcher’s several interactions that productions of power relations exist both in knowledge, in representation and in function. People in power are represented by their status; the knowledge of their status determines their functions. The complexity of power is found in the structural layers of institutions – legislative power and cultural forms - kingship authority. Foucault argued that

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<sup>12</sup> Mutala Mohammed and Ruhiya Saddick are staff members of the University of Ghana under the Ghana Dance Ensemble in the Institute of African Studies. They reside in Madina Zongo Junction and are members of the Dagbamba Community in Madina.

“this form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects. There are two meanings of the word "subject": subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to” (1982, p. 781).

The Dagbamba group of people are very well known for their Damba Festival which is celebrated in March. During my field visit, the celebration date fell on 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2019 (as seen in the figure 3 below) and this affected my rehearsal plan with the participants since most of them traded in small and medium scale business over the week-day.





Figure 3: The Madina Dagbamba Chief Palace. Front of the palace is the banner for the Damba Celebration © Solomon Dartey

This development posed a challenge for me as it was derailing my plans but I was assured by my informant, Mutala, that I would be able to have access to the participants after the festival. The performance of cultural heritage like festivals reveals indigenous knowledge and ideas embedded in the movement, song, drum language and costumes of the people. Therefore, the Damba Festival as a form of cultural heritage created by their forebears reflects their values, customs, and beliefs that has been observed and accepted by the community. So, although my rehearsal plans were altered, I took advantage of the opportunity to appreciate the performance of the heritage form. This led me to visit the Dagbamba Chief Palace and observed a first-hand rehearsal on the Damba festival in a neo-traditional environment. The visit however served as a medium of familiarization with the community in Madina on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2019 around 7:40pm.

The pre-performance started after 8:00pm with most kinsmen present. The performance went into the night due to its cultural significance to the people and also due to the display of several activities. The figure below (figure 4) gives a glimpse of an activity during the festival. It displays the presence of people from all walks of life present at the palace, and actively participated in the activity.



*Figure 4:* The Madina Dagbamba Community members dancing on the street in front of the Chief's Palace © Solomon Dartey

Engagement with these people posed some challenges to the progress of work, as most of them wanted rehearsals to take place on Saturdays after they had returned from the market and other engagements, as they normally did when preparing for the festival. They also requested that the rehearsals take place within their community preferably the Chief's Palace. The rehearsals' venue and time hindered the process and progress of the project, as it would expose our work to the community, and hinder the solid engagements needed for devising. The collaborative nature

of devising requires a congenial atmosphere for bonding, concentration and creativity, which would be difficult to achieve in the community. Their unwillingness to succumb to the proposed rehearsals schedule and alternate enclosed venue necessitated a search for a new team. This new team consisted of students on UG campus who resided in the municipal area.

A working team (see table 1 below) was eventually put together after all ethical consent documents had been explained to the participant and signed. As devising involves collaboration from start to finish, there was the need to select people who were passionate about their community and willing to cause change. Our first gathering had six (6) people reporting to the Mirror Room of the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana – Legon on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2018. Below are the names of the participants and their respective communities within the municipality.

Name	Community within LaNMMA
Kelvin Apeti	Libya Quarters
Sena Atsuga (Biggles)	Sakora
Nenesenor Abloso (Nene)	Ashaley Botwe
Efia Kwaa Appiah	Madina Estate
Emmanuel Adinkra	Agbogba
Daniella Adu-Asare	American House

*Table 1:* List of first Participants and their place of abode within the municipality.

#### 4.1.2. The Core:

This next process of the project (*see figure 5*) focused on four broad areas: Workshop, Rehearsals, Technique or Creative Approach and Reflections. These broad areas have their respective sub strands, which will be detailed in this section.

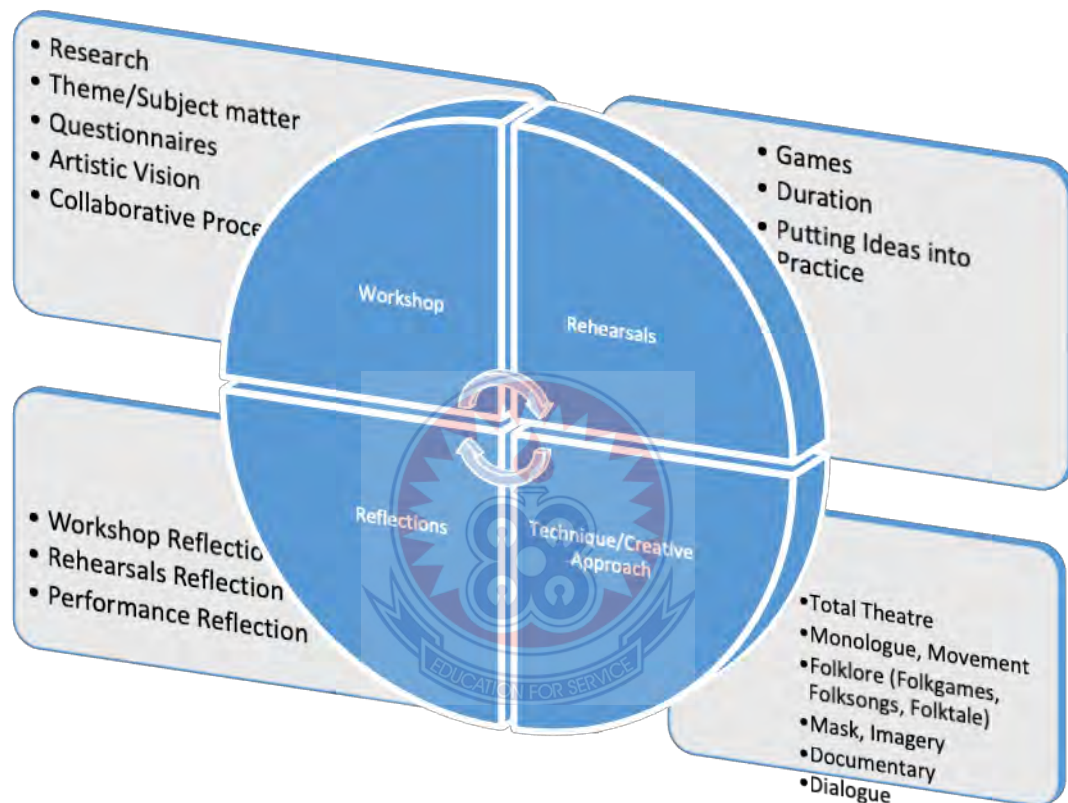


Figure 5: The Phases in the Core stage.

The first meeting discussed the various SDGs and why the research was focusing on Goals three, six and fifteen. Members were made to understand why drama was being employed as a tool to propagate and advocate the messages embedded in the SDGs. In this instance, the focus of the project was on the ordinary person in the community as the selected goals were lacking in the locality. Thus, the need to undertake this project there geared towards changing their behaviour to minimise the challenges entirely.



#### 4.1.2.1. Workshop:

The workshop was meant to train members to understand the component of devising, and the goals of the SDGs. The beginning session focused on explaining what the SDGs (see figure 5 below) were, deconstructing the seventeen (17) goals and finding their commonalities in our society. The key SDG resource that was utilised during the workshop session was the joint publication by the UN Communication Group (UNCG) in Ghana and the CSO Platform on SDGs titled *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Ghana: Why they matter & how we can help*. This publication details the aims of aligning Ghana's development priorities on achieving the SDGs through collaboration with CSOs and the private sector. The publication also "suggests why each of the goals should matter to us and what we can do, as individuals, to contribute to their successful implementation in Ghana and to ensure that no one is left behind" (UN Communications Group & CSO Platform, 2017, p. 3). The UN Communication Group in Ghana and the CSO Platform's publication details the reason why specific goals matters and how we can help achieve such goals in the country. For instance, the main focus of Goal 3 "... is to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages" (2017, p. 6). The same publications detail six ways we can help achieve Goal 3 with the first being the need for every aspect of one's life to be guided by the right choices such as the use of condoms, testing for HIV regularly, and taking kids job seriously. This helps in protecting one and the people they live with (2017, p. 7). The team carefully studied these suggested areas by situating them within the community and found ways to showcase them in the performance to drawn the attention of the community to it.

During the workshop process emphasis was placed on Goals 3, 6, & 15 linkages and disparities in what constitute the Goals (this will be discussed extensively later in this section). Some unique cultural traits drawn from the community were used to augment the workshop process, as well as simplify the goals for easy understanding. These subjects will be scrutinised further in this section based on the lab site and some adopted for the devised piece. It is worth noting that the researcher became the facilitator at this point. The 17 SDGs Chart (see figure 6) and the joint initiative publications were available for all participating members via the group WhatsApp<sup>13</sup> platform.



Figure 6: The Seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals. © United Nations

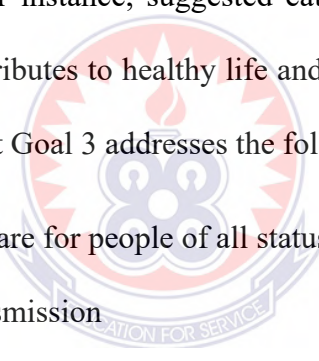
Importantly, some other community members joined at the workshop stage and were briefed accordingly so that they could be well informed about the issues concerning the project. These included Dodzi Aveh, Abena Gyanewaa Anin, Dede Gyanmaki Tetteh, Mamiya Wendy Aku

<sup>13</sup> The WhatsApp platform was created for the group. The purpose of the platform was for all to share documents they found necessary for our course. It was also the platform we use to discuss rehearsals schedules and other relevant issues.

Sika, Lena Agbenyeke, Christian Sunny Agbetsiafa, Agnes Adomako, Margaret Lamptey, and Phaniel Parbey.

Kofi Lumiere, Selina Tetteh, Natasha Brown, Esther Mensah, and Gyan Narh, who joined at the early stages, took an early leave because our rehearsal schedule was clashing with some other important engagements of theirs. It is worth mentioning that though they were not coming for rehearsals they were making inputs on the WhatsApp platform.

After discussing what the goal entails, some team members were given the opportunity to share their knowledge and understanding of the Goal 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing). SDG Goal 3 aims at ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all ages (UN Communications Group & CSO Platform, 2017). While Efia for instance, suggested eating well, Daniella noted that the state of one's mental health also contributes to healthy life and wellbeing. Through research and deliberations, the group suggested that Goal 3 addresses the following:

- 
- Tackling good health care for people of all statuses
  - HIV mother-child transmission
  - Health related goals
  - Good healthy lifestyle
  - Right to quality health care services
  - Holding authorities responsible for their action
  - Visiting the hospital in time.

We went further to list group of people within the community who were affected by the lack of this goal. A few examples that relate to issues of health and wellbeing are that of teenage parents and their wards, unmarried pregnant women, school dropouts among others. The researcher used the grounded theory approach to elicit engagement and commitment of the team in order to tease out the realities of the goals in the community.

Under Goal 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation), the group focused on water, its source, its usage and misuse in the community, as the goal aims at ensuring access to safe water sources and sanitation for all. When the case of sanitation was introduced, Kelvin recalled the case of a man in his neighbourhood who always dumped garbage in the gutter when he was going to work in the morning. Others also shared their experience especially Nene, who recounted how people sweep and drop their garbage in the open drains. The issue of flooding whenever it rains came up, so we discussed the cause and effect of it, and suggested that the dumping of garbage in choked gutters contributed to that. Similarly, fault-lines in engineering works such as open drainage is also one of the main causes of nation-wide flooding. Aside the open-air drainage, the lack of interest to integrate subsurface drainage systems by town and country planners is adversely affecting livelihood in the mid-to-short term. The team was tasked to suggest people who are culprits to the aforementioned activities and they identified *Shadow Boys*<sup>14</sup>, *Kayaye Girls*<sup>15</sup>, Trotro (public transport) drivers, market women, members of households, community members, including the literate population etc.

I tasked the team to observe the identified lifestyles when they go back to their communities. We agreed that observing the daily activities of these people and re-enacting them would help make significant impact in the lives of the various stakeholders as well as help test the efficacy of the Performing Arts in affecting lives.

When it got to studying Goal 15 (Life on Land), which is aimed at sustainably managing forests, and combating desertification. It also deals with halting biodiversity loss and reversing land degradation. I realized that the participants were not well informed about this goal, and in return this affected their ability to situate their ideas in the communities. We explored the SDG documents and read them extensively. I triggered a discussion which directed them to know that the goal deals with how well the land is protected against degradation and how our lifestyle and

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<sup>14</sup> These boys load passengers for commercial vehicles.

<sup>15</sup> These are head potters who carry luggage and make a living out of it.

over-reliance on nature is affecting humanity negatively. I explained that this particular goal was selected based on an earlier instinct of conducting the third project in Winneba. It was aimed at sensitizing the people to reduce the use of plastic and tree products.

After the team understood what the SDGs were about especially the areas that we were focusing on, we went further to list societal and environmental activities and vices that were affecting our communities. The following were listed (see figures 7 & 8): migration, robbery, child labour, squatters, open defecation, urinating in gutters, illegal substance in gutters, bribery and corruption, deforestation, shelter, road hazards, pollution, traffic, rape, school dropout, prostitution, poverty, gambling, over population, low water accessibility, head potters, etc.



Figure 7: List of suggested social cankers linked to the 3 Goals under study. © Solomon Dartey

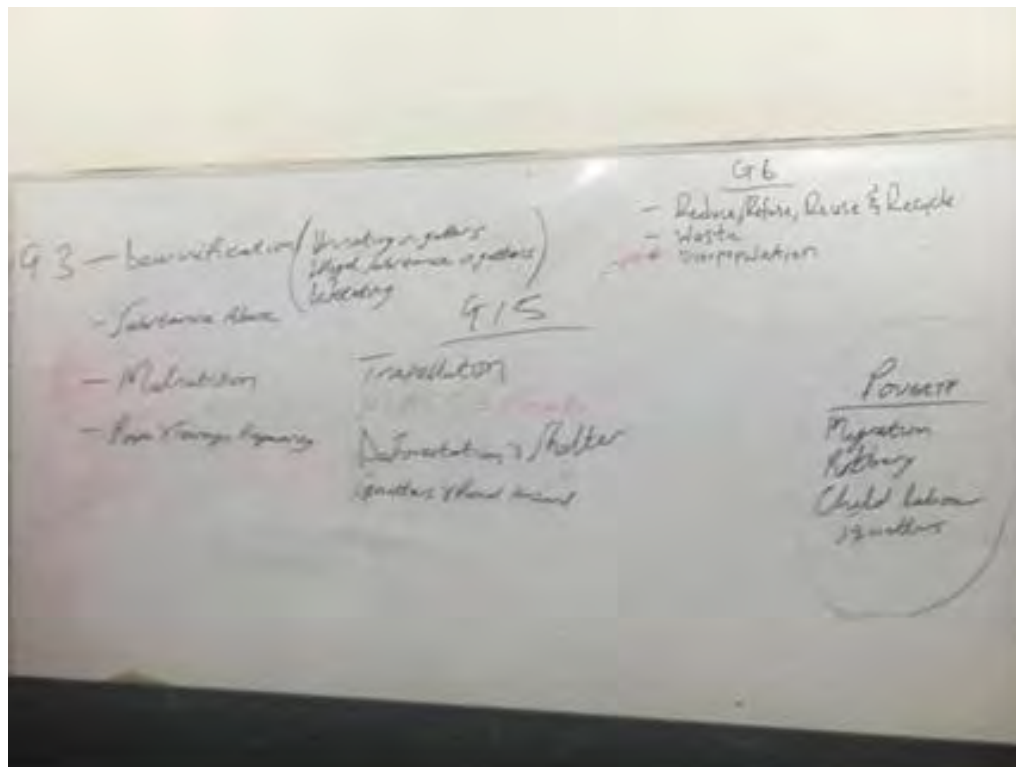


Figure 8: The categorised issues

These summarised activities were categorised according to their prevalence within the selected Goals. Some issues were merged and given a general name by the group in order to treat it holistically at the creative process (see figure 8).

**Goal 3** (Good Health & Wellbeing) for instance had the following social vices categorised under activities that are preventing us from meeting the target (see figure 9): Deurification (urinating into gutters, Illegal substances in gutters, and defecating), substance abuse, malnutrition, and rape & teenage pregnancy.

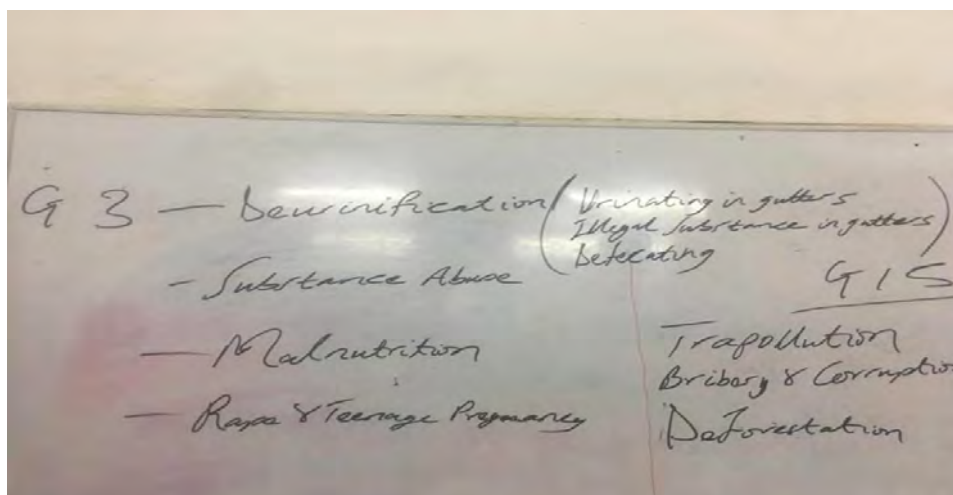


Figure 9: Activities placed under Goals 3 ©Solomon Dartey

The following social activities were also identified as activities which were not being implemented and preventing us from meeting Goal 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation) targets (see figure 10): Reduce, Refuse, Reuse & Recycle (4R)<sup>16</sup>, Waste, Over-population, Low water accessibility.

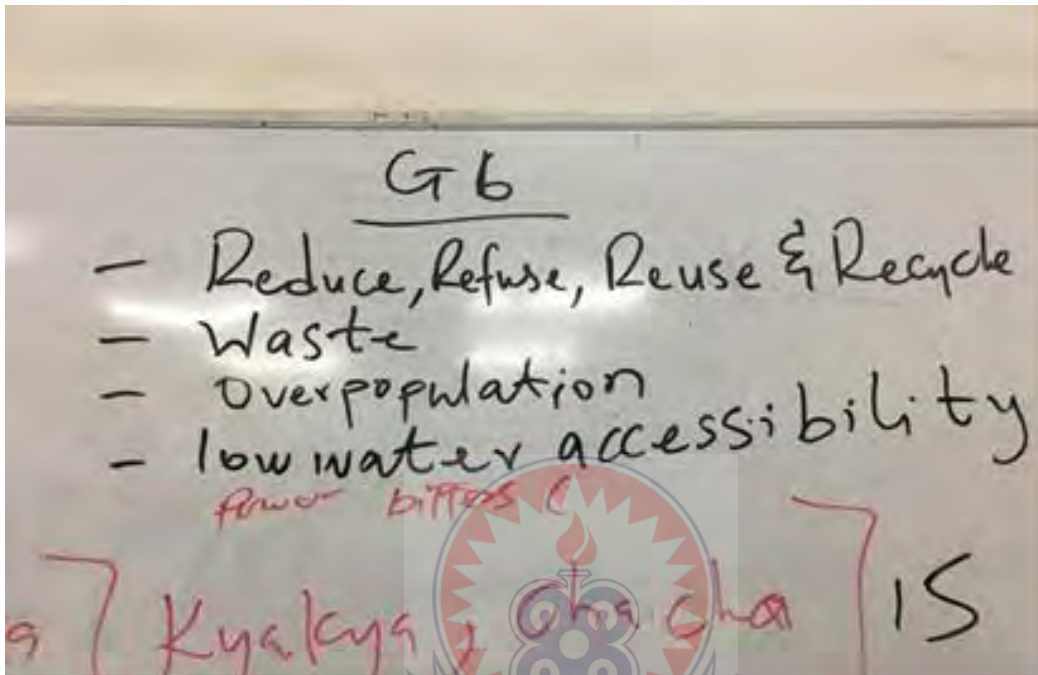


Figure 10: Activities placed under Goals 6

**Goal 15** (Life on Land) had the following activities as factors impeding the meeting of the set target: Deforestation, Shelter, Traffic, Pollution, Migration, Robbery, Squatters, Road hazards, Bribery and Corruption and Child Labour. These activities were narrowed down to Trapollution, Deforestation and shelter, Squatters and road hazards, and poverty. For us, Poverty causes Migration, Robbery, Child labour, & Squatters (MRCS=Poverty).

<sup>16</sup> Our engagement with the Plastic Punch team made us understand that we have moved from the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, & Recycle) by promoting *Refuse*. They claimed the campaign against Plastic use, is pushing for people to refuse the use of Plastics.

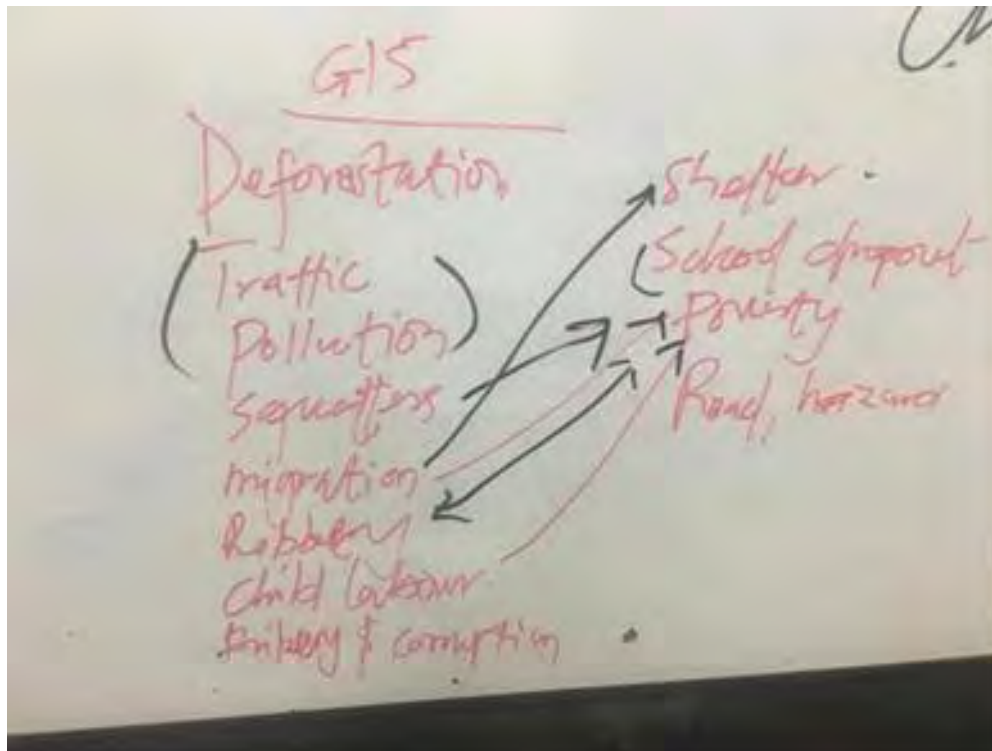


Figure 11: Activities placed under Goals 15 ©Solomon Dartey

After team became conversant with the relationship between the SDGs and their community, we proceeded to engage them because *everyone needed to be involved*. This segment of the workshop session was enlightening for the participants. Some of these knowledges that came to the fore after our meetings included: understanding the concept of the SDGs, learning of what the SDGs are meant to achieve, and appreciating the quest of the SDGs to improve our day-to-day activities towards achieving equity. Some participants learnt that the goals are about our daily lifestyle in our communities. Some members also learnt that personal hygiene and protection of the environment are ways of helping achieve Goals 3 and 6. For instance, Abena learnt that teenage pregnancy and maternal mortality were challenges that Goals 3 was meant to address.



We further discussed some practitioners and countries that use devising and how we can also explore it in promoting the SDGs. Participants watched and analysed devised videos from *Frantic Assembly*, *DV8 Physical Theatre*, *Off Balance*, etc. This was done in our physical meeting and on WhatsApp. We explored the basic devising processes to help us appreciate the task on hand (figure 12).

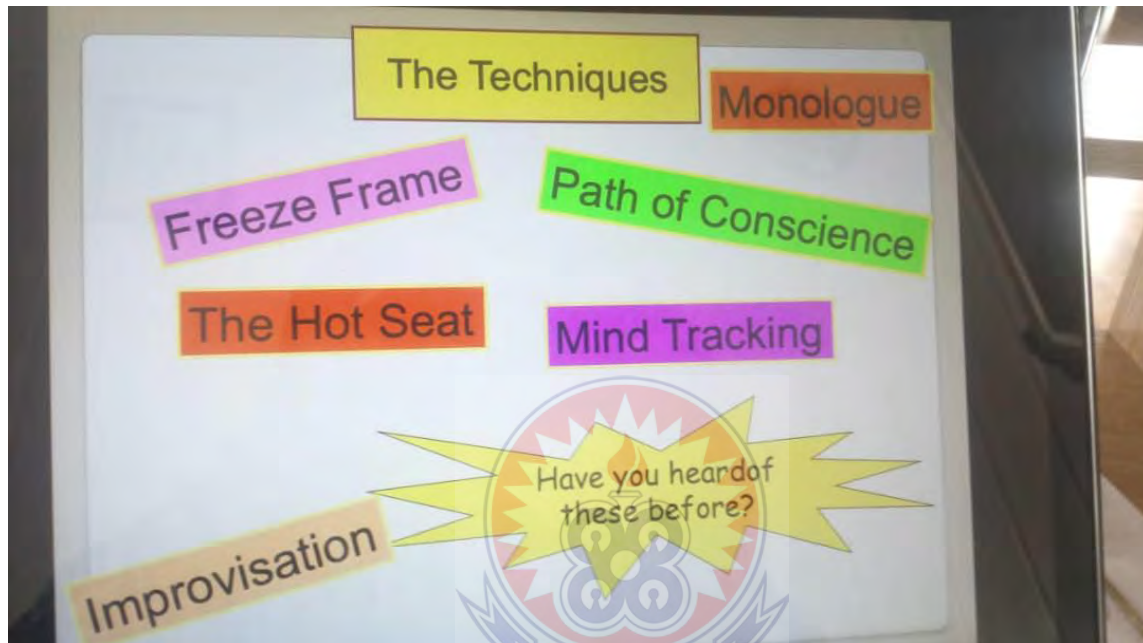


Figure 12: The basic techniques that are used in the devised process. ©Solomon Dartey

From the Outset team members had the opportunity to understand that the advocacy on the promotion of the SDGs does not end with this project, instead they are being challenged to engage others in propagating the objectives of the SDGs after the project ends.

The group / team extensively explored folklore at the workshop stage, as it would be the tool for disseminating the message of the SDGs. The stimuli for the project is folklore: a vehicle to transmit the message of the SDGs to our cosmopolitan audiences. The folklore was performed in forms such as folksongs, folkgames, storytelling, myths, and legends. Members were briefed on why folklore was being incorporated as a medium of communicating with community members / stakeholders. Folklore serves as a transmittable form of cultural heritage and the community can easily with them. Members reflected on some folkloric activities they were familiar with and taught others who were not familiar with them, through group warm ups and reflections. One

main objective for introducing folklore was to salvage its local non-performance by reintroducing and re-integrating them back into the community's activity.

At this stage, we realised the need to incorporate some patriotic songs like “Oman b3y3 yie”, and “Ma oman yi ho nhia wo” to the folkloric repertoire. The selected songs were for us to appreciate our role in society and evoke patriotism in the citizens (audience). Patriotism echoes the notion of nationalism and, nationalism represent a marker of identity. Through the song-text, there is a call to action to uphold the values of nationalism. This song although historic served the purpose towards achieving a national SDG campaign. Thus, Cudjoe and Okyere (2015) stressed that ‘through the “doing approach” identity, interpersonal relation and communicative character comes to the forefront’. By the doing / performing the context of the song that patriotism is uphold. Nenesenor (a musician) was encouraged to develop songs needed for the performance.

Folk games like *Hide and Seek*, *Pilolo*, *Kyini Dan ho*, *Chasketele*, *Me P3 Kwan Ako*, *Amp3*, *Aka Aka Aka*, *Blewo 33*, *run, run, run, there is a fire on the mountain*, etc. were explored and some were selected to be used for the project because of the moral lessons inherent in those games. The selected games were developed in line with greening and cleaning the environment, protecting waterbodies, safeguarding the land against degradation and pollution, and promoting good health. For clarity and accuracy, I tasked some team members to meet Mrs Akua Abloso<sup>17</sup> to learn some folksongs and folkgames from her after she had honoured an invitation to one of our meetings (see figure 13 & 14). Our meeting with her was to clarify and get the right lyrics for some folksongs and games, which were not very clear at first. She visited us again at our rehearsals, where she interpreted and told us the purpose of most of the songs and games. This gave the team enough insight into the use of folklore in the devised drama.

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<sup>17</sup> Mrs. Akua Abloso is a Lecturer at the Department of Dance Studies, School of Performing Arts, University of Ghana. She is teaching Dance theater and social change, and Traditional songs and games.



Figure 13: A session with Mrs Abloso at the Drum Village (From right to left; Solomon Dartey, Mrs Abloso, Nenesor Abloso, Kelvin Apeti, and Selina). ©Solomon Dartey

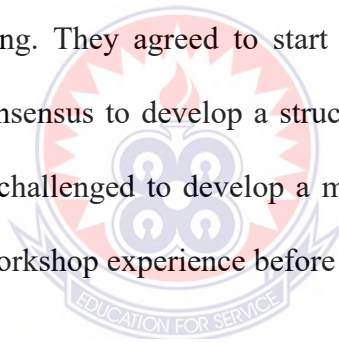


Figure 14: Folksongs learning session with Mrs Abloso (Sitting behind her desk in her office (A4)). ©Solomon Dartey

After each workshop session, members were tasked to reflect on what they had learnt, what they knew before, what they did not know, and how they were going to apply what they had learnt in the propagation of the three selected SDGs.

The group adopted an episodic style for the development of the drama: this was to make each scene standalone. This style offered the opportunity to do without a scene if need be and this would not affect the whole process. This approach was adopted so that in the process of putting the scenes together, scenes that did not work well could be eliminated without it affecting other creative works. We concluded that to be able to achieve our objective, each scene should have at least a folkloric element driving the subject matter or idea.

The team got to know the artistic vision of the director after the workshops on the SDGs, folklore, the community and devising. They agreed to start putting the workshop ideas into practice at rehearsals. There was consensus to develop a structure for the devised performance after the workshop. Members were challenged to develop a monologue (this will be discussed later in this section) based on their workshop experience before actual rehearsals started.



#### **4.1.2.2. Rehearsals:**

The rehearsals process was flexible in terms of meeting schedules. Members were pre-informed on what to expect at rehearsals, so they always came prepared, although we made room for contingencies. The WhatsApp platform served as an information platform that contained related materials and ideas concerning the project.

Rehearsals always started with team building activities. This was important because team building activities, created bonding. These team-building activities included trust and contact games. We engaged with skill building activities also considering that non-professional formed the majority of the group and the team needed their competence level to be improved to a certain standard.

We engaged with some of the folkloric activities in this segment for participants to familiarise themselves with those folk activities. Sena Atsugah (Biggles), Kelvin Apeti, and Nenesenor Abloso mostly led the warm-up activities as most of our performance activities relied on movement, specifically physical theatre. These individuals were challenged to lead the fort because of their performance experience in Dance and Movement. The warm up session in the figure below were introduced to help with concentration exercises and also to get the body ready for the physical activity of the rehearsal process.



*Figure 15.a:* Group warm- up sections during rehearsals at the ETS Drama Studio ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 16.b: Group warm-up sections during rehearsals at the ETS Drama Studio ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 17.a: Warm up session for the production team ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 18.b: Warm up session for production team. ©Solomon Dartey ©Solomon Dartey

I led a warm-up activity using movement borrowed from Samuel Beckett's *Quad*. This focusses on the essence of time, space, pattern, rhythm and tempo, using movements borrowed from Samuel Beckett's *Quad*<sup>18</sup> (1982) (*Samuel Beckett Quad - YouTube*, n.d.). We practised this activity several times and developed our own routine from it. This developed routine represented the flow of water, as it became part of the main performance. The free flow of water when not obstructed and when it encounters a blockade was established using these developed movements. It is worth noting that, usually our warm-up sessions were used to develop movements for agreed ideas. To appreciate the creative process, it is important to now focus on how ideas were put together into scenes, how the developed scenes were structured into a sequence. Significantly, this process was not finite, as the team knew that everything could change anytime in the process.

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<sup>18</sup> *Quad* was first transmitted in Germany by *Sddeutscher Rundfunk* in 1982 under the title *Quadrat 1-2*. It was *first* transmitted by BBC2 on 16 December 1982. First published by Faber and Faber, and Faber, London, in 1984. *Description*: A piece for four players, light and percussion.

The players (1, 2, 3,4) pace the given area, each following his particular course.

#### 4.1.2.3. Putting Ideas into Practice:

This process started immediately after the workshop stage, where team members got information about what they were engaging in and the challenges that comes with it. This stage divided into three phases: first, second and third phases.

First Phase: This phase comprised of twice in a week rehearsal for two weeks. Based on earlier discussions with the participants regarding scenes development using the devised approach, we chose the *Pilolo* folk game as the opening performance and our working title. Since *Pilolo* is a traditional hide and seek game, we wrote societal issues under the SDGs evident in the community in a paper and hide it. The first to be found would be performed, until the next subject matter was located. During the process of enacting the subject matter, the person who found it stepped out and displayed it to the audience like a placard. This was borrowed from Bertolt Brecht's use of placard in his *Alienation effect* theory<sup>19</sup>. The song *Arise Ghana Youth for your Country* was agreed to be sung with emphasis on "we are all involved" in the process. This was to convince the community members that everyone is involved in keeping to good sanitation practice. The team unanimously agreed to incorporate projections (video & images) in its performances. The use of projections and its impact is discussed later in this chapter.

As part of the devising process, we deemed it imperative to include folkloric materials at every point in time since it is the stimulus for driving the performance. The team sought to include more games and more folk song to enrich the performance. This we believed would sustain the interest of the audience in the play. Example of games suggested include *hide and seek*, and *police and thief* (Ghanaian indigenous games). The game *police and thief*, was meant to depict police officers arresting bad and unlawful individuals in the society for committing environmental offences. It was recommended that these offenders should be made to engage in

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<sup>19</sup> The use of placards gives details of the story and avoid gaining audiences' empathy. Placards can be used for naming people in generic ways, location and time, or any such relevant details used.



community service as a form of punishment rather than imprisonment.

The total theatre approach which includes the use of music, dance, and mime, was used to execute this project. Michael Jackson's *Earth song* was one of the songs chosen because it addresses ecological preservation in its lyrics. There were several deliberations before the team settled on this song, as we were torn between using *Heal the World* and *Earth Song* from the same musician. However, Nenesenor suggested we use *Earth Song*. His justification was that the lyrics of the song directly addresses SDG Goal 15 than the other song and we all agreed. Sound effects were used to help audience appreciate mimes to be used in the performance.

As part of the scene development, the option of using choreography as a communicative tool to the audience was also explored. Daniella suggested that we use inanimate objects as insignia when dancing. Her idea was based on the fact that maintaining our surroundings is not the sole responsibility of the government but a collective effort. Biggles, the choreographer on the project, also stated that women and children suffer most during a disaster. The depiction such a scenario was to be enacted through the concept of a running water. A structured community versus an unstructured community will be depicted simultaneously. In the cause of doing this, initially, the team brought about another masterpiece of "*they don't really care about us*" a song by Michael Jackson. This song was to be a curtain raiser for the choreography with the inanimate object repeating the lyrics "they don't really care about us".

The main motive behind this was to criticise various governments for not putting enough punitive measures as deterrent for communities with poor sanitation. The song seeks to sensitize the community to be responsible citizens, by cleaning their communities and ensuring that community members adhere to good sanitary practices for healthy living. This idea was borrowed from Mohammed ben Abdallah's *Land of a Million Magicians*, where he expounds, "the power of authority must flow from you"(1993, p. 77). In a country like Ghana, there is always the tendency to point fingers at the government (leaders of the country) on any crisis that

befalls the nation. It became imperative to use this means to educate the audience to understand that they constitute the government. Thus, moving the country forward is a collective responsibility involving both leaders and the citizens.

The facilitator chipped in the idea of including patriotic songs to enrich the drama and also evoke patriotism in the citizens (audience), and this was agreed on by the team. We then selected two patriotic songs - “*Oman b3y3 yie a*” and “*Ma oman yi ho nhia wo*” to be used. Patriotism is synonymous to Nationalism and nationalism connotes a sense of identity construction. Post-Independence Ghana witnessed several political interests in using the performing arts as a means to project self-identity and national identity. Therefore, according to Cudjoe and Okyere, who investigated identity construction in the popular Ghanaian Highlife dance during Ghana’s post-independence stated that “movements that evolved during the colonial and post-colonial eras which formed the highlife couple dance came about as a process of “finding a niche” to cover in an environment that reflected varied personalities and identities. The structured dance accompaniment to the music was a representation of a “nationalized” identity replete with its own essence and belonging” (2018, p2). The two song-texts inspire a sense of belonging and places an introspective responsibility on individuals towards national development. Likewise, in selecting these two songs it is established that long-term sustainability is foremost personalized on an individual level and then at the national level. As a song of advocacy it reiterates the notion of national representation, and Stuart Hall rightly puts it that “our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning...”(1989, p. 69). The team was challenged to use the ideas to develop their monologues as they reflected on these cultural codes embedded in the song-text.

The phase ended with the team agreeing on using the following structure:

- The play was structured in Six (6) Acts, of fifteen (15) minutes each. This implied that the performance would not exceed one hour thirty minutes.
- The first section would involve the use of flash mob as a *prelude*. The flash mob would be a popular dance performance to one of Gasmilla's<sup>20</sup> popular songs "Falefale"<sup>21</sup>. This idea was based on advice of a team member who was very engrossed in the community. Kelvin suggested that one way of keeping the people connected and staying for the play was to interlace the performance with some popular music.
- Act 1: The second section is the first act, which addresses Goal 15 (Life on land). It dealt with nature and the adverse effect of our daily activities that harm the natural environment. The devastating nature of the flood on humans was addressed in this Act. In this scene, characters imitated deforestation and building in waterways. When it rains, we see the water destroying the buildings in its path.
- Act 2 addresses issues on Goal 3 (Good health and Wellbeing).
- Act 3 addresses household waste and drains. This act was structured by the team as it sought to address issues in both Goal 3 and 6. In this act, there is a depiction of a man defecating into a water body and another person urinating into a gutter. A woman who sweeps her compound, comes out to dump her waste into the gutter and is confronted by a resident. She gets furious and talks about the fact that Zoomlion is ineffective when it comes to collecting the waste generated in the household and as such the gutter is her only resort. An environmentalist then intervenes to educate the audience on the need to keep the environment clean.

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<sup>20</sup> Gasmilla International Fisherman (Odartei Milla Lamptey) is a Ghanaian Hip-life artist. He is noted for hit songs like "Telemo" and "Aboodator". Some of his songs touches on social ills and advocacy.

<sup>21</sup> Falefale is a Ga word meaning Cleanliness.

- Act 4 suggest how digital technology can be used to reduce felling of trees for paper, bags, etc.
- Act 5 engages the use of the 4R's (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) as recommendations to the social canker of environmental degradation.

Second Phase: This phase extensively focused on monologue and dialogue developments, improvisation, mime, music and choreography. The team's original music compositions happened at this stage: two original songs were created through the leadership of Nenesenor. It is worth noting that, each team member was supposed to create at least two monologues on two goals. Even though monologues and dialogues were created individually, they were fine-tuned collectively. Each member recited his monologue at rehearsals to the house and we made recommendations based on the scenarios. Some members posted their monologues on the group WhatsApp platform for opinions before rehearsal. It must be emphasised that the role of the director as a facilitator was operational at this level. I had to make sure that we agree to disagree as a collective. The team discussed the arrangement and structure of each monologue. Some scenarios were developed from some monologues. Improvisational and miming techniques were explored extensively in developing the ideas into scenes and Acts at this phase. Blocking of scenes were done, as the scenes were being developed. It was at this stage that Mrs Akua Abloso revisited the team to assess the development of the folklore, and to support the team appreciate the history behind some selected folklores. This timely meeting caused us to rethink our stands and re-strategize. For instance, our working title changed in the process from *Piloloo* to *Chaskele*, as the concept of *Chaskele* resonated with what we wanted to achieve with the SDGs more than the former.

*Chaskele* is synonymous to baseball, but in this game, the character (cleanliness) who throws the can (in our case refuse) aims at dropping it in either a basket or a used car tyre. There is another

character (anti-cleanliness) close by the basket whose duty is to prevent the thrown object from entering. This anti-progressive character thinks it is somebody else's business to clean up the environment, and not him.

Line rehearsals took place at this stage: this was because we needed to create cohesion and bonding for the team. The team needed this because we wanted to create believable characters, who would symbolise the community.

Choreographic movements and mimes were further developed to enhance the story at this stage. For instance, in Act. 2, we agreed use Trotro station as our setting because many people board these buses to their various destinations. The choreographed mime was to depict the loading and moving of a vehicle, which was to move on the stage and through the auditorium. This was one way we broke the fourth wall. The Samuel Becket's *Walking in Space* technique was adapted to illustrate the movement of water.

Commitment by some members who we started with began to wane to the extent that some had to leave. This ~~æ~~ called for a dynamic restructuring of the developed scenes, which is an acceptable practice in devising. The changes the team did was not too different from the original scene structure. We had to merged some Acts to have three Acts finally:

- Act 1 - Nature (Goal 15): This is a choreographed scene based on Michael Jackson's *Earth Song*. There was a fusion of monologues on the devastating actions and inaction of humankind, which has affected nature in this act. Patriotic songs like *Ma Oman Yi Ho Hia Wo* and folkgame like *Mep3 Kwan Ako* was to be incorporated into the Act.
- Act 2 - Market and Bus Station life (Goal 3): This act focused on depicting the lifestyles of people at the marketplace, and bus terminals or stations in the community.

- Act 3 - Household, Drains and Alternative (Goal 6): This Act focused on carrying the message of adverse social activities households portray regarding sanitation and how they manage their waste. It was also to capture the uncouth behaviour of the citizens towards drains in the country. In the end, there was also a piece of alternative advice given on how to handle waste materials in the country.

We were fortunate to test a section of the second stage with some audiences at Prampram with support from Plastic Punch one of our partners. As a group, we classified the performance as a pilot performance. It will be important to discuss our engagement with Plastic Punch at the section.

#### **4.1.2.4. Engagement with Plastic Punch**

We were privileged to join the Plastic Punch team for their beach clean-ups at Coconut Pointe Hotel<sup>22</sup>, New Ningo Prampram at the behest of Richmond Kennedy ‘Legacy’<sup>23</sup> after they were interested with our theatre as a gizmo in addressing SDG 3, 6, and 15. This invitation made us research about the activities of Plastic Punch to know how well our experimental approach will fit into their activities as their focus was engaging with Goals 6 (Clean Water & Sanitation) and 14 (Life below Water). We agreed to stage Acts 1: Nature (Goal 15) and Act 3: Household, Drains and Alternative (Goal 6) which relatively affects Goal 14. We joined them to climax the celebration of World Ocean Day 2019. Even though we were billed to perform as a team, we took it as a fact-finding mission and endorsement of our research findings on the effect of sanitation and how our lifestyle affect nature.

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<sup>22</sup> Coconut Pointe Beach is very close to the estuary where the Djange River enters the sea. This is where the filth from inland comes into the sea. The beach is a turtle nesting and breeding site.

<sup>23</sup> Richmond Kennedy ‘Legacy’ Quarcoo is a Co-founder and President of Plastic Punch Ghana an NGO that is passionate about the environment. The mission of Plastic Punch is to raise awareness on the dangers of plastics to the environment, marine life, and humans, as well as finding and providing sustainable waste management solutions for Ghana and beyond.

We joined the Plastic Punch team and other volunteers at Alliance Francaise – the converging point, where a bus was available for all participants. The bus took off at 7:30am as majority of the registered had arrived and headed straight to New Ningo Prampram Township where we picked some pupil volunteers who Plastic Punch has been working with, and moved straight to Coconut Pointe Beach.



Figure 19: Plastic Punch Beach Clean-up poster at Coconut Pointe Hotel, New Ningo Prampram. We participated in all these beach clean-ups. ©Plastic Punch

The striking effect on arrival at the beach was the waste covering the shoreline, as there were no houses around for us to say they were responsible for the filth (See figure 17). We were deliberating on the source of filth on the banks. The activities for the day included; clean-up of the coastline, workshop on compost making, workshop on recycling, drama performance,

aerobics, and refreshment.

The Clean-up task (see figure 18) was for us to segregate the waste we collect at the seashore. Plastics, sachets, and anything rubber were to be collected by a group, glasses and bottles were to be collected by another group, then the last group was to collect shoes, clothes and materials. This technique was geared towards recycling, as some of their partners were recyclers of various products. The team adopted this strategy in our performance, especially the scene addressing recycling.



*Figure 20.a:* The Coastline of Coconut Pointe Beach filled with residue from the lagoon and neighbourhood.  
©Solomon Dartey





Figure 21.b: Types of residue found at the Coastline of Coconut Pointe Beach ©Solomon Dartey

After the clean-up activities, participants engaged in aerobics dance workshops on how to compost in the city, and creative reuse ideas of plastics, and the drama performance by Calabash Farm was the last activity for the day. Our Performance titled *Falefale* (Cleanliness) was performed under a shed at the Coconut Pointe Beach.

The *Falefale* performance was a one-act performance extracted from our main piece titled *Chaskele*. The performance opened with a Narrator giving an exposition, this followed with the playing of the *Chaskele* game that involved the audience. As the game was on going, Nenesenor interrupted with his monologue questioning our behaviour using the game as reference. Then came the Narrator with his pidgin narration. This followed with the water scene using Samuel Beckett's *Quad* technique, as the stage is filled with waste. This was interlaced with the choreography of Michael Jackson's *Earth* song. Three monologues on the subject matter were delivered afterwards. The play ended with the singing of two songs: *Oman be ye yei aa* – a patriotic song, and *Falefale* - an original composition created from the process addressing the issue of sanitation. The performance ended with the cleaning of the stage area which was filled with filth. Figure 19 are images from the performance by the Calabash Farm team.



Figure 22.a: Calabash Farm performing *Falefale* at the Coconut Pointe Beach. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 23.b: Performance of *Falefale* at the Coconut Pointe Beach. ©Solomon Dartey

The following ideas were collated from the post-performance discussion:

- Learnt that we have to clean our environment. (See production video attached: A lady respondent, Video: 25:18-27)
- If we drink sachet water, we should not drop the empty sachets in the gutters. (See production video attached: A female respondent, Video: 25:51- 25:55)

- We should not throw our plastics everywhere. (See production video attached: A female respondent, Video: 26:04- 26:09)
- Do not litter the beach (See production video attached: A male respondent, Video: 26:28- 26:55)

After the performance, which lasted for twenty-five minutes, we had our post performance reflection when we went for rehearsals. We observed that the pupils did not understand the monologue as the language used was, English but appreciated the multilingual narratives. This observation helped us to resort more to the use of the multilingual approach in delivering narratives, as our ambition is to reach the masses. The performance review offered us the chance to access audience engagement and what to do to get their attention as the kids were carried away by the Chaskele game. We also used the opportunity to enhance our *falefale* song, as we realised the audience understood and enjoyed it. The performance experience at Coconut Pointe Beach, led to the final structuring of the performance, as we were able to identify what was lacking and what we needed to bring to the fore.

This third phase was the final stage of the project. In order to make up the numbers for our cast the team collectively agreed to recruit three more people had to leave the project prematurely. We briefed the new recruits on the performance demands and our expectations.

Our proposed performance date (19<sup>th</sup> July 2019) was to be agreed on by Management of LaNMMA, unfortunately they had a month-long program, which could not accommodate our performance. Upon further consultations, we agreed on Thursday the 27<sup>th</sup> June 2019, at 11am in the Hall of the Assembly. It was a day they will have all Assemblymen attend a General Assembly Meeting. I had to agree because we will need their space and audiences. Their constituted audiences agreed upon were to include: Assemblymen, staff, Community leaders, youth groups, and Stakeholders (see Appendix 2 – Invitation letter from Assembly).

Based on the above development, we intensified our rehearsals by extending times and days. We also included some real-life activities people engaged in, hence the adoption of Documentary – a multimedia approach to augment the total theatre performance. Final outline of the production structure was agreed on and that became the blueprint for the rest of the rehearsals. We moved our rehearsals from the Mirror Room and Drum Village to the ETS Drama studio as we got permit from the studio manager to use the space for rehearsals (see Appendix 3- Permission Letter).



*Figure 24.a:* Rehearsal at ETS Drama Studio. ©Solomon Dartey



*Figure 25.b:* Construction of Props for the production. ©Solomon Dartey

This new space offered us the opportunity to work with the technical elements, as the technical crew were eager to justify their ideas at rehearsals. They led most of the rehearsals at this section, especially the set designer, as we needed to engage with their creatives. Agnes Adomako, the set and props designer assembled car tyres, which served multiple purposes in the production (see figure 20 & 21). Actors engaged with it, as a play tool, and a set. Her focus was to employ elements within the environment classified as waste products. She engaged with the style of symbolism through scenic improvisation, with the intent of providing hints of ideas for the audience to journey with the disseminated message. She advised that we use placards and signpost as signage to establish setting since as a team we agreed to borrow ideas from Bertolt Brecht. She justified the use of placards and signpost because we engaged with more than five locations and establishing a unified set would not support the performance, especially as we were not definite about the space for performance. These signage's described varied scenarios in the performance; they include, 'Don't Urinate Here', 'No Shitting, Spot Fine GH 50.00', 'Well planned Settlement', 'Unplanned Settlement' and 'Don't throw refuse here'. The team supported her minimalist ideas as it saves cost and tailors the ideals of the SDGs.



Figure 26.a: The car tyre props being used as a community bridge and boundaries. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 27: The car tyre being used as a holding for the Chaskele game. ©Solomon Dartey

We collectively worked on the construction of properties (props) using waste materials like bottles, sachet bags, papers, food packs, disposable cups just to mention a few, these items were modified (either by taping, gluing, painting and assemblage) to increase its volume, improve texture and distort/ augment its appearance for effective usage (see figure 22). The scenic design was unelaborate yet suggestive and functional, leaving room for audience to employ their imagination and intuition to break down the team's vision.



*Figure 28.a:* The Team working on some props using waste materials we gathered during the creative process.  
©Solomon Dartey



*Figure 29.b:* Creating the Chandelier from waste materials for the production ©Solomon Dartey

The Costume designer (Aku Sika) who doubled as a cast member tailored the minimalist style and encouraged the use of mask for inanimate objects. She engaged the concept of symbolism by using articles of clothing to represent the roles of animate characters as they adorn black tops and tights. For instance, a tie was used to depict a corporate worker. This idea enhanced swift costume changes and reduced the quantity of costumes required hence the need to do without wardrobe assistants. Her major designed task was designing costume for the character Water. The creative idea for the Water character was extensively discussed with, the Costumier and Kelvin – the actor playing the role. This is because we wanted the actor's movements to be fluid and unrestrictive.

We decided on a cloak gathered at the waistline with a hood. She gave it a mixed gender look as some water bodies have gender attributes, especially in Ghana. She used polyester fabric and woven cord to create the top part while the tulle was gathered at the waistline to give the flowy



effects of water when the actor made his movements. The net pattern also served as a surface on which strung waste items were pasted with the help of Velcro. Attached to the upper part of the cloak costume was fish scales created with polyester fabric. This was to create the impression of the net catching fishes in the river or water bodies thereby highlighting the importance of water bodies to man's survival (see figure 23)



*Figure 30: Cast member trying out the costume with the Costumier. ©Solomon Dartey*

General costume for all performers were black tops and black tights, which were suggestive of neutrality. The choice provided ease in movements, as well as enabling actors perform multiple roles without distorting the image portrayed.

The lighting designer (Margaret Lamptey Amo) started putting her ideas to practice at this point of the rehearsals, though she was engaged in the process from the inception. The lighting design concept was conceived during rehearsals, as there was no script to fall on; this served as the main

source for gathering lighting cues and organizing ideas for the design. The designing process was in phases, as actors had to create dialogues and scenarios during rehearsals, which were subjected to additions and subtractions to carry the message across. The decision of colours to use from the lighting palette and the kinds of lighting equipment to use were considered and firmed up as rehearsals progressed.

Moving rehearsals to the Drama Studio, provided opportunity to enhance technical perspectives. The lighting designer for instance got a clear view of movements on stage as she got where to hang the lighting fixtures to get the specific distribution of the lights on stage. Her design ideas were tested during rehearsals, as the team also contributed ideas to enhance the look. Her challenges were establishing accurate moods and making projections visible, as light rays will be emanating frontally. She requested we re-examine the structure and possibly put the projections earlier or later. The costumier (Aku Sika) and other team members corroborated her suggestions. The team revisited the structure and unanimously proposed a final structure putting technical needs at the forefront. This re-examination enabled her to develop detailed lighting cue and lighting plot for the performance and reproduction of the piece

This experience helped us to finalise on the production structure:

- **Prologue:** *Chaskele* – The prologue starts with the Tonto Airplane (whirling of cloth) and pushing of car tires to create a playful atmosphere. Participants arrange Car tires to form a huge container serving as the Chaskele basket. The formation leads to the start of the Chaskele game.
- **Act I:** Nature (Goal 15) - This section deals with nature and its destruction. It tackles the subject matter of deforestation, water pollution, and environmental degradation. These stories are told using storytelling, and choreographic movements approach. Folkloric elements like *Ma Oman Yi Ho Nhia Wo*, and *Me Pɛ Kwan Akɔ*, are used.

Transition – *Daa daa Ke be Ke be*

- **Act II:** Market & Station Life (Goal 3) - This scene focuses on the ordinary lifestyle of the people at public places. Folkloric elements like *ampe*, *aka aka aka*, and *blewu ee* are also used.

Transition – Documentary – the documentary highlights the effect of indiscriminate disposal of refuse, and the impact of flooding. It also professes ways to address the canker and improve on the environment.

- **Act III:** Household, Drains & Alternative – (Goal 6) - The scene engages on the sanitation lifestyle of the people and their use of drains through music, sculpture and dialogue. The folkloric elements like poetry, spoken word, *biɛɛŋɔlogy*<sup>24</sup>, *Oman be ye yiea*. This act also deals with the way forward, where recommendations such as the 4Rs concept (Reuse, Refuse, Reduce & Recycle) are proffered on how to tackle these challenges.

After the agreed layout by the group, our rehearsals followed the pattern as ideas were twigged to suit the agreed format. It must be emphasised that the scene structure became the heart of the devised product. Team commitment and consistency at rehearsals helped shaped the product with its technical elements, which blended well at the technical rehearsals held at the Drama Studio of SPA. The blended creative approach will be extensively discussed in the next section.

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<sup>24</sup> *biɛɛŋɔlogy*: A modern approach to tapping into traditions and arts of indigenous spontaneous performance poetry. Random words are thrown by the team/audience to the poet/performer, who immediately strings them into a spoken word verse in the spur of the moment. During a performance, the performer introduces the audience to the concept and invite them to join. The term is a Ga word, which translates to “right now/right here”. This coinage is by Yibor Kodzo Yibor and Nii Lante Lamptey of Ehalakasa.

#### **4.1.2.5. Technique/Creative Approach**

The session will highlight the various elements explored in the SDGs performance using the devised approach. The group agreed on some creative approaches to be used in the process. These are theatre forms and elements engaged for the propagation of the message of the SDGs in Ghana.

##### **4.1.2.5.1. Total Theatre**

This concept evolved from Richard Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk: "a total or unified work of art, in which all elements – music, voice, movements and spectacle – work together..." (*Total theatre - Oxford Reference*, 2020). The concept denotes the amalgamation of several artistic techniques in a performance of which the outcome of this project will portray. *Chaskele* for instance engaged several artistic elements as a means of communicating and enhancing the artistic presentation for promoting the SDGs in Ghana. Apart from the dramatic elements, other artistic elements engaged in the performance include music, dance, spoken word, mask, movements, documentary, and folklore. This approach was chosen as it offers diverse opportunities to meet the varied needs of the vast audiences. The elements used in achieving the Total Theatre approach will be discussed focusing on its benefits to the devise process. Through discussions and experimentation, the performance aesthetics explored several other elements in producing its product.

##### **4.1.2.5.2. Folklore**

Folklore was the principal means through which ideas for creating the performance was developed. The folklore incorporated music, games, dance, and tales as a stimulus for engagement. This proved useful, as devised performances require a stimulus for its story development. This project depended on folklore to excite imagination and sustain interest in advocating the SDG Goals. A stimulus serves as the initial point for developing ideas for the

performance. It is in this respect that every scene changes or beginning of scene for this project engaged some folkloric activities.

Folkloric materials of Ghanaian origin as noted above was the main catalyst used in the devised play as a medium through which the message was communicated. We researched on our anticipated audiences to serve as a guide to our creative work. Our target audience were cosmopolitan in nature, hence the need to know them and how to reach out to them through performance. This is because conventional play performance with a classic form might not achieve our purpose. That is why folklore was used since most of our audiences engaged with a folklore as a play tool growing up.

We used some folkloric materials that the local folks and even the elite could relate with. Some of the folkloric activities we engaged with were tales, games and songs. Games such as *Pilolo*, *Chaskele*, *Police and thief*, *Ampe*, *Me pe kwan akɔ* were considered for the performance. These selected games were developed and enhanced at the workshop stage, to enable the team visualise how it will play on stage. The prominence and ideology behind the games influenced our choice for the production title *Chaskele*.

Using folkloric games in a performance that addressed serious society issues were very helpful. This gave the team and probably the audience some playing time as they reflected and reminisced their childhood days. The storytelling mode was also a means used to espouse the goals in the performance. The Narrators were tasked to summarize every act and detail its essentials and the specific goals being addressed.

Folkloric activities such as *Daadaa k3gbee k3 gbee*, and *Aka Akaa Aka*, were used in the play to grab audience attention. These activities were meticulously placed at strategic points in the play. This helped in getting attention from the audience throughout the play.

#### **4.1.2.5.3. Monologues**

*Chaskele* unlike most plays used monologues as one of its core elements in communicating the message of the SDGs. These monologues were developed after the workshop on the Goals. The team was tasked to research and come up with monologues addressing each Goals and how they are reflected in the community. These monologues gave a clear indication of what we wanted the audience to take from the play.

Monologues were then situated at their rightful places under the goals as part of the devised piece for effective communication. Most of the monologues professed the problems and offered recommendations. The SDGs have been operationalised for a while but most of these community members have relatively no idea as to its purpose to them as citizens. Perhaps the medium of communicating these SDGs to the people became a challenge. We therefore used the monologues to speak to certain issues and make the message accessible to the audience without having to read some ambiguous document.

This element became efficient as a bit of stop-start play drama technique was employed. In this case, the actors would freeze at an instance and have one actor address an issue while the others look on. For instance, during the performance in the market scene, a lady character stepped out of the act while the others remained frozen to confess the problems she is going through since she left the village to the city. When she finished her speech, the other characters unfroze and the performance continued. The monologues were also used as alienation effect - to break the attachment of the audience to the performance and focus on important issues in the performance. This was another technique used to highlight on issues. At the tail end of the production, we see individuals come in with their monologues telling the audience how best to recycle their waste materials for the betterment of their environment and also their personal wellbeing.

Lastly, the monologues were used to espouse some of the feelings of inanimate objects as the activities of humans affect them. For instance, the monologue on choked gutters with waste materials.

The monologues became the pivot for linking and developing dialogues. The bigger ideas in the monologues were deconstructed through this means to enhance audience appreciation and understanding. The improvisation technique was heavily relied on for dialogue creation. This was achieved after the ideas and monologues were situated under the right section or act. The structure and monologues became the frame on which dialogues, music, and other movements were developed.

All these techniques were employed to give the play a facelift and further make the audience enjoy the play while learning on environmental health care and the SDGs.

#### **4.1.2.5.4. *Physical Theatre***

Since the devised product was a total theatre performance, dance featured prominently. Besides, dance also forms an integral part of the community's activities during most public gatherings. The decision to make dance one of the bedrocks for devising the performance was because dance resonates with the people and it is a means of drawing attention. Dance also uses movements as a means of communication. In this light, Abigail Sena Atsugah (Biggles), a choreographer who happens to be a community resident was co-opted into the group. Her role was to help in movement development for the devised performance using the collaborative approach.

From the onset, the decision to rely on Samuel Becket's *Quad* was imperative to the development of the first scene dubbed the water scene. For this scene, the facilitator suggested the use of such movements to depict the flow of water through space. The team found that to be an amazing addition to the piece and the team tasked the choreographer to find amenable movements using the *Quad* as a catalyst. Water moves in a steady manner and repels or

meanders its ways through paths it creates for itself. Movements depicting the flow of water were developed based on ideas borrowed from the *Quad*. We had people moving in diagonals and along the edges of the stage in non-meandering path as used by Becket in his *Quad*. The movements developed in many phases, especially when obstructed by an object or an individual.



Figure 31: Performers rehearsing the flow of water inspired by Samuel Becket's *Quad*. ©Solomon Dartey

In some instances, the performers moved in the space and redirected anytime two or three people meet at a point- this represents the redirection of water when its path is obstructed (see figure 24).

Physical theatre was used in almost every act of the performance. Physicality and movements heavily dominated the first act, as those scenes were used to expose the impact of our lifestyles to nature and its consequence on livelihood. Sena Atsugah and Kelvin Apeti created choreographic movements based on Michael Jackson's *Earth Song*, which was used in addressing Goal 15. Physical theatre as a creative approach served as a communicative tool as well as enhancing the output of the performance.



#### **4.1.2.5.5. *Improvisation***

Improvisation was used as an explorative tool to generate new contents and to explore ideas in a devised performance. This technique was core to the creative process. At this stage, the ideas captured from the research phase were given artistic life through experimentation at rehearsals. Improvisation helped us to invent and create our contents spontaneously, which aided us to generate instinctive ideas and character development. As we were working without a script, the appropriate means to develop a content for the devised project was to use improvisational techniques. Group members were encouraged to be open-minded and run ideas with the group so we accept and develop the feasible ones, thus defining the framework of the scenes. This process is fun and somewhat stressful due to the need to experiment numerously to generate a common and acceptable product. This was also the means for performers to sharpen their performances skills at rehearsals, as members had the opportunity to critique each other and proffer alternatives, hinging on collective interest. We used the spontaneous improvisation technique extensively to develop dialogue and scenarios. When the ideas are developed, the group through its day-to-day reflections refine the ideas at rehearsals until majority are up to scratch with the idea and gestures. This is where the director's work come to the fore; leading discussions and implementing ideas developed by the group. This helped us to develop our stories coherently based on the accepted scenarios and monologues developed around the SDGs were operating. Most scenes were created based on real life events we witnessed and heard about in the country and more importantly what the people were familiar with. Scenes of a trotro (bus) station, market place, household dumb and slums were created based on experience within the LaNMMA community. Thus, the team used these locally based sites as a point of contact and through improvisation developed scenarios that addressed challenges within the community and the nation at large. Aside the monologues and Narrator's speeches, all dialogues were uniquely

improvisational. These dialogues were created through community observation, as the team are members of the community.

#### **4.1.2.5.6. Music**

Most part of the performance engaged music, which is meant to throw light on the key message. The songs used were purposefully selected for the performance from Ghanaian patriotic songs and folk culture. These songs were deemed thematic as they resonate the lifestyle of the people and the need to change.

The quest to engage the total theatre approach of which music is a part of did not warrant the usage of any song that comes to mind. All suggested songs were analysed and scrutinised to ensure their viability in enhancing or strengthening the propagation of the SDG message. The songs were to create an environment for the audience to relate to while the act progresses.

Different genres of music were engaged in the process: folksongs, patriotic songs, sound effects, natural sounds, recorded music of popular musicians, and original songs. Act One which addressed the issue of how water bodies and natural resources are handled, used sound effects of raindrops and flowing water. Michael Jackson's *Earth song* was used in the act to choreograph movements depicting the impact the actions of humanity have on natural resources, especially water. Apart from special effects sound sourced online, the team used either xylophone, slit drum or Atenteben to create all other effects (see figure 25).



Figure 32: Atenteben, ©African Drumming



Figure 33.b: Slit drum. ©David Darling



Figure 34: Xylophone. ©Pinterest

The creative process enjoined us to be original and this led the team to create its own song based on the thematic issues engaged in the process. This process led by Nenesenor used a mixed genre of rap, spoken word, and call and response to create the theme song *Falefale*. *Falefale* means cleanliness in the Ga language a local dialect of the indigenes of Accra in Ghana. The song contained messages of cleanliness and the need to clean the community to avoid diseases like malaria and cholera.

Patriotic songs such as *Oman b3 y3 yie*, and *Ma )man hi hie wu*, were chosen based on the correlation they have with the thematic issues being engaged in the project. The message of empowerment, and responsibilities that behoves a citizen are embedded in the selected songs. These songs used as educational tool to inform audiences on their roles and responsibilities as citizens was amplified after the pilot project at Pampram. Music which comprised of instrumentals, and lyrical songs, served as interlude and performance enhancer, played a significant role in the devised process.

#### **4.1.2.5.7. Mask**

The performance structure required the creation of non-human characters and the most appropriate means of depicting them for our purpose was to make the characters' wear mask for representation and conveying the elusive truth. Apart from representing the non-human characters, our use of mask was not to communicate mood or emotions but to enhance characterisation and aesthetic possibilities (see figure 26).



Figure 35.a: Water navigating through a well planned community. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 36.b: Movement of water in an unplanned community. ©Solomon Dartey

The usage of mask was not for the entire performance but restricted to the water scene. The scene portrays the effect water can have when its path is obstructed and vice versa. Engagement exploring with the mask gave the performance a different outlook.

#### 4.1.2.5.8. *Design*

The production design focused on using waste and reusable materials as much as possible. The performance opens with stage scattered with waste materials (see figure 27). These materials are the day-to-day materials we indiscriminately discard in our surroundings. The group collected them from the community and engaged with them for the performance. The waste vehicle tyres were used for two purposes; stage props for the Chaskele game and a set-in other scene.



Figure 37.a: Pre-performance rehearsal on the stage. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 38.b: Folk game being played by performers on stage ©Solomon Dartey

As the project is geared towards engaging the people on environmental cleanliness as well as promoting the SDGs, the performance professed varied ways waste can be *recycled* or *reused* if we forget to *reduce* and *refuse* (see figure 28).



Figure 39.a: Recycled used disposable cups into a chandelier. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 40.b: Recycled tyre into an eco-friendly material ©Solomon Dartey

#### **4.1.2.5.9. Documentary**

This section focuses on the exploration of multimedia approach as a section of the performance was screened. The outcomes included background effects from images and field archives as well as a documentary which was shown in-between scenes. The documentary style is a non-fictional film form that is an authentic representation of the reality. It aims at presenting realities and actualities in the community and the world. Documentary deals more with real issues, real events, real people, and real emotions. For documentary, the filmmaker has less control over events. It is a means for presenting accuracy or truth to the audience as our project aimed at revealing community challenges and strategies to engage in achieving the SDGs.

Some members of the team who had know-how in documentary film production led this section.

I worked with Amir A. Gbankulso, and Afotey Nii Odai. We sort to concentrate on recycling strategies in view of the indiscriminate of felling of trees, environmental pollution and its effect on humanity. The team also visited the Madina Township to film choked gutters and waterbodies in the community. The video was a mixture of moving images, graphics and photos. As the project engages the episodic style in story development, the documentary was created in same stead, so it could be a standalone performance. The team wove the materials we had into a collective and told a story with it. (See production video attached: Documentary)

#### **4.1.2.5.10. Reflections:**

Reflections are key components in any devising process. All phases of the creative process and product were critically reflected on. This was to enhance the efficacy of the finished product and its ability to communicate the SDG message it carried to the audience. Since some devisors start with nothing, it is essential to document the process and reflect on every stage or any creative idea that evolves in the process. Reflection is a laborious task but essential to the creative process through collaborative quizzing and agreement. Most of the questions that comes to the fore during reflection are:



- What worked and what didn't work during each phase for the group
- How could it be improved?
- How did the group work impact the process or product?
- What should be carried forward, what should be dropped and what should be hanging?
- What general value will be imbibed in the audience, while enhancing suspense?

We were able to achieve the above as a team, because we appointed a secretary amongst us, whose duty was to document the process and discussions. These records are normally uploaded on the groups WhatsApp page before we meet for the next rehearsals (see Appendixes 10, 11A – 11F). Members at this point were encouraged to read the report and make suggestions as to deductions and omissions to improve the product, making them active participants. We reflect before and after every meeting to enable us to enhance creativity, continuity and coherence. We reflected after every performance to assess what worked and what did not work, and how to go about the next performances. We had two performances – Drama Studio, University of Ghana, and Alliance Francaise before the main performance at Madina. As a team, we had post performance reflections of which individuals submitted their reflections (See Appendixes 15A-15C). These individual reflections were shared with the group and it guided us in our performance at Alliance Francaise - Accra.

As the director, I mostly coordinated the reflections and ensured that our criticism is in a discursive and mature form to enhance cohesion. Members appreciate the process as spirit of creative suggestions and not intent to attack an individual or the group and this is one of the strategies that birthed the *Chaskele* production.

#### 4.1.3. The Product – Chaskele

The story sequence was refined in order to facilitate fluidity in the creative process of the final product. In the creative process of the product, the first thing was to put together a script<sup>25</sup> (See Appendix 4- *Chaskele* Working Script). The working script was simple and direct with its intended message of advocating the SDGs. Components in the working script included most theatrical elements that enhances performance. It is worth noting that the working script was not a fully fletched script or a playwright's play. This working script was shared with all team members to guide us in producing the consensus reached by the group.

As the director, I conscientiously consulted the working script at the technical rehearsals stage to help the team note their shortfalls. Engaging the working script helped the technical team to enhance its cues, as the team was focused on staying in the trajectory. The project was audience conscious; hence, the need to manipulate energy and resources to keep focus from onset to the end of the production.

At this stage, the team planned two performances at the ETS Drama Studio – UG- Legon, LaNMMA Assembly Hall – Madina respectively, and later invited to participate in the Agrobi Theatre Festival organised by Institut Francais-Ghana at Alliance Française of Accra (see figure 29 for production posters).

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<sup>25</sup> Working script is the blueprint that came out of our rehearsals sessions, meant to guide and keep the group focused on what we were producing.



Figure 41.a: Posters of the *Falefale* performance at Alliance Française – Accra part of the Agrobi Theatre Festival.



Figure 42.b: Poster of the performance of the product at LaNMMA Assembly Hall- Madina,

The ETS Drama Studio performance, which took place on the 25th June 2020 at 7:00pm, was a closed performance to seek professional thoughts of theatre practitioners and lecturers at the School of Performing Arts. This was aimed at reflecting on the performance from the perspectives of professionals before outdoorizing it to the target community. Faculty members that came to watch the production included Prof. Martin Owusu, Dr. Daniel Appiah-Adjei (Head of Theatre Arts Department), Africanus Aveh (Senior Lecturer-Theatre Arts), Rev. Dr. Aaron Yeboah (Studio Manager-ETS Drama Studio), Kofi Anthonio (Assistant Lecturer-Dance), David E. Quaye (Lecturer-Dance), Dr Amakye Boateng (Lecturer-Music), Eric Awuah (Tutor-Dance) and some Masters students from the Theatre Arts Department.

The main performance lasted for about an hour without interruptions.



*Figure 43.a:* People in a community disposing waste into gutters and water bodies. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 44.b: Performers depicting a trotro scene. ©Solomon Dartey

Audience reflection took place after the performance. The observations of the closed audience include the following highlights:

- Engulfing the stage with waste products and clearing them after the end of performance.
- Use of the appropriate working gears for cleaning the environment like gloves, pickers, and nose mask.
- Recommend we use legible labels to enhance visibility other than just writing on A4 paper. They added that we write on both sides of the cardboard so the ‘Handyman/Props master’ will just turn it other than flipping the cards.
- The transitions before and after the documentary should be seamless, as what they saw killed the flow of performance.
- Instead of hanging or placing some placards, we should let the Handyman always come with them when needed.

- Cast should consciously sing in key, and everyone should support during choruses.
- Structure the biengology to enable members know whom they follow, even though the act is supposed to be spontaneous.

The team appreciated the observations from the closed audience (see figure 31) during a post-performance reflection a day after. The team scrutinised the observations from the closed audience and that of the team. These observations were incorporated into the final performance to enhance the final outlook as well as send the message of the SDGs.



*Figure 45: Post Rehearsal analysis and discussion with selected audiences. ©Solomon Dartey*

#### **4.1.3.1. Performance at LaNMMA Assembly Hall**

The main performance took place at LaNMMA Assembly Hall at Madina Social Welfare on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019. It is important to enumerate the activities that took place on the day prior to the performance, in view of its tendency to influence the actual performance. The team arrived at the venue around 9:00am even though the performance was scheduled to start at 11:00am. The team's early arrival to the venue was an opportunity for us to familiarise ourselves to the space, as well as check the feasibility of the technical demands as the technical team setup a day before. Interestingly, the venue was not spacious as compared to the ETS Drama Studio, hence a technical rehearsal within the space to help us achieve our ambition.

After the technical rehearsals at LaNMMA Assembly Hall, Kelvin, Nene, and Dede complained that the space was limiting and affecting their respective roles, hence, they requested that we either amend the performance or plead with the stakeholders, so we move the performance to the ETS Drama Studio. Their concerns were collaborated by some other team members during our pre-performance review. As the Director, I mitigated; especially after consulting the technical team who assured us that they could function equally well within the space. I reminded them of the purpose of the performance and the target audience proposed by the assembly, hence the need for us performers to work within the allotted space or venue. As the liaison between them and the community leaders, I informed them of the possibility of staging the performance in a bigger space if the assembled stakeholders suggest a new venue. Hence, the need to give off our best and see what comes out of the major performance.

While the team was psyching up for the performance after our briefing, the administrator of the Assembly informed me that the lights are out and that they do not have a generator set or plant. This posed a challenge that could affect the scheduled time for the performance. I quickly organised and hired an alternative generator from the community for the performance.

The main performance started thirty minutes behind scheduled, as most of the stakeholders had not arrived. We engaged the waiting audience with some warmup activities (see figure 32); *Antoakyire, Ampe*, (popular Ghanaian folkgames) and contemporary dance movements to the memorable *Davii Neba* by Kawoula Biov, featuring Patapaa.



Figure 46.a: Warm up activities using folk games before the main performance. ©Solomon Dartey



Figure 47.b: Warm up activities using contemporary Ghanaian music before the main performance. ©Solomon Dartey



When most of the guests arrived (see figure 33), we officially commenced the program with the Master of Ceremony taking over from the team. There was the need to observe some protocols, so the Master of Ceremony assisted by the Presiding Member introduced the dignitaries and invited guest. We were grateful to have all the Assemblymen in the electoral area, Heads and staff of LaNMMA, representatives of the following groupings: Trade Associations, Drivers Union, Muslim Community, Christian Community, Youth Groups, Fitting and Garages Association and Non-Governmental Organizations, Zoomlion, Plastic Punch, Folklore Board and the Media present.



*Figure 48:* Guests seated in the auditorium waiting for the start of the program. ©Solomon Dartey

The program commenced with Mr Bernard Brock – the Director of Administration giving the opening remarks and purpose of gathering. Iddrisu Seidu Kananzoe – the Master of Ceremony expounded on the purpose of the gathering by espousing members on the SDGs, the composition of the performance team and what is expected of the audience after the performance. He read the synopsis:

*Chaskele* interrogates the ills that hound society in these modern times. Everyone seems to be complaining yet few are bothered in finding lasting solutions. With the aid of folklore, the performance that is propagating the SDGs stimulates thoughts on how to curb this menace and enjoy better life on earth. The creative process was characterized by collaboration between different forms, genres and artists. We are nobody telling somebody that anybody can save somebody (See Appendix 5- Chaskele Brochure).

After reading the synopsis, he invited the group to start the performance. The *Chaskele* performance started after his introduction. The performance (see figure 34), which followed our agreed structure, lasted an hour, ten minutes. The audience were very receptive as they sat through until the end of performance. After the performance, the receptive audience actively participated in the post-performance discussion.



Figure 49: Performance of the struggles of water in an unkempt environment. ©Solomon Dartey

Honourable Jennifer Dede Afagbedzi – the Municipal Chief Executive for the area was the first to comments after the performance (see figure 35). She congratulated the team and stressed on the sleepless night filth gives them in the community, especially at the market as it affects the

assembly's finances. She called for attitudinal change in this regard so they can channel the resources of the assembly for other developmental purposes. She further assured the community of the Assembly's commitment to supporting the project. Her speech paved way for audience reflection.



Figure 50: Hon. Jennifer Dede Afagbedzi – Chief Executive Officer of LaNMMA, giving a speech after the performance. ©Solomon Dartey

#### **4.1.3.2. Audience Reflection (Post-Performance Discussion)**

The audience appraised the performance and asked some questions for clarification where necessary (see figure 36). Most devising groups always end their performance soliciting the views of their audience. As devising is a continuous product, we use such contributions to better forthcoming performances, as the views of our audiences are significant to the process. The Master of Ceremony coordinated the post-performance discussion while the team listened to the feedback. Our secretary could not document this process because he was part of the performance. The videographer was tasked to document the performance and the post-performance discussion (see production video attached: Video recording of *Chaskele* at LaNMMA Assembly Hall).



*Figure 51: An audience member sharing his opinion after the performance. ©Solomon Dartey*

Some of the comments from the audience were revealing and educative, it showed that they grasp the concept of the SDGs from the devised performance. Their feedback and response will be a subject for analysis in the next chapter. Some of their transcribed and paraphrased feedbacks include:

- The filmed performance should be shared with the community leaders, clergies, and opinion leaders for showing in the communities as evidence to convince the people. They added that the post-performance aspect should be encouraged after they watch the film.
- It was also suggested that the performances should be staged in schools for students, since it is easier to change a child than adult.
- That sanitation officers should be visible in the communities to enforce the bye laws of the Assembly on sanitation.

- That Assembly members should initiate the revival of the culture of communal labour.
- Importantly, the audience present that day were unanimous in the decision that plastics should not be burnt. Thus, the need to educate the populace on recycling and how to manage plastics after use as the better option. Madam Edem Azanu, in her remarks, demonstrated how plastic bottles can be managed after using its contents.

After the Audience reflections, interviews (see Appendix 6: Sample *Chaskele* After Performance Interview Guide) were conducted for some selected attendees, using the purposive sampling approach. These included departmental heads of LaNMMA, Assembly members, and NGOs. Their response and press reviews<sup>26</sup> will be discussed in the next chapter of this project.

#### **4.1.3.3. Post-Performance Reflection**

The team needed to have a post-performance reflection after the performance. Post-performance reflection is an essential aspect of the devising process. However, it is done later after the performance day, so members can make meaningful contributions.

I tasked them to record their reflections and hand them in by the close of week. I did not set parameters for the reflections, as I wanted them to present anything that comes to mind based on their performance experience and comments from the audience. Most of the team members handed in their reflections (See Appendixes: 15A, 15B, and 15C), these reflections will be discussed extensively in the next chapter.

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<sup>26</sup> A performance review by Nene Osiedu Senyemi published 3 July 2019 on Ghanaweb with the *Chaskele event held in Accra*. This review can be assessed at <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/entertainment/Chaskele-event-held-in-Accra-760256?channel=D2>

The team had a call to present the performance at Alliance Française as part of the *Agrobi Theatre Festival* from 17<sup>th</sup> October to 26<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Plastic Punch and their diaspora communities who were at LaNMMA facilitated our performance billed for Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2019 at 8:30pm. The team took the opportunity to invite guests who were not in the community but performance lovers to grace the occasion. This performance was technically enhanced based on our experience and reviews from LaNNMA and having the opportunity to stage it on a professional theatre space. As a team we were poised to give off our best by enhancing the scenic effects and ambience.



Figure 52: Performance of the trotro scene at Alliance Francaise. ©Solomon Dartey

The first image depicts a carefully plan community (see figure 37). In the performance it was shown how water, when it rains, flows gracefully without causing any havoc. The second image from the left on top speaks to water struggling to find paths in slums, unplanned settlements and unkempt gutters. The first image on bottom left expresses the dire need of the earth in search of better treatment from humans. The last image depicts a daily public transport behaviour of passengers. In this scenario, a passenger drops a waste material on the road. In this case,

everyone in the bus tends to advise the lady on such an unhealthy behaviour towards the environment.



## Chapter 5

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 5.1. Introduction:

The preceding chapter detailed the process for developing the *Chaskele* performance including post performance and audience reflections. It described how the creative team was formed, as well as detailed how data gathered from the field were used in the creation of the devised performance. The post-performance and audience reflections data were analyzed in order to appreciate the meaning gathered from the audience as well as the team. The researcher replayed the performance and listened to the recordings of audiences and the team severally to ascertain the holistic appreciation of the data.

The transcribed reflections from the audience were analyzed to ascertain the appreciation of audiences if the devised performance exposes them to the SDGs under discussion. Common discourses were identified under the selected SDGs under exploration. The same approach was used to analyze the transcription of the post-performance reflections of the creative team. The focus was to analyse their appreciation of the creative process as well as their readiness to use the *Chaskele* model to promote the SDGs in their communities.

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the *Chaskele* performance as they address the SDGs under review from the perspective of a performance analysis.

#### 5.2. Performance Analysis

The aim for creating the devised performance *Chaskele* is to propagate the SDGs within communities and ultimately model a folkloric performance framework for the same purpose. The creative process and development of the performance was inspired by these inquiry questions.

1. How can devised theatre be used as an alternative tool for propagating the SDGs?



2. What innovative and effective processes and resources could aid in achieving the selected SDGs?
3. How participatory is devised theatre as a community mobilisation tool?
4. What is the impact of folklore as a stimulus in devising?

In the Routledge Introduction to Theatre and Performance Studies, Erika Fischer-Lichte outline that “a performance analysis aims to answer specific questions that the researcher has going into a performance and/or that arise during the performance or with regard to its public reception. Investigating a performance without having a specific question and simply trying to analyse the performance from every angle is not feasible.”(2014, p. 54). In line with this understanding, the analysis of Chaskele, as a performance piece (the product) aims at answering research questions 1, 3, and 4. Research question 2 will be answered in the next section when I analyse the creative process.

While answering questions 1, 3, and 4, the analysis of Chaskele as a performance will take into account the somatic, the phenomenal, and the semiotic dimensions of the performance. The performance is analysed mainly from my perspective as the facilitator, with some juxtapositions of responses from other audience members. Thus, from my perception while watching the performance both live and recorded, I discuss the meaning of the performance in reference to the research questions through the structure of description, interpretation, and insightful analysis of the form and content of the performance.

### **5.2.1. The Prologue**

The performance opens unto a stage covered with filth as seen in the image below. There is no fourth wall, and the audience are seated in the filth, which is a common sight on the streets on many cities in Ghana. Within a meter distance on many streets in Ghana, street users fight with plastic waste for space. Choked gutters, heaps of refuse on either side of the roads, pure water

sachets flying out of Trotros<sup>27</sup>, humans and refuse strangely co-exist on the streets in the Capital City of Ghana. So, before any performer will walk onto the stage, the opening scenery established an atmosphere of chaos and disorder, which was not only a reflection of the streets of Ghana, but most importantly, a questioning of the state of minds of the people.



Figure 53: MC on the stage introducing the performance. © Solomon Dartey

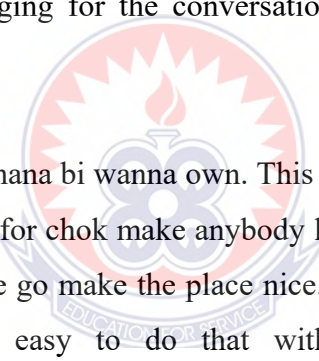
Shortly a narrator walks (see figure 38) onto the stage and greets the audience twice. On both occasions of greeting the audience, the Narrator expected and waited for the audiences' response. Thus, right from the onset of the performance, the audience were invited to participate in the performance. Theatre research has shown that a conscious and direct audience participation in performances is an effective way of ensuring transformation and community participation. Theatre traditions and practices like Epic Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed and Storytelling, have exploited the practice of audience participation to empower audience and teach morals. And so, such was the outlook of *Chaskele*, to engage the participation of the audience for the purposes of empowering them with knowledge of the SDGs.

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<sup>27</sup> Mini busses used for public transportation in Ghana.

In the Ghanaian cultural understandings, “greetings are a sign of acknowledgement, respect and concern for others and are followed by questions about one’s health, the family welfare, the journey etc.”(Global Affairs Canada, 2018). Therefore, by greeting the audience, the Narrator acknowledged their presence and invited them to have a conversation concerning the wellbeing of their community, which is being destroyed by their own doing. To establish a common ground for this conversation, the Narrator identified himself as one of the audiences, as a member of the Madina community. This deed establishes a sense of fellow feeling and collectivism, which is needed to ensure that all present in the auditorium are part of the problem and can be part of the solution. The Narrator also spoke in Pidgin English, which is common with the community, as a cosmopolitan settlement. Addressing the audience with Pidgin English further established the common ground and sense of belonging for the conversation they were about to engage in.

Below is the opening narration:



**NARRATOR:** This Ghana bi wanna own. This Madina, ebi we n))  
wanna own. We know for chok make anybody lef somewhere then  
come show we how we go make the place nice. Ebi we n)) wanna  
own. And it’s very easy to do that with the Sustainable  
Development Goals (SDGs) err. The power is in we naa wanna  
own hands to make the place nice. See, it’s very easy. It’s as easy  
as playing ‘Chaskele’. You naa just wait and see.

Right from the beginning of the performance, the audience were drawn in, engaged and they were ready and willing to partake in the conversation of the performance. This practice of consciously engaging the participation of the audience answers my first and third question. Engaging the participation of the audience the way the Narrator did in his opening address is a way of ensuring community participation and using theatre as a transformative pedagogical tool. Audience participation in the performance did not end after the opening address, and was not also done by only the Narrator. Throughout the performance, the Players performed with the audience through singing together, and question and answers during and after the performance.

Right after the opening narration, the prologue continues with the other players joining the Narrator on stage to play a series of Ghanaian traditional games. From rolling old car tires and gleefully (like kids) running around with one end of a piece of cloth tied around their waste and the other end held in their hands, (as seen in figures 2 and 3) while dancing to *Meridian* by Wulomei,<sup>28</sup> the players established a nostalgic atmosphere for the audience who relived playing the games in their younger years. Through the games, the Players set the stage to play Chaskele, which is also the name title of the performance. Chaskele is folk game mostly played by kids who attempt to throw refuse into a basket or a used car tire and one of them tries to prevent the others. Hence, the performance that sought to propagate the SDGs used the game of Chaskele to conscientise the audience about how some individuals and organizations are hindering the attainment of the SDGs. The way the game of Chaskele was employed in this performance goes to answer question 4 - how best can folklore be used as a catalyst of transformation for national development, and for the purposes of this research, knowledge on the SDGs, is engendered with Devised Theatre? The concept of the game of Chaskele encapsulates the essence of the performance, which was indicated by one of the Players.

**THE STRIKER:** And that's Chaskele. This is the game they are playing. Everybody wants to throw something into the tire but this guy (*Points at the guy with the stick*), standing there doesn't agree. Some were able to throw the rubbish into it, some couldn't. That's the moral of this game. Many of us over here in this Madina, don't like development. So, we have become stumbling blocks to the progress of the community. Like this guy who is hitting away the positive vibes of the others who are aiming at their goal, many of us do not want to come together as a unified force, to clean up Madina, to develop Madina and to progress Ghana as a whole.

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<sup>28</sup> *Meridian* is a nostalgic hit song produced by Wulomei a youthful Dance company from the Coastal sector of Ghana noted for producing folk music. Nii Tei Ashitey with Saka Acquaye supporting them formed the group, which produces indigenous Ga songs.

Please let's change our attitudes and it start from today. Thank you!

The playing of Chaskele ended the prologue (see figures 39 & 40) and well so, set the stage for the conversation on the SDGs.



Figure 54: Players rolling old car tires. © Solomon Dartey



Figure 55: Players running around with one end of a piece of cloth tied to their waste and holding the other end in their hands. ©Solomon Dartey

### 5.2.2. SDG 15 – Life on Land

The scene after the prologue focused on SDG 15, which seeks to “protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”(United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), 2020). For purposes of this performance, and in the context of the La Nkwantanang Madina-Municipal Assembly, the performance focused on the degradation of water bodies, forest reserves, and the consequences on human settlement.

The scene starts with the performers going through viewpoint techniques of shape, tempo, repetition, gesture, and movement. The performers start by moving diagonally across the stage, mirroring one another’s movements and gestures to create and represent the shape and movement of water. The scene is also lit with a sea blue effect to reflect the colour of water. The focus of the scene is to discuss how human activities are destroying the ecosystem, especially water bodies and forest reserves. The performers take turns to present monologues recounting how drainage systems meant to control the movement of water and prevent flooding in communities are being choked with pollutants like plastic waste, industrial chemicals, and human waste. These drainage systems then become contaminated and choked, which in turn contaminates water bodies meant for human consumption, and or causes flooding during heavy rains, and eventually resulting in the loss of human lives. Below is one of the monologues, which painted a gloomy picture of human actions against the ecosystem and called on the conscience of the audience to save the ecosystem from further destruction, or regret doing nothing.

**NENE:** I left my right in the centre of your heart. I lost my light in the darkness of your sight. The darkness of today’s light tore my retina apart. Show me good from evil and chance me a new start. When I finally draw my last breath, I will regret that I did not do that which I knew was right but left to fall apart.

The performers, singing a Ghanaian patriotic song, ‘*Ma ɔman yi ho nhia*’, called on the audience to wake up to this frightening reality. The moment of performing this song was solemn and reflective, as seen in Figure 41, to drive home the enormity of the situation at hand, and the need for everyone to get involved.



*Figure 56:* A solemn and reflective moment in the performance calling on the audience to wake up and take actions to save the ecosystem. ©Solomon Dartey

The Narrator takes the audience on a journey of creation, how God created a perfect ecosystem with each element – the sky, trees, water bodies, and animate beings – being dependent of one another. In his monologue presentation, the Narrator recounts how this perfect ecosystem is being endangered by human activities like deforestation and building on waters, which are causing flooding and rise in temperatures across the world. Speaking in pidgin, the Narrator satirises the consequences people are facing as a result of the incessant felling of trees meant to protect them from harsh weather conditions.

**NARRATOR:** Then times err, then the trees dey everywhere wey everywhere make green. As man start dey make plenty for the earth ein top, he see the trees n)) he figa say them dey there kwa. He no know say them bi things. Them bi serious things! So man start dey cut cut all the trees. He take build houses, then towns,

then right now if you look again, no place is green like that. Right now if erain small then flood go come spoil everywhere. Wey right now err, hmm, man dey the water inside dey drawn oo, he make shi. Wey God too, He chock for one corner like that wey he spy man wey he tell am say kwasia like that who born dog.

Still discussing SDG 15 the performance presents an enactment of how humans can safely coexist with water bodies in a well-planned settlement that discourages people from building along and on waterways. Assuming the place of buildings, the performers presented two scenarios: a well-planned settlement and an unplanned settlement where people build along and on waterways. In each scenario, the performance highlights the consequences of a planned settlement and an unplanned settlement as seen in figures 42 and 43.



*Figure 57: Representation of a planned settlement. ©Solomon Dartey*





Figure 58: Representation of an unplanned settlement: Players rolling old car tires. ©Solomon Dartey

The imageries created were larger than life, captivating, and captured the thoughts of the audience. It drew their attention to their illicit actions against the ecosystem, and made them aware of the frightening consequences of these actions. This moment in the performance made them sit back and reflect on the ills human activities cause to the environment. The moment pushed the frontiers of the performance as a pedagogical tool to engage community participation for the promotion of knowledge on the SDGs. During the talkback session, an audience member, Francisca Edem Zano, the Culture Coordinator for La-Nkwantanang Medina Educational Directorate, detailed what she learnt from watching the performance.

We have come to the realization that our flooding is caused by building in water ways. Water naturally takes its course so when we build on its way it also finds its level and causes destruction. Water is life so we need to avoid building in waterways, avoid throwing rubbish into waterbodies. In fact, we need proper planning, the planning department of the municipality should take upon themselves as a world cup and properly plan our societies so that we will not eat into the ways of the water to cause flooding. As an individual when I am buying a piece of land and the landlord is greedy enough to sell a land on a water way I would have to avoid

it. I have to let him/her know that what he/she is doing is not good so I will not buy that land.

Another audience member, Josephine Asayaa, a worker at La-Nkwantanang Medina Municipal Assembly- Records Department, mentioned that,

Your performance has really educated me. It has made me know that when we pull down trees it has a big effect on us especially the O-Zone layer. The heat that come on us does not make us feel comfortable. We have to check on people who cut down trees and give them severe punishment. I will also urge people to plant trees in their homes and communities as well.

When asked how the SDGs should be promoted in the community, Bernard Baah, an Assistant Director at the La-Nkwantanang Medina Municipal Assembly, indicated that, like this performance project, academic institutions should collaborate with state institutions, especially the municipal assemblies to create awareness on the SDGs.

These responses from the audience demonstrates how transformative theatre is as a pedagogical tool and the extent to which it can be used to engage communities to create awareness on the SDGs.

### **5.2.3. SDG 3 – Good Health and Well Being**

The presentation on SDG 3 started with a folk song the foreshadowed an understanding of what SDG 3 seeks to reduces. The song, Daada k3 b33 k3 b33, is a folksong in the Ga dialect which literally means, every day there is chaos among my siblings in the house. This song highlights a state of pandemonium in families, which challenges the health, and wellbeing of the people. With rising domestic violence, street violence, substance abuse in many communities in Ghana, especially within the La-Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly, using the performance to address SDG 3 was timely. In a 2020 report by the U.S Department of State’s Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), they state that, “street crime is a serious problem in Ghana, and is

especially acute in Accra and other large cities. Pickpocketing, purse snatching, and various scams are the most common crimes”(Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2020). The report further indicated that flashpoints in Accra include “Madina & environs; Adenta & environs; and Dansoman & environs.”(Overseas Security Advisory Council, 2020). The consequences of these rising incidents on domestic violence, street violence, and substance abuse ranges from homelessness, streetism, poor mental health, and even death.

SDG 3 seeks to ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all ages. This includes reducing maternal mortality, ending preventable deaths, reducing substance abuse, and increasing access and to sexual and reproductive health. These issues were rightly addressed in the performance. Starting with the folksong, the performance highlighted the state of pandemonium on the streets of Madina. Ranging from phone theft, pickpocketing, car accidents, quarrels between commercial drivers and their passengers because of overloading or over speeding, there is not a single day that there is no violent scenes in Madina and its environs.

The presentation of SDG 3 starts at a bus station. As expected, the atmosphere at a bus station in Accra is mostly chaos. Bus conductors calling and jostling for passengers, stationed traders calling for buyers from their stands, hawkers taking their products into the busses, passengers overtaking one another to board their buses, a typical scene at a bus station as presented in the performance is a survival of the fittest. Just after the conductor was done loading the bus, the driver comes to start the bus only to realise that there was a problem with the bus. The passengers would have to wait for a while for the bus to be fixed. This led to some quarrelling between the passengers, the conductor, and the bus driver. While in the bus, a passenger disposes a plastic waste on the street, which heightened the hostility in the bus.

Still at the bus station, an elderly man, who was a passenger in the bus was robbed of his phone by a passer-by. In the elderly man’s attempt to report the theft incidence, he was told it was a normal thing that happens at the Madina bus station. Another passer-by worried about the event

narrated how she was lured to come to the city for work only to end up as a sex worker. As though this racketeering was not enough, from nowhere a young lady came to accuse one of the male commuters of getting her pregnant and not taking care of her. The young man complained he doesn't have any money at the moment for her. The young lady, a teenager who isn't working, claimed she isn't living well which is putting her life and her unborn child's life at risk. She is unable to go for maternity care because she has no money and no health insurance. At the same time, another lady also accused another guy of impregnating her but this time, the other guy denies responsibility and the confusion between the two of them results into a scuffle with other commuters at the bus station all getting involved. Before long, one person was stabbed and died on the spot (see figure 44).



*Figure 59:* Scenes of the stabbing of the man in red shirt and a friend attending to him. ©Solomon Dartey

Below is the how the Narrator summed up the presentation on SDG 3.

**Narrator:** Our brother is dead already. Our friend is gone. Just like that. His life has been thrown away like the fickle flames on a candle. He is dead and gone. Along with all his dreams and all the endless possibilities that could have happened with his life. He is gone just because you and I could have done something but we

chose not to. Our brother is dead and gone. I know you would say this is not my business. Maybe you are right it is none of your business. But today, he is the corps lying by the road side. Tomorrow it can be you, you or me. He is gone. Just because one of us here could have done something but we chose not to.

As bizarre as these accounts in the performance are, they are not far from reality. On daily basis, needless deaths are recorded as a result of domestic violence, street violence, poor health systems, maternal mortality, and substance abuse. Moreover, this is what SDG 3 seeks to address; to reduce the rate of needless death and promote good health and wellbeing.

The Narrator further goes on to address the enormity of these needless deaths, which can be prevented if things are done right.

Narrator: Why should someone die from malaria, cholera, diarrhoea and why should a mother die after giving birth to a newborn child. Well sustainable development goal number 3 is fighting towards, ensuring health, safety, and social well-beings in our communities. We have to learn to keep our place clean. We have to promote better standards of living. Sustainable Development Goal 3, is fighting to ensure that we all have our safe well beings. And we are here for it!

From SDG 3, the performance continued with SDG 6: 'ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all'. This was the last of the three SDGs addressed in the performance. The focus was however on the latter part of the SDG, 'good sanitation for all'. A scene, which is not rare in many cosmopolitan cities in Ghana, is the wrongful and indiscriminate disposal of plastic waste and human waste. It is common to see overflowing waste bins left unattended to, choked uncovered gutters, polluted water bodies, and streets swamped in assorted plastic waste. Improper management of waste is an unfortunately common practice in many cities in Accra, and though there are laws meant to deter people from such practices, the laws are hardly implemented. These irresponsible sanitation practices include open

defecation, throwing rubbish into gutters, and pouring industrial waste into water bodies. When one of the workers at La-Nkwantanang Madina Municipal Assembly was asked what are the main cause of flooding in Ghana, Ms. Josephine Asaayaa, indicated, “the main cause is our attitudinal change because some of us dump refuse into gutters which eventually cause flooding. I think the sanitary inspectors should reinforce the bye laws again to punish those who litters around”.

In March 2012, the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP) reported that “poor sanitation costs Ghana 420 million Cedis each year, equivalent to US\$290 million. This sum is the equivalent of US\$12 per person in Ghana per year or 1.6% of the national GDP”(2012, p. 1).

#### **5.2.4. SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation**

To address SDG 6 in the performance, the scene started with a documentary of real-life incidences of people throwing refuse into gutters while it was raining (see figure 45). The thinking of these people was that the rainwater would carry their refuse away. They however do not concern themselves with where their refuse will end up, and they certainly do not concern themselves with if their refuse will pollute water bodies.



*Figure 60:* Participants watching the documentary being projected after the performers addressed SDG 3  
©Solomon Dartey

The showing of this documentary was a transition from SDG 3 to SDG 6. If good health and wellbeing can be ensured, then it is important that people keep their physical environments clean and desist from illicit waste disposable activities. During the post-performance discussion, Hon. Jennifer Dede Afagbedzi, the Municipal Chief Executive of LaNMMA, indicated that one of the incidents captured in the documentary happened in the community, and the Assembly has ransom for anyone who reports the whereabouts of the said culprit.

After the documentary, the rest of scene established on a field with used car tyres representing a gutter and a bridge. The bridge connects communities that are separated by a rain gutter but residents have converted it into a dumpsite, irrespective of the signposts that is meant to alert them not to defecate and throw refuse in the gutter.



*Figure 61: A performer defecating in an inappropriate place. ©Solomon Dartey*

The scene starts with two of the performers holding two signposts (see figure 46), which read, ‘no shitting here. Spot fine GHS50.00’, and ‘Do not throw refuse here’. Despite these signposts

boldly placed at vantage places, it did not deter other people from doing exactly what the signpost said they should not. From one person to the other, the performers took turns to either defecate, or dump refuse on the field, even against the stern admonishing of one of them. It took the intervention of a Sanitation Officer who appeared on the scene to restore some sanity. When questioned for their reasons behind engaging in such illicit acts, the culprits played ignorant but the Sanitation Officer referred them to the LaNMMA by-laws on sanitation:

**Sanitation Officer:** Article 1 section 1 - A person shall not dump refuse at an unauthorised place within the jurisdiction of the assembly. Article 2 section 3 - A person shall not defecate at the banks of rivers and water sources and other similar areas.

This brought the offenders attention to their crimes and the sanitation officer use the occasion to address them, rallied all of them to clean up the field. The next scene took the audience into the past when communities used to embark on communal labour – an activity that brings people in a community together to clean up the community. In the mood of work and happiness, the performers happily collaborated to clean up the field. This was a reminder to the audience that, the responsibility to keep their communities clean does not rest with a few individuals or government workers, but it will require a collective effort from all and sundry. Also, while this was going on, one of the performers brought on stage a chandelier made with recycled plastic cups (see figure 47) to educate the audience on how they can make money by recycling their plastic waste instead of indiscriminately disposing them.





*Figure 62: A character using used disposal cups to create a chandelier. ©Solomon Dartey*

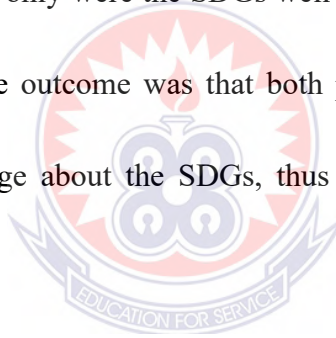
At the end of the performance, the MCE iterated her stance on promoting good health and wellbeing of the people in the municipal assembly. She mentioned that

Sanitation is a bite of challenge in my working environment. There is a lot to be done when it comes to sanitation. Like the performance we just witnessed and some of the contributions we just heard, I think we must start with our homes and schools. If we are able to educate our people and children from our various homes, I think we can go a long way but as we speak, we doing much better but we have a long way to go.

Another worker at La-Nkwantanang Medina Municipal Assembly, after watching the performance noted that:

the performance has really educated me. It has made me know that when we pull down trees it has a big effect on us especially the O-Zone layer. The heat that come on us does not make us feel comfortable. We have to check on people who cut down trees and give them severe punishment. I will also urge people to plant trees in their homes and communities as well.

As mentioned at the beginning of the Performance Analysis, the aim of the analysis was the use of the performance to answer research questions 1, 3 and 4: how transformative is theatre as a pedagogical tool; how effective is Devised Theatre to engaging community participation; and how best can folklore be used as a catalyst of transformation for national development? Throughout the analysis, answers to these questions were discussed. To sum up these discussions, theatre was well used for instructional purposes in reaching out to the performers of *Chaskele* and the LaNMMA community about the Sustainable Development Goals. The research centered, engaging, collaborative, use of folk materials and experimental approach used in the making of *Chaskele* ensured that not only were the SDGs well explained but also made relatable to the performers and audience. The outcome was that both performers and audience became empowered and embodied knowledge about the SDGs, thus becoming themselves, first-hand agents of transformation.



The next section will discuss research question 2: what innovative processes will be used in achieving the SDGs? To do this, I will discuss the creative process leading to the realisation of the performance. This will include, research, workshops, community engagements, and rehearsals leading to the final product.

### **5.3. The Creative Process:**

In answering research question 2, the analysis will focus on the creative process that birthed the *Chaskele* product. The focus of the analysis is from the point of view of the facilitator and the creative team. This will be from my observation as a participant as I reflect on the creative process and review the reflections of the other members of creative team. The discussion on the

intent of the creative process with reference to the research question 2 will be through the structure of description, interpretation and analysis of the process.

It is worth noting that the term *innovation* in research question 2, should be looked at from the viewpoint of the theatre making process engaged in this project. The details of the analysis will be structured under five (5) thematic areas:

1. Chaskele as a Devised Piece
2. Folklore and Its Place in the Creative Process
3. Directing and Directing Technique
4. The Impact of the Process on the Creative Team
5. Perceived Impact on Audiences/ Expected Impact on Audience/ Performers  
Reflection for/on Audiences

### **5.3.1. Chaskele as a Devised Piece**

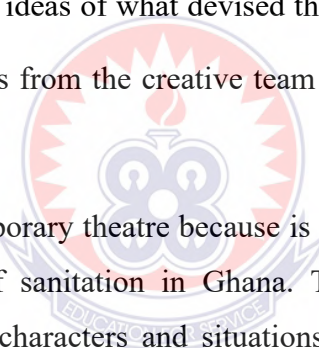
To commence the analysis, it is important to rehash the working definition used by the creative team to guide the creation of the *Chaskele* performance. Devised theatre is a division of applied theatre that focuses on using experimental theatre approach to create an original total theatre performance that prescribes and reflects contemporary social realities using research, improvisation, unordered collaboration, design, rehearsals and reflection, through cooperative engagement of the people by a director who acts as the facilitator. The working definition is what guided the creation of the *Chaskele* performance, where the idea of promoting SDGs, especially goals 3, 6, & 15 using folklore were tossed among the creative team by the facilitator.

The birthing of the *Chaskele* performance was out of shuffling creative ideas on promoting SDGs 3, 6, & 15 using folklore as the tool for stimulating actions for the story. As devised theatre allows for anything to be used, the creative team experimented and sampled folkloric

activities that resonates with the promotion of the SDGs. This was achieved with the guidance of the Director, whose key responsibility was to reconcile imminent misunderstandings as well as allow team creativity within the framework of promoting SDGs 3, 6, & 15.

It is worth revealing that devised theatre essentially thrives on openness, transparency and the promotion of equity within the creative team. Elements such as commitment to multiple perspectives and subjectivities to multi-modalities are what the *Chaskele* performance team hinged on in the creative process.

As devising encourages commitment to multiple perspectives, it was important to posit the product under contemporary theatre practices as reviewed in the literature section. Interestingly, the creative teams understanding of *Chaskele* performance as a contemporary theatre form varied from person to person though the key ideas of what devised theatre should entail are captured in most of their explanations. Quotations from the creative team that illustrate the aforementioned are:



“Chaskele is a contemporary theatre because is more natural and it addresses the issue of sanitation in Ghana. The piece presents realistic and ordinary characters and situations that the audience can relate to. It includes drama, dance, music and a documentary. A performance that is contemporary in every sense of the word.”  
(Lena)

“Chaskele is purely contemporary due its naturalness and the ideology communicated to its audience. Chaskele informs its audience of the current issues and how well it can be solved. The usage of various theatrical elements like music, graphic text and costumes makes it a contemporary theatre.” (Sammy)

“I see Chaskele as a contemporary play as in as Theatre of today, modern Theatre, Theatre in tune of the present time, the new practices of our time now.” (Abena)

“...Chaskele is not a written script and does not have the Aristotelian definition of tragic or comedy play performance attached to it. It is also not a melodrama or a romantic play but rather a collaborative and improvisational act of the performers and the technical group aided by the director of the performance.” (Maggie)

“It deals with current happenings in our community and what we do and see as individuals.” (Dede)

“It touches on issues that are relevant to recent occurrences in our environment and issues related to the youth in terms of direction and focus.” (Sena)

“For me Chaskele spoke on very important social issues that are happening now, it reflected the society we live in now.” (Dodzie)

“Chaskele is a contemporary theatre because of the subjects and theme it carries, it deals with issues surrounding our immediate environment. Another characteristic which make it a contemporary theatre is the use of characters.” (Christian)

From the creative team’s transcript, it is clear that the creative considers *Chaskele* as a contemporary theatre performance. Simultaneously, they consider the *Chaskele* performance as a performance whose thematic concerns addresses current societal issues, as well as incorporate theatrical elements like music, documentary, dance, and poetry into its performance, giving opportunity to audiences to relate. Dodzie, Sena and Dede for instance sees the performance as a piece of art that reflects current happenings in the community.

Collaboration and improvisation are some key terms that stand out in the creative team’s explanation on why the performance is a contemporary theatre. Even though the creative team is a selection of community youth members within the LaNMMA environs, their selection was an assembling of like-minded performing artists who are concerned about their community development and progress. The team availed themselves for the progress of their community and

were ready to collaborate with unfamiliar people. As devising thrives on collaboration, it is important now to analyse how the creative team collaborated in creating the *Chaskele* product, owing to their diversity.

Collaboration was key to the creative process, as the model requires the input of everyone in the creative team. The reliance on extensive collaboration was due to the absence of script, as members were mandated to create out of nothing, as they relied on ideas and improvisation. It can be argued that every performance engages some form of collaboration, but the level of collaboration engaged in this project is intense as all members including the technical team were involved from the workshop stage (conception) to post-performance reflection (finish). For example, Kelvin captures his experience with this type of collaboration in his reflection notes:

“I will say I’ve never been part of a production that includes the Costumier on stage, so I will say with costumes she got from both perspectives actors, dancers, and other crew members.”

The germane collaboration involving cast and crew in the creative process facilitated shared responsibilities and ideas through improvisation. As highlighted in the literature review, the product is a collective ownership, hence the need to be holistically involved. As the facilitator, I employed the consensus building approach to directing, as I ensured members had no restrictions pertaining to the creation from the start of finish. Christian for instance explains his experience as:

“The technique used I will say is the bottom-up approach, this is the case where the director allows actors to create based on their feeling on the subject. In the preparation of *Chaskele*, the director gave me the opportunity to write my own lines based on the subject which were being discussed.”

As there was no script to rely on, the team developed creative ideas out of the workshop, which exposed them to the SDGs, and folklore. These creative ideas were experimented with using improvisational techniques.

Improvising the SDG ideas with folkgames became the main tool for experimentations and story development after exploring the folkloric activities. The reflections of Margaret, the lighting designer notes that:

“The choosing of the games was driven by addressing the SDG’s. The choosing of the main game Chaskele which eventually became the title of the performance was to kick away dirt and have a clean environment.”

Through improvisations, folkloric elements were experimented with, birthing scenarios, which were later, developed into the story. Folkgames like Piloloo, Chaskele, Ampe, and Ashwe we estre’ were particular explored at the rehearsals stage. Quotations from the creative team reflections explains the place of games in the *Chaskele* product as:

“The games were used as narratives in the performance, so as to have a bearing on the audience and the performer and also I think the games served as a catharsis to the audience.” (Dede)

“The games created a traditional atmosphere, reminding the audience and us what growing up meant to us. It gave us the opportunity to reminisce fondly about the past, wishing we could employ our childhood all over again.” (Lena)

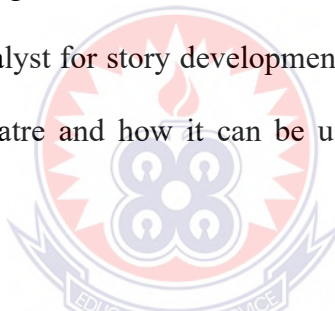
“As the Chaskele game became our main metaphor, we used it to dramatize the manner in which our various actions and inactions can hinder societal progress.” (Dodzie)

Some members of the creative team explained how folkloric activities were engaged in the creating of the product. Reflective quotations illustrating this are:

“I will say the games formed 35% of the piece and they made the piece more flexible and served as transitions at some point.”  
(Sammy)

“The games help in the development of the story line and also strengthen it. It also helped in carrying out the message to the audiences no matter their age, social status or level of education.”  
(Sena)

On a whole, the creative team sees devised theatre as a contemporary theatre, an art form that engages extensive collaboration and improvisation to address social issues within a community. This is evident in the preceding discussion where the creative team explained devising and its unique characteristics. Some members of the creative team explained the extent of collaboration they engaged in and their experience gathered. Some members of the creative team were able to explain how folklore served as a catalyst for story development. It appears the creative team has a better appreciation of devised theatre and how it can be used in promoting and addressing relevant issues in a community.



### **5.3.2. Folklore and Its Place in the Creative Process**

Another significant discourse captured in the reflection of the creative team is the dependent on folklore to develop the story. As devised theatre relies on stimulus to develop its stories, this project also depended on stimulus for the development of the story. The role of stimulus is discussed extensively in the preceding chapter. The stimuli engaged by the creative team when developing the *Chaskele* performance was folklore. As discussed in the literature review, folklore comprises of folktale, folksongs and folkgames. Even though all aspect of folklore was engaged, the project depended heavily on folkgames. The folkgames engaged with include the following: Chaskele (see figure 48), Piloloo, Ampe ((see figure 50), Antuwekyere, Tonton (see figure 49), Mepɛ kwan akɔ, Akaaka, Koba and Rolling tyres. These games were sampled from the creative team. Dede explains that “most of the games were childhood games...” implying



they are games they played when they were kids. These sampled games were not just selected but their implicit meanings guided their selections. This is illustrated in the following quotations:

*“Chaskele: this game was used conceptually in two ways and to identify two groups of people in society. One group that is focused on keeping the environment clean and the other group that constantly dirty the environment.”* (Sena)



*Figure 63:* Performers playing the Chaskele game. ©Solomon Dartey

*“Tonton: this is one of the oldest games played to keep fit and also check the direction of the wind using the cloth. In this instance, the game was used as a symbolic entity that collects dirt.”* (Sena)



Figure 64: Performers playing the Tonton game. ©Solomon Dartey

“*Ampe*: was employed as a bonding agent between two entities; when you agree on a common thing it is easy to accomplish it.”  
(Maggie)



Figure 65: Performers playing the Ampe game. ©Solomon Dartey

The creative team further demonstrate their understanding or implication of the use of games in creating the *Chaskele* performance. The following quotations illustrate the influence of the choice of games used by the creative team:

“The game Chaskele became an elaborate metaphor for the general theme of the production, hence the subtitle ‘kick the filth’”.  
(Dodzie)

“I believe the games and the problems tackled were supportive to each other. The games influenced issues addressed.” (Sammy)

“The director observed that, these games, which are repositories of indigenous Ghanaian knowledge, are becoming extinct with the increase in technology and its practices. The director saw it necessary to revive these games and make them relevant to contemporary phenomena.” (Sena)

“The choosing of the games was driven by addressing the SDG’s. The choosing of the main game Chaskele which eventually became the title of the performance was to kick away dirt and have a clean environment.” (Maggie)

“I would say, the subject of a particular scene influences what kind of game that are to be used.” (Christian)

From the above it could be inferred that every selected game served a specific purpose. Meaning each game selected had attributes that can be used in fostering the SDGs being investigated. The creative team’s exemplars below further reiterate how some individual games were used in the story development:

“*Ampe* leading to *Aka aka Akaa* is a rest point in the performance for some performers to change into other characters and to suggest time elapse for the trotro vehicle to reach its destination at the Madina community.” (Maggie)

“*Ashwe we etsre* (Not looking back) game is also influence by the SDG’s which advocates for a healthy community and in so doing we need to look back to reflect on our actions and inactions against the community and the results we get in the long run. Because, as a people if we do not look back disaster will engulf us like what happens if a player in the game does not look back when a player bends down behind him or her.” (Dede)

“*The Tonton* (Aeroplane) game was used as a curtain raiser to suggest the playful atmosphere to get the attention and rouse the interest of both younger and older people in the audience.” (Maggie)

“*The Chaskele* game was use as a central game to bring to the audience attention, the way some people in the society are preventing good social life and rather aiding bad sanitation such as littering the community, defecating and throwing of rubbish in water bodies.” (Maggie)

The above exemplars, demonstrate how some games were used in developing the *Chaskele* story, the following quotations illustrate how games in general were used in the creative process to develop the *Chaskele* performance:

The games were used as narratives in the performance, so as to have a bearing on the audience and the performer and also, I think the games served as a catharsis to the audience. (Dede)

The games created a traditional atmosphere, reminding the audience and us what growing up meant to us. It gave us the opportunity to reminisce fondly about the past, wishing we could employ our childhood all over again. (Lena)

These games were used in the play to communicate well with the audience. The first game *Chaskele* was used further elaborate how Africans prevent their fellow Africans from progressing. On the

lighter note the games were used to assist the audience relate more to the issues at hand. (Sammy)

The director observed that, these games, which are repositories of indigenous Ghanaian knowledge, are becoming extinct with the increase in technology and its practices. The director saw it necessary to revive these games and make them relevant to contemporary phenomena. (Sena)

We used these games as symbolism to the happenings in our society, the carried the message we wanted to amplify in various scenes. (Christian)

From the reflections on the creative team, it can be adduced that folklore as an indigenous activity was very pivotal in the creative process, as a stimulus of a devised piece is supposed to be engaged. Interlacing folklore with the selected SDGs was fruitful, as it brought to the fore the immensurable indigenous knowledge embedded in our folklore. The use of folklore also provided some flexibility to the creative team, in terms of how folklore was engaged. Simultaneously, the creative team's reflections clearly demonstrate the general influence of folklore in the making of the *Chaskele* performance. Some quotations that illustrate how folklore was used in the making of this performance are:

“As The Chaskele game became our main metaphor, we used it to dramatize the manner in which our various actions and inactions can hinder societal progress.” (Dodzie)

“The games were everyday games that are common to people and so relating to some of the happenings through the games, I think helped to augment the significance of the project to the audience.” (Lena)

“I will say the folklore formed 35% of the piece and they made the piece more flexible and served as transitions at some point.” (Sammy)

“The games help in the development of the story line and also strengthen it. It also helped in carrying out the message to the audiences no matter their age, social status or level of education. The games also served as a guide on which the story was hinged on.” (Sena)

“The games were prudent because the community could relate to them and sustain the interest of the audience and particularly of Ghanaian audience they cheer and sang along as the games were played by the performers. Also, these folklores have a lot of philosophes and morals which summed up some of SDG’s situations the Chaskele performance seeks to project.” (Maggie)

“Personally, I think it made we the actors connect to our roots, these were games we played as kids and playing it now made us realise the moral lessons imbedded in the message result influences our characterization. It also made the audience connect with us the performers and also to the act on stage.” (Christian)

### **5.3.3. Directing and Directing Technique:**

The preceding discussion illustrated how folklore as stimuli was used in developing the *Chaskele* performance. The team also brought to the fore, how folklore influenced the performance in general. Although the creative team developed the ideas into story from the onset, a director facilitated the meetings and the creative process. The facilitator’s creative ideas and directorial technique formed part of *Chaskele* product. The literature sectioned reviewed the role of a director in a devised process, and this is exemplified in the *Chaskele Devised*. The discourse will examine the directorial techniques employed by the director in the creative process. The next quotations illustrate how the creative team appreciated the directorial approach employed by the director:

“The Directors at various occasions sent the SDG’s he wishes to address on a Chaskele performance WhatsApp page for us to reflect on, as well as videos addressing similar situations to serve a

guideline for the performers in the creation of monologues and improvisational acts. During and after every rehearsal there are discussions and reflections of previous rehearsals and current rehearsals to streamline the piece. (Sena)

“Chaskele was mostly devised. This allowed us to create our characters rather than force ourselves into already created characters.” (Dodzie)

“Chaskele swayed slightly from the traditional directing methods, in Chaskele the actors brought up various ideas, which contributed to the finalisation of the piece.” (Sammy)

“The technique used I will say is the bottom-up approach, this is the case where the director allows actors to create based how they feel on the subject. In the preparation of Chaskele, the director gave me the opportunity to write my own lines based on the subject which were being discussed.” (Christian)

The concept of inclusion and collective ownership is clear from the above feedbacks provided by team members with respect to the directorial technique used for developing the *Chaskele* product. The director as a facilitator made sure that resource material were readily available to members of the team, such resources were shared on the groups WhatsApp page.

This same page was used for reflecting on previous activities, share monologues and ideas as well as helped individuals develop their unique characters. However, the next quotations illustrate how digital technology (see figure 51), a directorial technique introduced by the director enhanced the outlook of the performance.

“The use of digital projections to show the documentary in Chaskele in 15 minutes which could have taken more than 45 minutes to enact. The use of digital technology actually sparked the energy in both actors and audience. This ambiance prevented the audience from been bored... The documentary with pictures

made it easy for the audience to relate and understood the sanitation problems in Ghana and its adverse effects.” (Monica)

“There was the use of documentary by the director to showcase realistic videos to support the Chaskele play. Projection of scenic background instead of heavy sets on stage, made the work easier. We were able to project the effect of flooding which was so easy for the people of Madina to relate from their past experience.” (Nene)

“The use of sound to create the flowing or rushing of water within scenes which was livelier. It would have been more difficult to create such sound without the use of technology. Also, there was the use of sound to depict the droppings of water with the increasing tempo which rather enhance our work. This made what the performers doing on stage more realistic. The use of projected scenes also helped in creating realistic scenes on stage which made it livelier and more relative both to the audience and the performers.” (Wendy)



*Figure 66:* Output of the incorporation of digital technology in the Chaskele performance. Pictures taken at Alliance Française – © Solomon Dartey



#### 5.3.4. The Impact of the Process on the Creative Team:

There was a lot of satisfaction from the part of the creative team due to the unusual collaboration and creative experience. The sense of collective ownership pushed individuals to invest time and experience in the creative process. The amalgamation of the varying individual experiences and skills enhanced the outlook of the performance and its perceived audience impact. The individual contributions by the participants to the creative process based on their personal skills, community experience and the willingness to share and collaborate with unfamiliar people to address a societal issue actually enhanced the *Chaskele* product. As a team, we wanted the product to be a holistic and realistic representation of happenings in the LaNMMA community, of which we were able to achieve some feats. The overall impact and learning experience on the creative team is resounding. Indicated below are some of the quotations that illustrate the overall impact on the creative team:

“I learnt a lot about devising as a directing technique. I used it to in turn put up my own production titled "Who Be we?" A devised theatre performance on Pidgin English in Ghana, it's effect on society and how it can be used as a tool to foster unity. I realized that devising can be used to easily incorporate other aspects of art in Theatre.” (Dodzie)

“I learnt from this project because it made me reminisce on some of our childhood games and how these games can be used as a medium for advocating for change in our society and community and in our personal lives as well.” (Lena)

“The process was quite challenging but a good challenge. I had to think, direct and act all at the same time. I enjoyed the working with the cast and creative director although there were days that I felt frustrated because so many changes had to be made. In the end, it was worth it.” (Nene)

“Directorial skills and the information being laid educated me too in some instances.” (Sammy)

“Team work, innovation, and dedication, the need to explore our indigenous knowledge systems and make them suitable for contemporary times.” (Sena)

“The collaborative acts brought about a lot of spontaneity which some eventually becomes useful for the performance. The collaboration also brought about bonding among performers and technical crew that resulted in some crew members becoming performers at the end. The lack of Chaskele being a scripted play, it made performer think outside the box and technical crew relied greatly on rehearsals to pick cues for creating their designs.” (Maggie)

Overall, the creative team reckon the following acumens as key takeaways they got from the experience: teamwork, innovative approach, collaboration, and the exploration of our indigenous knowledge systems to address contemporary social issues.

The project sort to equip members with the requisite skills to train other community members, these are means to spread the coverage of the SDGs using the *Chaskele Devised* model within their respective communities and environs. Dodzie for instance started engaging the experience whiles we were in the final stages for the performance as LaNNMA. He recounts how the experience pushed him to use his spoken-word skills to devise some performances on the environment. The quotation below illustrates what he used his experience with the process to achieve aside working with the creative:

“The process pushed me to create four different spoken-word pieces on the environment. One of which I used for my devised performance and another one which I picked up and reworked on with a friend, we then added it to our set for the *Ehalakasa Environmental Poetry - Slam 2019* and we won the Slam.” (Dodzie)

The other members of the creative team also enumerated their experiences engaging the process, and its influence on them. This is illustrated in the following quotation:

“I learnt from this project because it made me reminisce on some of our childhood games and how these games can be used a medium for advocating for change in our society and community and in our personal lives as well.” (Lena)

The process and performance made a significant impact on me as an individual because it emphasized my belief in theatre as a tool for social change. I believe the audience would remember Chaskele for a long time. The performance had the right amount of comedy without neglecting to address the issue at hand. This is one performance that fully fulfils the purpose of theatre: to inform, educate, and entertain. (Sammy)

“Directorial skills and the information being laid educated me too in some instances.” (Dede)

“The need to reform my environment and engage others in doing same. The importance of falling on materials that is in the state of extinction, reviving them and conceptualizing them.” (Sena)

“I like the fact that majority of the creation was in the hands of the performers and the technical crew and this formulated the strong collaborative bond that brought about the ingenuity of each member in the group. And also, the performances related to situations happening in the Madina community which the Chaskele performances seeks to address.” (Maggie)

“Personally, it’s has been a great transformation journey for me, I would hold on to what I’ve learnt during this project to help keep my community clean.” (Kelvin)

“It changed my views of some environment things that I have not really paid attention to.” (Christian)

### 5.3.5. Creating Chaskele from the Perspective of Audience:

Although the creative team acknowledge the transformative experience the process had on them and their resolve to be advocates in their respective communities and other environments. They admit the need for the *Chaskele* performance to have an effect on audiences, especially people within the LaNMMA community. As a result of this need, the creative team in the midst of the creative enterprise anticipated that their audiences as a matter of interest should leave the performance grounds as people who understand the importance of the Sustainable Development Goals in their life and their communities. To this effect, the creative team created the story acknowledging the diverse background of the people in the Municipality, hence the use of the multilingual approach to satisfy language barriers and to enable every participant appreciate the importance of the social issues being discussed and its relative impact. The creative team as an advocacy group broke the fourth wall and engaged audience participation to foster participatory performance. In this regard, we did not want our audience enter the performance hall "...clearly knowing the boundaries, and understanding of the unwritten contract between them and the actors on the stage and the audience in the auditorium"(Gardner, 2020, p. 2).

It was necessary to gauge the creative team's thoughts on the performance, especially the viewpoint of the community members and stakeholders' reception of the performance. For instance, Dodzie resolves that

"The thing about *Chaskele* is that, we the performers replicated situations we see in our everyday lives, the audience got to see the performance and you could tell they experience similar situations, we didn't just touch on their wows but we also gave them workable solutions."

Lena's illustration interestingly affirms Dodzie's thoughts, even though her perception for the audience is from the point of view of what she gained from the performance, as she notes,

“I think the performance had a great impact on the audience and me as a performer because it gave me the platform to search within myself and see how sometimes our conscious and unconscious actions bring damage to our society and ourselves.” (Lena)

Though the response from these two performers anchors on the message achieving its intended focus, the response from the audience as illustrated in the performance analysis collaborates their thoughts. The views of the other creative team members as to whether the SDG message was well received by the LaNMMA audiences is illustrated in the following corresponding quotations:

“The audience saw their lives being played to them, as a result wished for more of such performances and also for it to be staged in first and second cycle schools in the Madina community to foster the change in behaviours in order to create a good and clean community.” (Nene)

“We have varied audience and from my observations, the audience could relate to the situations as they unfold in the performance. Many of them too were fascinated by the medium being used to tell the story. A number of them too were nostalgic with regard to the choice of games used and wish it could be replicated in our JHS and SHS for them to experience the import of these games.” (Sena)

“They were able to understand the concept created and what the piece was trying to communicate to them.” (Sammy)

From the above illustrations, it can be deduced that the *Chaskele* performance, offered its audience a better appreciation of what the SDGs are and how they can be used to promote the needs of humanity. This was achieved using folklore and the citing of familiar societal issues. The audience observed similar situations in and around their environment and activities, they see often in their daily lives. The audience's relatable experiences and proffered workable solutions using the devised theatre performance approach enabled us to promote good health, wellbeing and

healthy environment. Mr Abdul Alhassan (Education Department – LaNMMA) and Josephine Asayaa (Records Department - LaNMMA) respectively, are some satisfied audiences whose reflections affirms the views of the creative team. These quotations are illustrated below:

“I believe the performance was great because it really brings to bear the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s). We see them in newspapers and watch on Television, which is far from us but the performance actually brought the Sustainable Development Goals to their doors step, which they can relate. Beyond this platform the performance should go down to the schools so that the children will see the effects of such things so that they will grow up having such thought in mind, which will make Ghana a better place he added. (Abdul Alhassan)

“Your performance has really educated me. It has made me know that when we pull down trees it has a big effect on us especially the O-Zone layer. The heat that come on us does not make us feel comfortable. We have to check on people who cut down trees and give them severe punishment. I will also urge people to plant trees in their homes and communities as well.” (Josephine Asayaa)

#### **5.4. Conclusion:**

This chapter detailed the discussion and analysis of the *Chaskele* performance from the point of view of the audience and creative team. The findings presented were guided by the research questions and what transpired during the creative process, the performance, and post-performance reflections. Performance analysis and Creative process were the two main dominant areas identified for the discourses. In the next Chapter, the findings and advocacy for the SDGs are discussed linked to the reviewed literature. In addition is the developed *Chaskele Devised Model*.

## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION AND MODEL

#### 6.1. Conclusion

##### 6.1.1. Introduction:

This chapter is the concluding part of this research project, and it focuses on uncovering the research limitations and the experience of the study. It also proffers suggestions for future researchers based on the research limitations and findings.

The research findings with its relevant literature will be integrated into this Chapter to provide a deeper appreciation of the discourses. Based on the nature of this research approach, thus creating a devised model for advocating the SDGs, the research process from constituting the team to the performance of the final product was very relevant to the research. The research focused on theatre as a transformative tool and how devised theatre can be used in propagating the SDGs using folklore as stimuli.

The intent of this research project is not prescriptive, but to proffer knowledge gathered through the creative experience so that creative artists or devisers, who may engage this model in creating their devised works, especially when focusing on the SDGs and Folklore, will have this document as a guide. It is worth noting that two devising processes may not be the same. This is because of the varying factors to be considered by the creative team when working. Two-devised products by the same team and a devised product by another team will most likely not be same, hence the need to focus more on the process than the product, as the end is very unpredictable.

Owing to the above, the researcher, in this chapter, details how he was able to address his research questions and study objectives, while detailing his study experience, limitations, recommendations and the *Chaskela Devised Model*.

### 6.1.2. Answering the research questions

This research aimed at modelling a devised theatre (a contemporary art form) and folklore as an advocacy and dissemination tool for educating people on the SDGs and the need for everyone to get involved. The level of engagement among some community members in engendering participation in the devised process was also an aim for this research. Below are questions that guided the research:

- How can devised theatre be used as an alternative tool for propagating the SDGs?
- What innovative and effective processes and resources could aid in achieving the selected SDGs?
- How participatory is devised theatre as a community mobilisation tool?
- What is the impact of folklore as a stimulus in devising?

With respect to the first objective, the study proved that devised theatre has the transformative power to reach and impact the masses. The participants in the study were wholly involved in the story creation process, which birthed the *Chaskela* performance. They were also able to identify the challenges in their communities and situate the right goals that addressed them. They created their own monologues based on their experience and workshop findings. The reflection process is evidence of the catharsis that the performers went through and its impact in the creative process. The process trained them to be able to train others using the devised approach. The audience's appreciation and response at the audience reflection justifies that devised theatre is an engendered transformative tool. Devised theatre has the transformative power to reach and impact the masses. Through the approach, performers and audience were able to identify the challenges in their communities and to relate the right goals that addressed their community challenges.



Relative to the second objective, the production process, which engaged the following: research, collaboration, rehearsals, reflections and performance embolden the model as an efficacious approach to achieving the SDGs locally. The workshop phase offered the team the opportunity to appreciate the concept of the SDGs and proffered creative ways that could be used to draw the attention of the society to the SDGs and how all can get involved. The collaborative process emboldened the team to appreciate the ideas of others and the need to get all involved. The production phases also enabled the researcher to identify areas for improvement based on the team's reflections. Creative processes like research, improvisations, experimentations, folklore and the engagement of other theatrical forms birthed a model as an efficacious approach in promoting the SDGs.

In relation to the third objective, engagement with the creative team was quite smooth after they agreed to be part of the production. This was made possible after the researcher had relied on his contacts to refer some people who, in turn, also roped in others. Due to the collaborative approach used in the process, team members committed themselves to making it work. For instance, during the creative process, there was the need to get more people. The team members, therefore, invited colleagues they felt could commit to the process, and this really enhanced the creative process and the performance in general. Also, because the team members were living in the community, they brought up salient issues that affected the community with respect to the goals being addressed. Their invaluable contributions made the performance very relevant to the community, as the audience could relate to the performance. Devise theatre allows for collaboration, team building, and bonding. The democratic approach are participatory elements engaged by the team to advance the course of devising in the community.

The possibilities of using folklore as a catalyst in engendering the knowledge of the SDGs in Ghana really manifested. The folkloric elements used as the stimulus in the creation of the *Chaskele* performance enhanced the performance output and made the subject relevant to the

audience. The performance title, *Chaskele*, emanates from folklore, which is the hinge to which the devised performance was developed. Audience members were able to recall and relate to the folkloric elements we used in the performance, and this enhanced their appreciation of the performance contextually. The study advances that folklore is a catalyst in engendering the knowledge of SDGs. By reason, folkloric elements used as stimulus in the creation of the ‘Chaskele’ performance enhanced the performance and made the subject relevant to the audience. Folklore is constitutive of creative ideas that can be engaged as stimuli to create devised performances to advocate the SDGs and other social challenges.

### **6.1.3. Reflections on the study:**

The study was conducted with the aim of using theatre to promote the sustainable development goals, based on the call that all should get involved. As part of my social responsibility, I realised the need to educate the populace on the SDGs, especially those within my community. As a practitioner who specialises in using different theatre forms, I found it prudent to empower my community through devised theatre. This theatre form, with its democratic credentials, has the ability to equip participants, who are likely to create with other people based on their experience. The collective engagement using the collaborative approach with its intended cooperative ownership are used to empower the participants spread the message of the SDGs.

The experience gathered in using devised theatre to advocate issues of fertility, pregnancy and wellness, as well as using same in promoting ways of curbing climate change, through the reliance of raw data within the community, gifted the opportunity to harmonize the SDGs with folklore to promote the SDGs in Ghana. The experience offered me the opportunity to facilitate the process by guiding the team to come up with original stories that were reflective of the community they lived in.

The nuances of engaging devised theatre compelled the researcher to let go of his perceptions, this offered the community members the opportunity to birth diverse stories and approaches they thought can be used to curb the environmental challenges in the community. These challenges were enshrined in Goals 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land), hence using this Goals to advocate for the SDGs. This informal discussion led the researcher to solicit data from the people within the community, as their experience on site was far richer than what was researched and perceived.

The collective ownership and collaborative approach strengthened participants to fully engage in the process and offered authentic stories and ideas, which enhanced the creative process. During the process, the researcher served as a facilitator where he interrogated and unearthed issues within the community bothering on the selected goals. The workshop training offered the creative team the opportunity to recommend lasting ways to address the challenges within the community using folkloric elements. These were not exhaustive because the project aimed at developing a model using three selected goals out of the sixteen goals.

The researcher remained true to what audiences and team members shared when analysing the data. This made the analysis of the findings easy for the researcher. The in-depth appreciation by the audience and my creative team influenced the findings.

#### **6.1.4. Limitations of the Study:**

This study used the devised approach to make meaning of the enquiry under investigation as engaged by the creative team. As a result, the study presents the subjective experiences of the creative team without really allowing the reader to generalise the findings.

In a devised theatre, the point of departure is subjective and dependent on the creative team, even though this gives room for the creative team to start at any point unlike a scripted play. An unplanned point of departure can delay the process and also affect the output of a creative piece.

Although there is not a definite timeframe for preparing a devised performance, the availability of members and their commitment was a concern, as they were all volunteering and so the facilitator could not be as strict as he would have done for a conventional performance. Another result of the lack of definite timeframe is that the rehearsals process was longer than anticipated.

Audience reflections that were used for the analysis were sampled at the venue after the performance. These reflections were quite different from the post-performance reflection of the creative team, which were taken some days after the performance. A follow-up reflection from the sampled audiences at a later time could have generated diverse perspective as that of the creative team.

Because the director did not want to influence the process, especially the post-performance reflections, he insulated himself from facilitating the audience reflection activities but rather allowed a team member to lead the process. Previewing the interviews, I realised there were some provocative questions which were not asked and which, I believe, would have been asked as follow up questions if I were the one conducting the interviews. For instance, the audience did not ask questions pertaining to the creative work. Instead, they asked questions that bordered on health, wellbeing, the environment and SDGs. It would be reasonable to assume, therefore, that audiences only appreciated the product but not the model, which was used to propagate the vision. This missed opportunity, reflected in their response to questions that hitherto was supposed to deal with the process too.

Furthermore, the number of performances in the community was less; it was the intent of the researcher and his team to perform at the market square, churches and other community centres within the community, especially the respective areas of the creative team. In doing so, the researcher could have reached many people within the LaNNMA community. Time constraints and logistics, however, impeded these ideas, even though this could have enhanced the analysis and findings.

Another criticism of the study is that the researcher constituted youth members who were linked to the performing arts. Though this advanced the creative process, the findings cannot be generalised to include all community youth members. However, the study was not prescriptive of whom to engage when constituting the team of youth members within the community, as they were to be advocates for the SDGs within their community. It is the researcher's expectation that these trainees through the community leaders will use what they have learnt to train and engage other community members.

It could also be argued that the creative team was too small looking at the size of the community. However, the focus of the research was to create a model, which can be used as an advocacy tool for propagating the SDGs in Ghana, starting with the LaNMMA community. It is the expectation of the researcher that the trainees will engage the *Chaskele Devised model* and expand the frontiers for advocating the various SDGs in Ghana using folklore as stimuli. This will allow the researcher to be able to investigate the efficacy of the model and its impact in the respective communities.

Furthermore, the study focused on the transformative nature of theatre and how it can be used as an advocacy agent in promoting the SDGs in Ghana using cultural heritage as catalyst. Several different theatre approaches could have been used but the researcher was interested in the devised process because of the numerous benefits it brought to participant. These approaches could have been used to measure the efficacy of transformative theatre in nation building and broaden the scope of advocating the SDGs in Ghana.

In spite of the limitations enumerated above, measures were taken to ensure reliability and validity. During the creative process, the facilitator always made sure that the creative team understood what they engaged in and the expected commitment we were all supposed to extend to the project. He made sure that he did not interfere with the process in the absence of the team, promoted equity and ensured collectiveness in the team. Members were emboldened to

contribute and object at all times and their contributions were considered and amended where necessary. It is important to note that, the two approaches – practice-based research and devised theatre prioritise exploration, experimentation and reflection in their framework to ensure that the researcher and his creative team are able to birth a product out of engaging the process. The reflections provided evidence of individuals’ understanding and these formed the nucleus of the analysis. Interesting, the guidance and coaching from my supervisors, Prof Mary McPalm and Dr Faustina Brew, became much relevant during the analysis and shaping of the thesis project. These and others culminated to the saturation point of the research.

It is worth noting that the artistic research and thematic analysis approach opened the project up for discussion and further analysis. The study presented an analysis from the researcher’s point of view, which is likely to be disputed by other researchers. Owing to the above, the study’s findings are open to re-interpretation.

#### **6.1.5. Recommendations for Future Research:**

From the foregoing, it is recommended that further research be conducted on the efficacy of the Chaskele Devised Model in promoting the SDGs in Ghana. The study purposefully focused on the development of the *Chaskele Devised model*, using it as an advocacy tool for promoting Goals 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land) within communities using folklore as stimuli. Future research should engage the *Chaskele Devised model* in promoting goals which focus on poverty reduction, such as Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), and Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Goals that promote equality and fairness such as Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 10 (Reduced Inequality) and Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) can also be explored in future studies. Researchers interested in promoting green economy can also use the model to promote Goals 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and 13 (Climate Action). Researchers could equally engage the model to address individual goals.

Other researchers could explore the potency of the model by engaging audiences who have witnessed such performances, and study the impact the model will have on them and the community. The study did not explore the impact that individual members of the creative team are making in the community after engaging with the process; future research works could explore this.

Other development-based theatre approaches like Theatre for Development (TfD), Drama in Education (DIE), Theatre for Social Change, Forum Theatre, and other applied theatre approaches could be conducted to enable researchers draw on data and make comparisons. For example, comparative analytical researches could be conducted on the different advocacy drives for the SDGs in Ghana, to determine the impact of theatre on national development.

Scholars who would like to engage the model as an advocacy tool in their community will have to be guided by the following:

1. Community groups like cultural groups, Ewe community, Dagomba community, etc. can engage with the devised theatre model to promote the SDGs and other societal challenges.
2. The creative processes and the exploration of indigenous knowledge systems could be engaged by creatives and advocacy groups to promote and address the SDGs and other social issues. Rehearsing/ meeting consistently for a minimum of four (4) weeks will guarantee an awesome performance if the model is utilized exclusively.
3. The service of a theatre practitioner or director will be needed to help the team research, interpret the model, block the performers and produce an expected product.
4. In fostering sustainability and growth, wherever possible, community members identified in this project should be encouraged to continue the process of advocating the SDGs in their respective communities without depending on the facilitator.

Additionally, it might be helpful for researchers and academics in performing arts institutions in Ghana to introduce devised theatre as a unit when teaching, as devised theatre is a core component of the Drama and Theatre curriculum of the IGCSE and IBDP program respectively. It would be interesting to engage them using the *Chaskele Devised model* as it draws strength from our cultural heritage.

The research has contributed to the expansive discourse and literature on applied theatre, especially literature on using devising as a tool for development. It will be insightful to engage the information in this study for further research, where the researchers focus on other areas other than the one engaged in this research.

Further research can be conducted on the efficacy of the Chaskele Devised Model in promoting the SDGs in Ghana. Future research could engage the Chaskele Devised model in promoting the other goals.

Researchers and academics in performing arts institutions in Ghana can introduce devised theatre as a course and expose students to it. It would be interesting to engage them using the Chaskele Devised model as it draws strength from our cultural heritage.

#### **6.1.6. Conclusion:**

Devised theatre has the transformative power to reach and impact the masses. Through the approach, performers and audience were able to identify the challenges in their communities and to relate the right goals that addressed their community challenges.

Teamwork, innovative approach, collaboration, and the exploration of our indigenous knowledge systems (folklore) to address contemporary social issues facilitated the birthing of an original performance piece to aid in the promotion of the SDGs in Ghana.

Devised theatre is hinged on 'Collective Ownership'. The collective ownership and collaborative approach strengthen participants to fully engage the process and by way offering authentic stories and ideas, which can enhance the creative process.



Folklore as an indigenous activity is something that people can relate with, hence its usage in the creative process opens an avenue for creative diversity and appreciation by the audience.

The function of theatre is to excite, shock and delight us, to make us feel alive, to stimulate our imagination and to appreciate the totality of our humanity. It does this by creating images and provoking feelings that will strike a chord deep inside us. Theatre needs to reflect the drama of our natural environment and of our people. (Dijk, 2011, p. 88)

## **6.2. Chaskele Devising Model**

### **6.2.1. Introduction:**

The framework for the different phases of the devised product is usually what most devisers rely on to devise their works. This includes workshop, research, rehearsals, creative process, product, and stimulus. The stimulus is largely explored through the engagement of experimentation and improvisations. It is important to note that "... devising framework is a skeleton that supports and holds together the skin, flesh, and organs of the performance" (Dijk, 2011, p. 34). This skeletal framework is not fixed but can be manifested in different forms depending on the needs of the creative team.

Time and effort allotment to the various phases is dependent on the Devisers and what they feel needs much of their attention. This project allotted significant time to researching on the SDGs and folklore.

The Chaskele Devising model, which engages a community, places a lot of attention on research (in-depth exploration) and rehearsals (experimentation). Research into folklore and SDGs was essential to help determine which folkloric element is appropriate in disseminating SDGs 3, 6 and 15.

Influence and inspiration from the works of Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Jacques Lecoq, Mohammed ben Abdallah Elikem Kunutsor, Ebenezer Asime, Lab DC, Anne Bogart, my own research practice and discoveries form the strands for creating the devised model, which engages

folklore as its stimuli for propagating the SDGs in Ghana. This model places actions above dialogue, as it seeks to sustain audience attention and imaginations.

It is worth noting that “[a]ll methodologies need to be seen in the light of their underlying values and assumptions”(Dijk, 2011, p. 45). This is what directs the output of the performance. The use of the devised theatre pedagogy is to propagate the SDGs in Ghana through its folkloric cultural approach. This enlightens us on how our cultural and moral heritage can be used to foster growth and development.

It is my expectation that an audience member will be able to discover, to be enlightened, educated, shocked, excited, and unafraid by revelations on the SDGs. The exploration of these will enable us achieve the stated objectives. I want cultural values I never knew existed revived. I am a person who is interested in stories that enlighten or provoke the ordinary person to enhance his personality while engaging with his cultural attributes.

The purpose of theatre is to excite, create awareness, educate, stimulate imagination, and appreciate humanity. Theatre creates shared experiences through connections with the assembled people. It creates an avenue for asking questions, as well as presents existing possibilities, which hitherto are concealed or not easily accessible to all. Boundaries are broken through inspiration, which births the celebration of dreams.

It is important as theatre practitioners to present theatre that stimulates artistic ideas when addressing social issues. Our theatre tool has the ability to reveal hidden questions and images through means that strengthen society. Engaging the youth members within the LaNMMA community to propagate the SDGs using folklore as stimuli through the use of devised theatre technique helped in bringing to the fore the realities on the ground, whereby we were able to propose alternatives that resonate with the community.

The devised model I have developed for the promotion of the SDGs in Ghana is moored on Ghanaian cultural values embedded in our folklore.

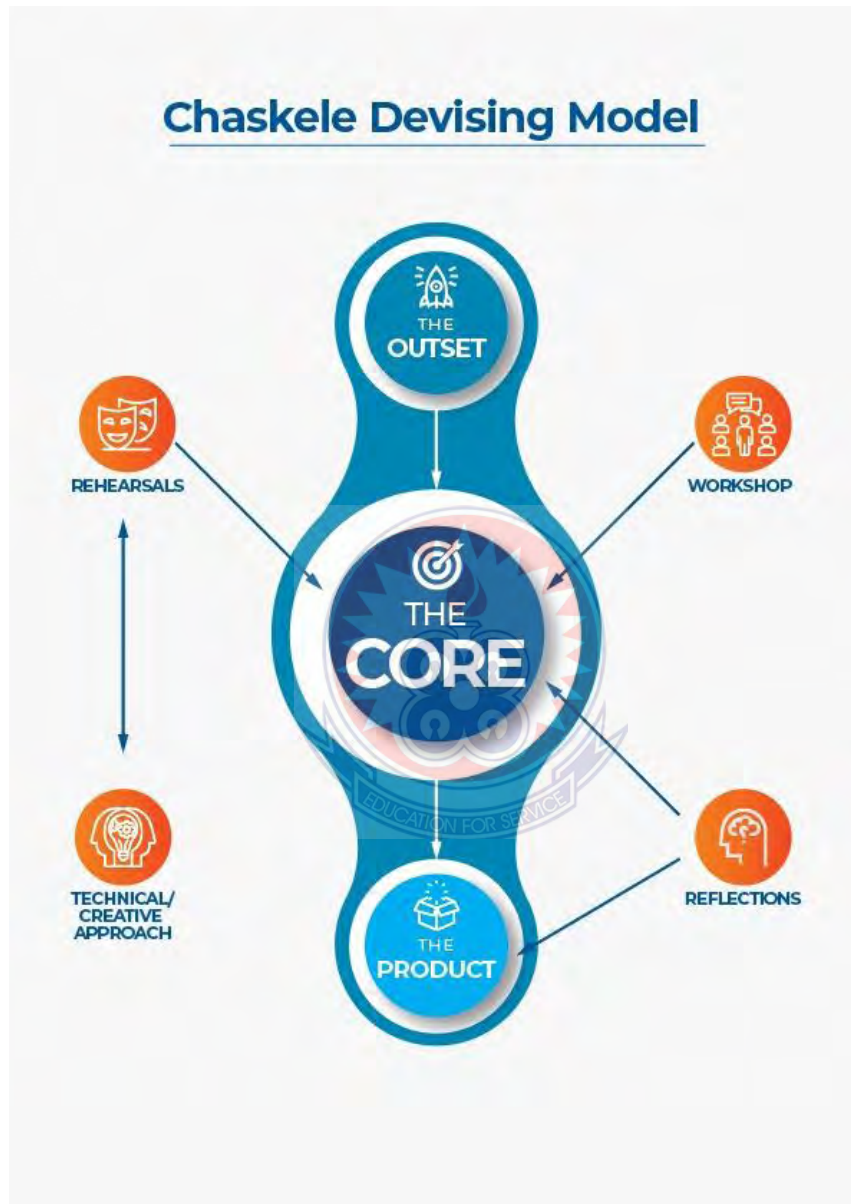


Figure 67: Chaskele Devising Model © Solomon Dartey

This Chaskele Devising model is grounded in the creative principles and approaches of:

- Three Phase Structure – The Outset, the Core & the Product
- The Outset: Team Formation, Permit

- The Core: Workshop, Rehearsals, Technique or Creative Approach and Reflections.
  - Workshop: Research, Artistic Vision, Subject Matter/Theme
  - Rehearsals: Games, Putting Ideas into Practice (improvisation), Duration
  - Technique/Creative Approach: Total Theatre, Folklore, Monologues, Physical Theatre, Improvisation, Mask, Design, Documentary,
- The product
  - ❖ Reflections: Workshop Reflections, Rehearsals Reflections, Audience Reflections, Post-Performance Reflections

### **6.2.2. Three Phase Structure:**

The greater perspective of the model is enveloped in three phases: the Outset, the Core and the Product. To engage the model effectively, there is the need for researchers to structure their project work under these three-phases. Doing this will enable them engage the necessities at an early stage or at the right time as the outcome of a devised product is unpredictable. As devising is more exploratory, it is important for the creative team to be collaborative as they experiment through improvisation, owing to the fact that the nature of devising makes it very difficult to predict how the product will turn out, even though its commencement can be predicted. The exploratory nature of the devised process necessitates a detailed structure when engaging the *Chaskele devising* model. The detailed approach of areas to explore when engaging this model is the subject of discussion in subsequent sections.

#### **6.2.2.1. The Outset:**

The Outset is the preliminary phase for exploring the *Chaskele devising* model. This is the phase for assembling the team, which can help the initiator (visionary) create a performance for

addressing issues confronting the community or promote achievements within the community. Team composition is very important because every initiator needs people to rely on in producing the product. To approach this, the model recommends assembling community members who believe in the idea and are ready to contribute their quota to improve the community. It is advisable to constitute team members from the community or organization, as they are accustomed to the lifestyle of their respective communities. What this means is that they are the best people to proffer alternative ways of addressing the issues, than outsiders who may have no experience of happenings in the community. Prospective members need to be creative, open-minded and ready to learn. The model proposes that the composition of the team should comprise some technical members (sound, costume, props, light and set designers) who are ready to engage the process from beginning to the end, and are willing to offer their technical knowhow to the creative process. The availability of at least two of the technical members will help mitigate the technical demands of devising. The commitment of the team members should be paramount, as the process relies solely on collaboration. The selected volunteers should be briefed on the project and the expectations well detailed out. If possible, a performance contract should be signed to bind all to the project.

Another area of concern under the outset is permission seeking. It is mandatory to seek permits from appropriate authorities within the community and stakeholders whose activities focus on the subject matter. This is important as the data required to justify assumptions are mostly with the authorities and stakeholders. In other words, they are the hub of raw data needed for the creative work. The team leader or anyone familiar with the authorities can engage on behalf of the creative team (with consent from all), and make sure that all stakeholders are aware of the project and are ready to support when needed. The data needed to run the workshop is gathered at this stage from the authorities and stakeholders.

With the green light from authorities and stakeholders, where appropriate permits and data are collected, the team is ready to enter the next phase of the process, which will focus on researching to develop a concept, scheduling, and rehearsals. This becomes the Core of the process of which will be detailed in the next section.

#### **6.2.2.2. The Core:**

This phase is the soul of the project, where the tenets of devising are explored and implemented. The real hustle and bustle happen at this stage, thus the engine or heart of the creative process. The creative process starts at this phase and is expected to mostly end with a product. Since this is the warehouse of creativity, many experimental and exploratory activities take place at this stage. The Core, which is the creative hub, is the macro embodiment of other strands, which is deconstructed into four sub strands for easy appreciation. The four sub strands for exploration are Workshop, Rehearsals, Technique/Creative Approach and Reflections. These sub strands serve as the branches to which the creative process evolves. It is important to note what these strands entail and how to engage it when using the *Chaskele Devising Model*.

A chronological exploration of the sub strands can lead to undiluted discoveries, which can be woven to birth an authentic product that has the ability to impact society. Before the exploration of sub strands, it is advisable to nominate someone to serve as secretary for the group. The secretary's duty is principally to document the process, especially agreed formats and sequences of the group. The documents are the reference points for reflections and discussions, as there is always the need to reflect on every activity during meetings. The documentation could be in a form of writing or video and must be accessible to all members of the creative team. It will be advantageous for groups to video record or audio record all meetings. This enables the procedure of engaging playbacks during conception and reflecting periods, as it enhances continuity.

The appointment of a group secretary sets the tone and atmosphere for real work to commence with respect to research and discoveries, which falls under the sub strand of workshop.

1. **Workshop:** This phase focuses on training the creative team in appreciating the concept of devising: what it entails, and how to engage it. The understanding of the SDGs and their objectives are unveiled here. The session focuses on explaining what the SDGs are, deconstructing the seventeen (17) goals, and tracing their presence or lack in the communities. The linkage to the community is important because that is what can authenticate which goals needs greater consideration in the community.

It is advisable to break or narrow down the Seventeen Goals; creative team should not engage more than three goals and should make sure the selected goals reflect the needs of the community. It will be exhaustive and challenging to tackle all goals in a single devised product, as there is the high possibility of not exhausting all the goals, as we are required to detail the goals for better appreciation by the community.

Exploration of the practical details of the respective Goals vis-a-vis their lack and presence in the community, affords the group the opportunity to categorize the societal, environmental activities and vices confronting the community under the respective Goals. This will afford the group the opportunity to situate their peculiar lack and propose recommendations, which will be engaged through improvisations to address the challenges discovered.

The facilitator is supposed to make sure that every team member has a firm grasp of the SDGs and is able to relate or link them in the community. The best way to ascertain this is through intermittent reflections and site visitations. The creative team should be challenged to write monologues on selected goals and how their presence can help improve the community. These should be read to all and feedback taken. This will help the facilitator know the status of the

creative team. When the facilitator is convinced, then the subject of the workshop needs to shift to understanding the concept of devising, and how it can be used to produce a performance.

The creative team needs to be educated on the basic devising processes to help them appreciate the creative demand in exploring theatre as an advocacy tool. The facilitator engages the team through experimentations of developing short scenes and monologues that can be acted out and solicit feedbacks. The facilitator should solicit documentary evidence to back the monologues or stories from the creative team. This challenges the creative team to participate in or observe happenings in the community as well as authentic the creative product.

The next area of focus is the exploration of folklore, as it is the wheel for disseminating the message of the SDGs. The model uses folklore as a stimulus; thus, folklore becomes the starting point for the creative piece, the vehicle for transmitting the message of the SDGs to the community. The creative team should be educated on what constitutes folklore and explore different forms taking examples from participants. There is no prescriptive approach to use at this stage, as the intent is to give room to the facilitator to use any tactics that will resonate with the team. Sample some folklores to start the creative piece with, thus, what is selected should help in driving the message of the SDGs.

After sampling some folklores, the facilitator should elicit thoughts through in-depth exploration of the sampled folklores and document emanating ideas. The group should select one folklore they want to engage as their starting point.

At this point, the artistic vision of the facilitator or the group should be clear to all, as it is getting into time for real practical explorations. I recommend the episodic style to be engaged in developing the performance, as this enables scenes to stand alone. Furthermore, it is easy to remove and add scenes without affecting or paying much attention to dramatic structure.



NB: It is important to task members to reflect on their experiences at each phase or at the end of the workshop session. The reflection should focus on what they have learned, what they already, what they do not know, and how they are going to apply what they have learnt in the propagation of the selected SDGs.

2. **Rehearsals:** the rehearsals phase focuses on putting into practice the ideas the researcher develops or gathers at the workshop phase. This phase is supposed to be used to experiment ideas and methods to ascertain their efficacy and durability. This is where the director/facilitator's role is needed as he or she is to guide the team to achieve its vision. The facilitator must make sure that his artistic vision is spelt out and the team is committed to attaining it.

The upsurge of technology offers the opportunity for the team to be deliberating outside rehearsals periods. Social media platforms should be used as a means for sharing new ideas and information as it affords the group the opportunity for all to be abreast of information.

Rehearsals should always start with team building activities as they promote bonding and cohesion. The activities should include folk games like ampe, tuumatu, matumatu, police and thief and others common to the team.

The exploration of the creative approach happens as this stage, as the team is supposed to establish connections between ideas and concepts. The team needs to be clear about the technique or creative approach it will be engaging in. It is recommended that they engage *folklore* as stimuli and workout other connections that will help build an interesting story advocating the SDGs. As the devised product is supposed to engage the *total theatre* approach, there is the need to employ certain elements when developing key connections. These elements should not be limited but must include *monologues, physical theatre, improvisations, mask, designs, and documentary*.

The next section, which focuses on Technique/Creative Approach will expatiate on some selected elements, which should be used in the *Chaskele Devised Model*. This is the stage where ideas developed at the workshop session are put into practice, using improvisations.

3. **Technique/Creative Approach:** This phase focuses on experimenting with the creative approach at rehearsals. This stage takes place at the rehearsals stage, where all experimentations are supposed to happen. The exploration is supposed to be engaged collaboratively, giving aural cues to all members of the creative team. Members need to discern that the creative approach aims at engaging the elements as a tool for advocating the SDGs.

The most important element to employ when using the *Chaskele Devised Model* is *Folklore*. Folklore, which serves as the stimuli, is to be used to explore and build connections for structuring the SDGs story. The SDGs product is to be woven using folklore to expose the message to the community using the total theatre approach, where other art forms like music, dance, narrative, and many more are amalgamated. This provides the opportunity to engage folkloric elements like folksongs, folkdance, folktale and folkgames.

Folklore should serve as the point of attack for developing ideas for the performance. It should be the bedrock for story development, as it has the ability to excite imagination and sustain interest. The sampled folklores should be carefully analysed and linked with the selected SDGs to generate a narrative. In other words, the thematic headings should serve as a performance structure, as the team explores the episodic structure. The performance duration should not exceed one hour thirty minutes, if one wants to grasp the attention of the audience. The performance should open with a folkloric activity, and used within scenes for transitions. Audience engagement with these folkloric activities is mandatory.

The *monologues* developed at the workshop phase, must be situated within the scene structure and tested during rehearsals to establish coherence and fluidity. These monologues should be reflective of the community engagements as well as advocate the SDGs. The focus of the

monologues must be articulated in the performance to profess the problems, challenges and recommendations. The sampled monologues set the foundation for dialogue developments, which are supposed to originate from the monologues and other creative ideas. The broader ideas enunciated in the monologues are to be deconstructed into dialogues to enhance audience appreciation and understanding. It is important for the performance not to be dialogue driven as we engage the total theatre approach.

*Physical Theatre*, which comprises dance and movements, should be engaged in the creative process. Since dance has the tendency of wooing people, it should be engaged in grabbing the attention of the people. It is worth noting that dance plays an integral role in most community engagements in Ghana, hence the need to incorporate it when devising, as it serves as a communication tool.

Physical theatre in the form of movements is to be employed for creating abstract images, and movements, which is hitherto difficult and expensive when not using a realistic set. Movements should be used to communicate ideas that using words to say might sound offensive and unpalatable, as well inanimate objects like cars, river, field and houses. These are achievable with improvisations.

The path to generating contents and exploring ideas in a devised performance is *Improvisation*. The *Chaskele Devised Model* relies extensively on improvisation in its experimentations and dialogue developments, as it is a core component of the creative process. The spontaneous creation of ideas and content is through the means of improvisation. Character and dialogue development harnessed from the workshop should be shaped through improvisations, as the process does not mostly engage a written script. It is worth mention that improvisation in this context is not a one-off performance or rehearsals, but the team uses the improvisational techniques to develop the ideas and rehearsal repeatedly to grasp the lines as practice by performers using a script.

Improvisation should be used to develop the framework for scenes. This is achievable when team members are open-minded and express their views constructively. This process can be very tedious, but members must attach some seriousness and flexibility, as it is the avenue for sharpening performance skills and building cohesion, through collective feedback and recommendations. The director must be fully involved in this process, as he is to lead discussions and implement collective ideas. He is also supposed to guide the team, as there is the possibility of veering from the concept, hence making sure that the message of the SDGs reign supreme and reflective in all the process and product.

The use of *Mask* is essential for this model, as it is a means of conveying elusive truth and representation to the audience. In the process of creating, the team should consider the use of mask for the representation of non-human characters being played by humans such as rain, rivers, cars, animals, and many more. Using the mask in this model enhances characterization and enforce aesthetic possibilities in areas where audiences need to be visually convinced. The use of mask can be transient, as it has the possibility of presenting a different outlook for the entire performance. Even though it is mandatory to use mask when engaging this model, the model on the other hand does not specify the usage of a specific type/kind of mask, as it leaves this in the hands of the creative team to engage a mask that is accessible, and reflects and disseminates their intent.

One other thing that should be considered when engaging the *Chaskele Devised model* is design. *Design* plays a vital role in this model as well as other theatrical presentations, such as costume, set design, props, etc. The model recommends the use of materials within the community; these materials could be waste and reusable materials especially when engaging goals that touches on the environment. These materials should be used in such a way that the audience will acknowledge their dual role in the community, whether positive or negative. For instance, the *Chaskele* performance opened with waste materials scattered on the stage but ended with

characters cleaning the stage and turning some of the waste into reusable forms. The creative team should focus on collecting irrelevant or waste materials in the community, using them to educate the community on how their supposed waste can be transformed to positively impact the community.

The use of *documentary* is encouraged especially if the creative team can afford or have access to it. The model encourages the use of the multimedia approach in the creative piece, as it is a means of enhancing the setting. Documentary is a non-fictional film form used as an authentic representation of the real. There is, therefore, the need to engage this process, to bring to the fore the actualities in the communities. As documentary deals more with real issues, real events, real people and real emotions, the model recommends its engagement in the creative process, to help the audience appreciate the performance, as the challenges in the community can be revealed through this means.

The key aim of the model is to present events as it is but not as it seems, unless proffering a recommendation, especially when revealing community challenges and strategies to enable us achieve the target SDGs. The use of documentary is ideal for the Chaskele Devised model, especially in situations where it is difficult to have a video documentary. The creative team should resort to the projection of photos and graphics, as the focus of engaging documentary is to provide evidence of happenings in the community.

The culmination of the above approaches is aimed at meeting the needs of the uncategorized audiences, as there is the need to offer diverse opportunities, which is achievable with the *Total Theatre* approach. Total Theatre allows the incorporation of different artistic techniques to generate a common unit, which is reflective of several other arts forms. The working together of the different art forms such as music, dance, voice, movements, spectacle, improvisation, documentary, and folklore will create a harmony for one's devised performance.

The *Chaskele Devised* model recommends the culminations of all the above approaches into a unit, with priority on cultural diversification and originality.

When the above are engaged during rehearsals, the repetition and amendments afford the team the opportunity to fine-tune its creative work, which should be ready after not less than a month of intensive rehearsals. After the integration of the technical elements, that is about two technical rehearsals, the team is encouraged to invite some stakeholders and experts to watch the creative piece and provide feedback.

The team should consider the feedback while amending possible concerns after the team's reflections. These processes are means of ascertaining the readiness of the product for consumption by the target audience. At this point, the working script can be adopted as the script for the production, especially when it is written in the appropriate scriptwriting format, where theatrical elements are included. Members of the creative team should have access to the working script to guide all in producing the consensus reached by the group. Even though the working script becomes the blueprint for the group, it cannot be equated to a playwright's play.

The team by this time should be sure of where the performance will take place and run a technical dress rehearsal at the said venue. This will afford the team the opportunity to address all technical hitches and challenges before opening the devised performance to the target audience.

### **6.2.2.3. The Product:**

This is the stage where the rehearsed product, which is the refined fluid story sequence without any technical difficulty, is performed to the public. The *Product* is the formal performance of the creative work to the public. It is important that the final product addresses the pertinent issues identified at the research and workshop phase with its antecedent recommendations, as it is to advocate the SDGs. The product should be audience-conscious. In other words, everything

should be done to keep the audience focused from start to finish. The protocols observed during performances of other theatricals are to be observed at this phase also.

After the performance of the product, the model recommends that an *audience reflection* (this will be detailed in the reflection section) should take place immediately. An audience reflection is a means of collecting feedback from the audience in respect to the intended message being disseminated. This should be facilitated by any member of the creative team.

The purpose of *Audience reflection* is to collate audience appraisals of the performance, as devising is a continuous product, built on ideas and feedbacks. This should be done in the presence of all parties present, giving opportunity to the team to respond to important questions posed by the audience. The team can upgrade their product to satisfy pressing issues and ideas proffered by audiences to enhance the next performance.

The final phase of the process is what is termed as the *Reflections* phase. The creative team should not wait to complete the entire process before reflecting. Reflection should be part of the process from the onset; if possible, after every meeting a reflection should be conducted. Members should be encouraged to keep a journal for reflections, this could be electronically or hardcopy.

**Reflections:** The key component that is undertaken in all phases of the devise process is Reflection. The creative process and product should be reflected critically at all phases to enhance the efficacy of the finished product. As the premise is creating out of nothing, there is the need to document the process and reflect on it at every stage or any creative idea that evolves in the process. The director should coordinate the reflections and ensure that criticisms are constructive and enhances cohesion.

*Post-Performance Reflection:* this is a prerequisite after every performance. Post-performance reflection means that, the process does not end after the performance to the audience. The

director should debrief the team and task them to hand in their reflections at least a day after the performance. Because of the important role it plays in the success of a performance, post-performance reflection should happen at least a day after the performance to enable members offer meaningful contributions. The reflections should capture audience feedback and performance experience.





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## Appendix 1

### SAMPLE LETTER TO ASSEMBLY AND PROPOSED PARTNERS

College of Arts & Culture  
University of Education (UEW)  
Winneba  
18<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The Head  
La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA)  
Madina – Accra

Honourable,

#### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION & PARTNERSHIP

I am a PhD Candidate in Arts and Culture from the above-named institution, and will like to partner your Assembly to enable me conduct my research project.

My research project is titled *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Advocacy, Devising & Folklore*. The focus of this project is to use creative means to propagate the message of the SDGs especially Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land).

Some members of your community will be used to create a dramatic piece that will be performed in your community at an agreed time. These performers will then be ambassadors for the propagation of the SDGs in your community.

I will be grateful if your outfit can connect us with your community leaders to help facilitate this project.

I look forward to an opportunity for a meeting, if need be, so I can expound more on the project.

Please find attached my proposal for your perusal

Counting on your support.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,




Solomon Yaw Dartey


[0245882432/solomondat@gmail.com](mailto:0245882432/solomondat@gmail.com)

## Appendix 2

### INVITATION LETTER FROM ASSEMBLY

 **LA-NKWANTANANG MADINA MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY**  
P. O. Box 130 Madina, Accra

Our Ref: J2/231/14/01/357  
Your Ref: \_\_\_\_\_

 Republic of Ghana

Date: 11/06/2019

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**INVITATION TO A DRAMA PERFORMANCE PRODUCED BY A PHD. STUDENT FROM UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA AS PART OF A FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT BEING CONDUCTED IN THE LA NKWANTANANG-MADINA MUNICIPALITY**

You are respectfully invited to attend a drama performance produced by a PhD. Student from University of Education, Winneba slated as follows:

**Date:** Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

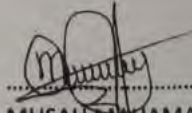
**Time:** 11:00 a.m.

**Venue:** Municipal Assembly's Conference Room, Madina Social Welfare

The focus of the research and the drama production is to use creativity to disseminate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically: Goals: 3(Good Health and Well-being), 6(Clean Water and Sanitation) and 15 (Life and Land). The researcher in pursuit of the project has selected people from within the Municipality for the impressive drama piece. These people are subsequently expected to be ambassadors for the propagation of the SDGs in their respective communities. Your participation in the upcoming event, and contribution to the SDGs implementation effort would give a further boost to their realization in a record time. In light of this, we therefore look forward to your attendance in the afore-mentioned Programme.

Invited participants are humbly advised to be on time.

Thank you.

  
.....  
**MUSAH MAHAMA Samsau**  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR 1  
FOR: MUN. CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## Appendix 3

### PERMISSION LETTER

College of Arts & Culture  
University of Education (UEW)  
Winneba  
13<sup>th</sup> June 2019

The Municipal Coordinating Director  
La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipal Assembly (LaNMMA)  
Madina – Accra

Honourable,

#### **PERMISSION FOR USE OF SPACE**

I write to kindly seek permission to use your Assembly Space to showcase my final research project – *Chaskele: Kick the Filth* conducted in your Assembly to your constituents, stakeholders and the media on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2019 at 11am.

I am a PhD Candidate in Arts and Culture from the above-named institution, and I have been working cordially with your team, especially Mr Asiamah of the Planning & Project section of your Assembly in respect to my thesis project.

My research project is titled *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Advocacy, Devising & Folklore*. The focus of the project was to use creative means to propagate the message of the SDGs especially Goals 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), and 15 (Life on Land).

Some members of your community were used to create the dramatic piece and are expected to be ambassadors for the propagation of the SDGs in your community.

I will be grateful if your good office grants me the use of the space as well as inviting your constituents to watch the performance.

Counting on your support.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Solomon Yaw Dartey

[0245882432/solomondat@gmail.com](mailto:0245882432/solomondat@gmail.com)

CC: Mr Asiamah - Planning

**Appendix 4**

**CHASKELE WORKING SCRIPT**

# CHASKELE

*Kick the Filth*



A Devised Script for promoting the SDGs

Narrator: Agoo

Audience: Ameeee!!!

Narrator: This Ghana bi wanna own. This Madina, ebi we n)) wanna own. We no for chop make anybody lef somewhere then come show we how we go make the place nice. Ebi we n)) wanna own. And it's very easy to do that with this with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) err. The power is in we naa wanna own hands to make the place nice. See, it's very easy. It's as easy as playing 'Chaskele'. You naa just wait and see.

*Actors come on stage from different directions one after the other pushing tires around. They later placed the tires centre stage to make way for the Chaskele game. The STRIKER comes on stage with his bat. The other ACTORS come on stage with their refuse and start throwing targeting Centre stage where the piled tires are laid. They pick and throw the refuse into the target and The STRIKER kicks out the refuse. This goes on for some time, then The Striker steps out and starts speaking.*

The Striker: And that's Chaskele. This is the game they are playing. Everybody wants to throw something into it the tire but this guy (*Points at the guy with the stick*), standing there doesn't agree. Some were able to throw the rubbish into it, some couldn't. that's the moral of this game. Many of us over here in this Madina, don't like improvement. So, we have explained it, someone's progress people don't like. He is getting away the positive vibes. They are aiming at their goal. And he says no. many of us here are like that. We do not want to come together as a unified force, to clean up Madina, to develop Madina and to progress Ghana as a whole. Please let's change our attitudes and it start from today. Thank you!

Lights out.

*The stage is set for the next scene. Four actors, each stand at the corners of the stage. One person walks diagonally to all the corners. Then everyone replicates him. They all depict the movement of water.*

Audience: Clapping

Nene: Are you happy to be here?

Audience: yes!!

Nene: Fire is burning can you hear. let's have patients. Let's use love or else we will spoil our country and run away to other countries.

Actor 3: All is free. But not all indeed. Desperation the venom we mishandle. Exposing our lives to its wrath.

Actor 4: I want it all.

Actor 3: ....it doesn't matter the cost.

- Crowd: I want it all!!!
- Actor 3: It doesn't matter who pays the price.
- Crowd: I want it all!!!
- Actor 3: We dig ourselves deep we can't climb. We put ourselves on weak leaves feeling proud. Someone should fix this. How did it happen? The dice we play.
- Crowd: The price we pay
- Drainage System: Built to maintain the sanctity in the communities. To control the amount of aqua on the surface of the earth. My job is easy but has been made difficult over the years with increasing population and the uncouthness in the behaviours of these people. Now I have my nose blocked with some kind of Undegradable substance. Hence heavy precipitation means destruction of roads, properties and when it gets worse people die. Not to let matters lie people shit and urinate through my mouth.
- Actor 5: Ahh so they shit and urinate through your mouth (in Fanti Twi)
- Drainage System: Oh breda!
- Crowd: Ahh!!!
- Actor 3: oh!
- Drainage System: All those sitting here, you can ask them. This pad, yes, this one, ask me am I the one who dumped it. Someone used it and came to dump it over here. The pure water sachets, indomie rubbers and other rubbers are dumped in front of my house after they have used them. What is all this. This must stop.
- Nene: I left my right in the centre of your heart. I lost my light in the darkness of your sight. The darkness of today's light tore my retina apart. Show me good from evil and chance me a new start. When I finally draw my last breath, I will regret that I did not do that which I knew was right but left to fall apart. The dice we play.....
- All: .....The price we pay
- Nene: What you sow...
- Crowd: ...is what you will reap.

*They all sing*

*“ɔman yi ho nhia wo Ghanaman ye wo ara wo de o*

*Dwen ɔman yi ho*

*Menkase wonfa ho*

*Momma yen nyinaa mom*

*Mfa okoroye moa*

*Biakoye bre aduru o*

*Tikorɔ nkɔ agyina oo*

*Momma yen nyina nsom*

*Obiara nye n`afam de o*

*Ghana benya nkɔso*

*Ghana betu mpɔn oo*

*Momma yen nyina nsom*

*Obiara nye n`afam de o*

*Ghana benya nkɔso*

*Ghana betu mpɔn oo”*

*They break into individual water movement. They form droplets and then one strong water looking for drainage system. But due to the lack of any the water forces its way through different areas of the community. The narrator leads the, in the call and response of “Me p3 kwan ak)” and the water response “wonya). The narrator comes unto the stage*

Narrator: Then times err, as God create the world finish. Then he turn the seas top chok the head ein top. So say ego fall ground que then make all the plants and flowers grow nice. That bi why the sky blue. You see say God err then He get sense waaa so He then begin to make some of the plants grow tall then strong wey we call them trees. Wey the trees too etake them put there so say them go hold the sea edey the earth ein top so say flood no go come. Then times err, then the trees dey everywhere wey everywhere make green. As man start dey make plenty for the earth ein top, he see the trees n)) he figa say them dey there kwa. He no know say them bi things. Them bi serious things! So man start dey cut cut all the trees. He take build houses, then towns, then right now if you look again, no place is green like that. Right now if erain small then flood go come spoil everywhere. Wey right now err, hmm, man dey the water inside dey drawn oo, he make shi. Wey God too, He chock for one corner like that wey he spy man wey he tell am say kwasia like that who born dog.

*The scene evolves into a settlement. The first is a well-planned community. In this community water is able to move freely with little or no resistance.*

*The second is a slum where the houses are built close to each other leaving no room for drains. Water accumulates as it gets nowhere to go and, in the end, destroys all the houses.*

*The characters dance to Michael Jackson’s “Earth Song”*

*Lights out*

Narrator: I don't think we have realised how important the forest is to us. The trees are our life. The animals in the forest are very important to us. And yet the trees keep disappearing by the day I know we have been saying that when the last tree dies the last man dies but that's exactly what Sustainable Development Goal 15 is fighting to prevent a world without trees. Sustainable development Goal 15 is fighting to prevent deforestation, desertification and the rampant cutting down of trees. Sustainable Development Goal 15 is fighting to preserve and conserve our environment to prevent biodiversity course. And we are here for it.

*Song "Daadaa k3 gbee k3 gbee"*

*A Mate and Shadow boy comes on stage loading their vehicle heading to Madina from Accra. Mate struggles with some of the passengers. The car is full. The driver comes. He tips the shadow boy for his help. The car refuses to start. The driver asks the passengers to help but they rain insults on him. The mate gets down to push the car to start. It starts and the car sets off for Madina.*

*Other persons are also heard selling their produce in the market. Market being busy.*

*The car goes offstage. Two children rush to the stage playing. One of the kids feel cheated and rants*

1<sup>st</sup> Kid: Today I don't want you to have any grudge with you. I like )straighti.

2<sup>nd</sup> Kid: I like )kodo

*They then play ampe after choosing the sides.*

*Kids have a grudge. They settle it and leave the stage*

*Bus arrives at Madina bus stop.*

*Woman drops a litter outside and there sets in a commotion. She is made to go outside to pick it. They advise her not to repeat such an act since cleanliness is next to goodliness.*

*The passengers get off the bus. Market being busy with a pure water seller, egg, and pen drives.*

*An old man after making a car and placing the phone in his pocket is stolen by a gang hoping to sell it to another person.*

Village man: Something has happened to me!!!

*Draws almost everyone's attention.*

Woman: Is everything okay?

Village man: I just placed a rubber here and I can't find it. It's gone.

Man: Oh your item has been stolen.

Village man: Yes my item is gone.



Man: Do you know something...

Comm'ty Tug: What type of phone is that?

Village man: A big phone that my child bought it for me that I should use it for calls.

Comm'ty Tug: And you have placed it on your ear like...you are not correct. When you come from village to Accra you will be like 'Hello...' you are not correct. Leave there and let us think.

Village man: I will use the stick to hit you...

Comm'ty Tug: Hey! I will slap you.

Man: Do you know something? When you send the case to the police station, nothing will be done about it. Relax!! Do you know something?

Village man: What?

Man: Leave it to God.

Village man: What is God going to do with my phone?

Man: This man too. Eii!!

Egg Seller: Please will you buy egg?

Village man: Your father and your mother are the ones who will eat egg. But this time who eats egg?

Phone Thief: Papa papa...Masa masa... what is it?

Village man: My phone is gone. I came to Accra to see my child and then someone has stolen my stuffs.

Phone Thief: Masa relax. In Madina , we do not make noise like that. Why are you making noise like that?

Village man: I am sorry but my things are missing that's why I am making too much noise.

Phone Thief: Ahh. Just give me GHC20.00 and let me go and collect it.

Village man: Oh leave there. Why are you guys like that?

Phone Thief: Madam you are fucking.

Woman: Please is it missing? You can't find it?

Village man: oh so it's gone?

Woman: Yes, it is gone. That's the same this that happened to me. Few years ago I came here from my home town looking for some job to do. I got here just like everybody else. I got here opened my bag to take my phone but it was long gone. Eii my phone is missing. Someone should help me. I don't

know anyone around. I don't have the person who is getting me the jobs number off head. What should I do? So I was walking around and a man told me he will send me to Jerusalem.

Crowd: Ahh then you don't have any problem.

Woman: It's not the Jerusalem in the Bible. It's a getho close by.

*A different scene of an irresponsible man who have impregnated a teenage start.*

Irresponsible man: But I have told you to come in the evening. Why do you do this every day? I have been telling you to come in the evening.

Teenage mother: Give me my money.

Irresponsible man: I don't have money here.

Teenage mother: The child is sick. Give me the money.

Community tug: What is the problem?

Irresponsible man: This sis said I have gotten her pregnant and that the child needs money. I have told her to come in the evening for her money and she is still bothering me.

Community Tug: Forget her.

Irresponsible man: Am I the only one who did it. Leave there.

Man: What is the problem?

Teenage Mother: He and I have given birth for like two months now. The child is sick, give me money to send the kid to the hospital too, he doesn't want to.

Man: Ahh don't you have health insurance.

Teenage Mother: I don't have some. Only if I had, I wouldn't have been here. I don't have some. Money to even buy food I don't have some.

Man: Herh, where are you...what are you saying...what have you done with him?

Teenage Mother: He and I have given birth.

Man: You and I have given birth. Ahh!!! How old are you?

Teenage Mother: Eighteen

Man: How does that concern you?

Comm'ty Tug: Oh leave there.

Egg Seller: Oh leave there. You guys are the ones do engage in those acts.

*Another group also comes on to the Centre stage. The man is refusing to give her mother after impregnating her. He pushes her down. The crowd around reacts to it. He stabs one person and bolts. The police arrive.*

Police 1: Hey what are you doing over here? What happened to him? you have killed him!

Police 2: He has killed him.

Suspect: No no no a guy killed him. He passed here...

Police 1: Hey, you are not going anywhere. You are a suspect. The guy is dead. Who killed him.

Suspect: A guy. He just passed here.

Police 1: When we get to the station, you will explain yourself. Masa come and carry your cross. Look at his beard and that of the corps. They are look alike. You all smoke. Hey put handcuff on him and lets go. Nonsense. You guys just like disturbing in this area.

Police 2: Take the lead. If you run, I will shoot you.

Narrator: Our brother is dead already. Our friend is gone. Just like that. His life has been thrown away like the fickle flames on a candle. He is dead and gone. Along with all his dreams and all the endless possibilities that could have happened with his life. He is gone just because you and I could have done something but we chose not to. Our brother is dead and gone. I know you would say this is not my business. Maybe you are right it is none of your business. But today, he is the corps lying by the road side. Tomorrow it can be you, you or me. He is gone. Just because one of us here could have done something but we chose not to.

*Lights out.*

*There is a video interlude (Documentary) of individuals littering the environment. There is also a showcase of how some persons around the world is making use of waste materials to produce useful and relevant things for community use.*

*Lights fades in*

Narrator: Today, I am becoming more creative. Peaceful crossover into the heavenly realms. Fly over into the horizon sunset. And there was this one I saw recently, it blowed me. You have kept long. And I think it's because ermm, the condition that are taking people from this world are becoming more complicated. The presuppose, myosotis, and we can't even forget that the common illnesses are still taking people away. Why should someone die from malaria, cholera, diarrhoea and why should a mother die after giving birth to a new born child. Well sustainable development goal number 3 is fighting towards, ensuring health and safety and social

well beings in our communities. We have to learn to keep our place clean. We have to promote better standards of living. Sustainable development goal 3, is fighting to ensure that we all have our safe well beings. And we are here for it!

Offender 1: What does it say? No shittng. Spots fine GHC50.00.

Concerned citizen: Herh! Hey! Abrantie.

Offender 1: Oh bossu! Good morning.

Concerned citizen: herh!

Offender 2: Its rubbish. Why haven't you done some before?

Concerned citizen: How can you do this. This is Ghana. This is our own... herh ewura! What are you doing? What do you think you are doing?

Offender 2: *speaks native language*

Concerned citizen: Me I am. I am . you are not correct. You are putting rubbish in the drains.

Offender 2: *speaks native language*

Concerned citizen: When you tell them that's when they start speaking their mother tongue. Your own house, last time you were shouting mama yie mama yie. I am dead oo. The water is taking me away oo. Have you see what you are doing?

Offender 2: No oo I am asking you where to put it:

Concerned citizen: Don't you have dustbin at home?

Offender 2: It is full.

Concerned citizen: Can't you call Zoomlion to come and pick it up?

Offender 2: Am I the one to call them?

Concerned citizen: Eii. Herh abrantie. You are not correct.

Offender 3: Is this your house? If it worries you pick them up. You are a fool?

Concerned citizen: Eii this is a problem oo. So, what kraa do you people want to do to Ghana?

*A sanitation officer from zoomlion walks on stage*

Ahhaa zoomlion papa. Look at this sister. See what she is doing?

Sanitation officer: Madam, madam why?

Offender 2: Why?

Sanitation officer: Isn't there dustbin in your house?

Offender 2: It is full.

- Sanitation officer: It is full.
- Offender 2: *speaks native language*
- Sanitation officer: Speak a language that I will be able to understand and stop speaking that language.
- Offender 2: I said, my dustbin is full. I don't want houseflies to come around it so I am putting them here so that when it rains, it goes away.
- Sanitation officer: Oh okay. So that we will get sick and die, right? When it rains mosquitoes will come and bite us. The things you have placed here, do you know that when the rainy water picks it up it goes into the sea or it gets stuck somewhere else? These things too there are plastics they have a long life span for more than 1000 years. Why do you people do that?
- Offender 2: It's not me. Where should I put it?
- Sanitation officer: But madam you have a sanitation officer.
- Offender 2: What is that?
- Sanitation officer: Everyone is supposed to be paying sanitation fee? So why are you acting as if you don't know what is going on? You are paying sanitation fee to your assemble. Then they will call when your dustbin is full they then come and collect it. I am sure you haven't paid. Then you will come here often. You will be imprisoned.
- Offender 2: oh oh oh
- Offender 3: Why are you people making noise this early morning like that?
- Concerned citizen: She is also part. Rap and throw.
- Sanitation officer: What as she done?
- Concerned Citizen: She has thrown faeces inside.
- Sanitation officer: Rap and throw.
- Offender 3: What has rap and throw done? Is it a bad thing?
- Sanitation officer: Oh no. it's not a bad thing. But is I ask you to get into the drains to get the one you threw inside; will you be able to get it?
- Offender 3: Oh why not. It's my own faeces. I will find it. Its normal.
- Sanitation officer: Its normal.
- Offender 3: Its normal. That's what we do over here.
- Sanitation officer: So then if you imprisoned too its normal.
- Offender 1: Masa masa. That's how they are. Arrest them all.

- Concerned Citizen: He is also part.
- Offender 3: Isn't it here that you defecate.
- Sanitation officer: Some of you are the reason why when we are going around, we carry the by-laws with us.
- Offender 3: What?
- Sanitation officer: Because you will act as if you don't know what is it.
- Offender 3: You are with what?
- Sanitation officer: I am with the by-law. Article 1 section 1 says, a person shall not dump refuse at an unauthorised place within the jurisdiction of the assemble.
- Concerned Citizen: Have you heard? You have to dump things around.
- Sanitation officer: Don't explain further. Yours says, article 2 section 3, a person shall not defecates at the banks of rivers and water sources and other similar areas. This places is all part.
- Concerned citizen: Punishment.
- Sanitation officer: You have defecated over here; you will be imprisoned. Because you have to pay the fine or we will imprison you or both.
- Offender 3: Bossu bossu.
- Sanitation officer: Oh leave there. Will you guys clean here or not?
- Offender 1: We will do it.
- Sanitation officer: Take! Use them to collect all the rubbish right now.
- Recycling agent 1: You see, these pure water sachets we have been throwing in the gutter, will be separated from the waste bins and kept for grandma. Who is grandma? Grandma is that woman who pass by the house every morning. She collects pure water rubbers. She sells them to the recycle. This is a source of income for her.
- Recycling agent 2: My source of income comes from this chandelier here. I made them out of plastic cups. Yes. Just keep them nicely for me and I will come for them for my chandeliers.

*The Sanitation officer leads the gathering in cleaning the environment. They all start singing. Madina Song and then followed by "Falefale" literally meaning cleanliness in Ga. They sing as they clean in a happy manner.*

*Offender one cuts in to give his monologue.*

- Offender 1: Wedge, so we clean Madina wey we dey galy for inside you no go make happy? So if we are going and our shows are clean, don't we like it? We

for clean this city. We for clean Madina so sey we naa we dey galy ahh we go feel like kings and princes, do you get it? We for make the city clean so sey no matter whatever wey we dey do, we go make am better. So sey we no go get dieses like malaria, cholera then things all. You barb.

*The poet walks on stage and juggles works thrown at him. He recycles the unused words into a meaning statements to advice everyone on the need to keep the environment clean.*

- Poet: This community is ours and this community belongs to us.
- Citizen 1: Environment.
- Poet: Let's up to us to keep our environment clean because it's our environment and it belongs to us.
- Citizen 2: Sanitation.
- Poet: And we are the ones to promote sanitation in our community. Because if we don't do that no one is going to do it for us.
- Citizen 3: Flood.
- Poet: We have to keep the place clean to prevent the place from flood. And when the gutters get chocked...
- Citizen 4: Plastic.
- Poet: ...with plastic things. We would have to take all of them out.
- Citizen 5: Behaviour
- Poet: We would have to change our behaviours. And buy time that...
- Citizen 6: Power
- Poet: We will have the power deep within us to change our...
- Citizen 7: malaria.
- Poet: ...community. We will fight malaria. We will change all our bad behaviours and all our new behaviours will come and in place and replace the bad behaviours.
- Citizen 1: Change.
- Poet: Because this change comes from deep within us.
- Citizen 2: Reuse.
- Poet: These changes belongs to us. We would have to learn to reuse plastic items that can be reused like we...
- Citizen 3: Refuse.
- Poet: We would refuse to stick to old norms and traditions...

Citizen 4: Reduce.

Poet: ...clean the place and reduce over reliance on plastic things. We would let science and all-natural things that could be recycle plastics that can recycled...

Citizen 5: clean.

Poet: and in the end, in the end, we would be pushing for cleaner souls, cleaner minds, cleaner communities. We would become cleaner people. We would live in a clean environment.

Earth Advocate: okay. I want...I want everybody here to close your eyes for a moment. And imagine a world without water. Imagine a world without water to drink after eating. A world without water to cook. A world without water to take your bath after a hard day's work. A world without water anywhere. Just imagine such a world. How is that world going to look like? Now you can open your eyes. I guess it's impossible, right? That is the goal of sanitation development goal 6. It seeks to give us potable water. To let us have access to drinkable water. What is our implement or what do we do to help achieve this goal. Let us stop open defecating. Let us stop it. Let us stop polluting our water bodies, please. oh God. Have you ever thought of the fact that, the same water we pollute, can be the same water that runs through our taps? Have you ever thought of it? Please let us come together and help achieve this goal.

*Starts singing Oman b3 y3 yie a 3fre yen ara as they take their bow.*

*The end.*





## Appendix 6

### SAMPLE *CHASKELE* AFTER PERFORMANCE INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### QUESTIONNAIRES.

1. Do you know about the sustainable development goals (SDGs)?
2. If yes, what do you know about it? (If no, give a summary of what it is)
3. Do you think they are achievable? (Especially in your community).
4. If yes, how? If no, why?
5. What is the state of health and wellbeing of the people in your Establishment?  
(How often do they fall ill?)
6. What do you consider to be good health?
7. Do you have access to good clean water?
8. What role do non – government organization (NGOs) play in protecting water?
9. What are your thoughts on sanitation in your work environment?
10. What can be done to make it better?
11. Do you think destruction of forest and land can have any adverse effect on you?
12. If yes, how? / If no, why?
13. If yes, what can be done to salvage it?
14. If yes, what are you ready to do to help as an individual?
15. Flooding is a major problem in Ghana, what do you think are the main causes?
16. What can be done as a Country to help stop this?
17. What are you ready to do to help stop this as an individual?
18. What are the best ways to involve people in the process of stopping these things?
19. What are the best ways people can be punished for breaking rules that are meant to prevent these things?