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INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN THE ARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH:

A ROUND TABLE PRESENTATION
BY
PAMELA UDOKA
AT THE 5TH WORLD SUMMIT ON ARTS
AND CULTURE:
MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA
OCTOBER 5TH, 2011

WHY CHAIN?



CHILDREN'S ARTS DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (CHAIN)

Is a children's theatre organization duly registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission as a Registered Trustee (CAC/IT/NO27375). It is engaged in enriching childhood and empowering children through the discovery, development and exhibition of their innate creative abilities.

Our target are Children and Youths and we source these mainly through schools. It is a known fact that economy and technology have eroded skills and core values our children learn. Therefore,

- CHAIN will apply creative dramatics and performing arts therapies to:
 - build confidence, mould character, develop psychosocial and inter personal relationships.
 - expand imagination, inculcate self-worth, and cultural values and develop leadership skills.

Bearing in mind that these vulnerable group must be equipped for the future.

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PAMELA UDOKA'S BIODATA

Pamela is the President/Artistic Director of Children's Arts Development Initiative (CHAIN) which organizes the **ANNUAL CHAIN CHILDREN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL** in Nigeria.

She was the Pioneer Coordinator of the National Troupe of Nigeria children's theatre workshop from 1992 – 1997; and has been in children's theatre practice since 1991. A graduate of Theatre Arts from the prestigious University of Ibadan, with an M.Sc. degree in Clinical Psychology; she also holds a PGD in Marketing. She has been in the forefront of writing for children and children's causes.

She has written and directed to critical acclaim for the stage, "*The Rejected Blessing*", which was in the long list of 10 for the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) prize for Children's Literature in 2007. Also amongst her drama scripts are, "*Clash of the Ants*" and "Transition" She directed "*The Last Safari*" to celebrate 50 years of Corona schools in Nigeria in 2005.

A recipient of The African Woman International Merit Award 1994 for her pioneering work with children; FATE Foundation Best Business Plan Award, 2006; Chair Centre Award for Best Female Aspiring Entrepreneur, 2006; Award of Excellence, National Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (NANTAP, Oyo State Chapter).



Association of Nigerian Authors

Pamela underwent entrepreneurship studies at FATE Foundation in 2005, where she won the **Aspiring Entrepreneur Award** for her business plan on the running of a **CHAIN ARTS CENTER**. She also won the **Chair Center Best Aspiring Female Entrepreneur** same year in same institution. She coordinated the **Children's carnival** event in Abuja, Nigeria to mark 50years of Chinua Achebe's "*Things Fall Apart*", and was **Artistic Director, 2008 Lagos Children's Carnival**.

A literary anchor person of choice, she was the **Compere** at the events organized by the **Association of Nigerian Authors** marking **50 YEARS OF CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART** and **50 YEARS OF THE WRITINGS OF J.P. CLARK**.

She was invited by the **International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ WORLD CONGRESS 2011)**, to deliver a plenary paper in May 2011 in Sweden. She is billed to co-lead one of the round table discussions at the **5th World Summit on Arts and Culture** holding in Melbourne, Australia in October 2011 under the auspices of **International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)**.

She is married to **Arnold Udoka** and both are blessed with children.

SOME OF CHAIN'S PAST EVENTS



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➤ **CHAIN CHRISTMAS FIESTA 2007**

(December 2007) Featuring 6 schools performing **'I DREAM A CHRISTMAS'** on stage for 2 days at the Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

➤ **CHAIN CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION 2008**

(May 2008) Featuring Students of Queen's College, Lagos performing **'THE REJECTED BLESSING'** on stage at the Muson Centre, Lagos

➤ **2008 CHILDREN'S DAY CARNIVAL AND PARADE**

(May 2008) Involved in packaging the above event for ISD Consult & Lagos Empowerment And Resource Network. (L.E.A.R.N) in Lagos State.

➤ **CHAIN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION** (October 2008) Featuring a command performance of **THE REJECTED BLESSING** on stage at the Agip Hall, Muson Centre



SOME OF CHAIN'S PAST EVENTS

➤ **CHAIN CHRISTMAS DRAMA FIESTA 2008** (December 2008)
Featuring Students of Jeno Grammar School, Surulere, Lagos.
performing **'I DREAM A CHRISTMAS'** on stage at the Agip
MUSON Centre, Lagos

➤ **CHAIN CHILDREN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL 2009**
(CELEBRATING TWINS) Featuring Students of Meadow Hall
Schools Lekki, Lagos in a performance of **THE REJECTED**
BLESSING on stage at the Shell Hall, Muson Centre

➤ **CHAIN CHILDREN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL 2010** Featuring
Students of Fountain Heights Secondary, and Top Angel School
Lagos in a performance of **THE REJECTED BLESSING** on
stage at the National Theatre, Lagos.

➤ **CHAIN CHILDREN'S THEATRE FESTIVAL 2011** Featuring
Students of Oshodi Snr. High Secondary, Lagos in a
performance of Prof Akinwunmi Isola's
'HERBERT MACULAY & THE SPIRIT OF LAGOS' on stage at
the National Theatre, Lagos.



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JUST FOR THE RECORDS.

I have been in children's theatre practice since 1991; but CHAIN was formally registered in 2007. With the volume of work we do at CHAIN, and taking into consideration the value added services we offer, I make bold to say that CHAIN has not yet applied for any funding from any donor agency.

This is a conscious decision as we wanted our work to speak for us, prove to the world that we are not a here-today-gone-tomorrow kind of organization.

The time is now ripe I believe, for the world to take notice. I was in Sweden in May to present a paper at the ITYARN convention during the ASSITEJ festival. Today, I am in Melbourne co leading a round table discussion at this prestigious World Summit all because of the work I do with children in my little corner in Nigeria.

I remain eternally grateful to the organizers of both events for putting me on the world stage.



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***THEME OF THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
12:***

***INTERSECTION BETWEEN THE
ARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH:***

WHAT PROSPECTS FOR NIGERIA?



INTRODUCTION:

Performing arts have always been useful as therapy all through human history. In ancient Greece, Aristotle's dramatic theory of catharsis was no more than the purgation of emotion which relieved a condition. So also did other ancient societies put to use the potency of performing arts in the management of certain symptoms they viewed as not normal in the behaviours of their citizenries.

Present day Nigerian communities applied the same practice because they had evolved their own communal methods of support. In Nigerian communities, traditional therapies are imbedded in cultural and traditional practices. From birth, the community looks out for every individual. In Africa, it is said that it takes a community to raise a child. ensemble, which serves as therapy to assuage the memory of the loss of a loved one.

These communal therapies which traditionally were in form of performances have been eroded and some are extinct as a consequence of colonial conquest, coercion, rule and the introduction of new value systems. There is therefore, no conscious effort at using these methods of therapy. These have been effectively replaced by modern methods of therapy through the neuro-psychiatric hospitals in the country.

This paper intends to make visible the prospects of performing arts therapies in mental health institutions in Nigeria to increase the content and generate broad based therapeutic offerings from Nigeria's neuropsychiatric hospitals.



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APPLICATION OF PERFORMING ARTS THERAPY BY CHAIN.

The case of “Boyo” is also another example. I had been consulted by Corona Schools to put up an end of year production for the school. During our “village square” workshop sessions, I observed “Boyo” had ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyper active Disorder). He was very lively, brilliant but restless.

You cannot engage his attention for more than 5 minutes. Even his teachers came to appeal to me not to use him in the play. “...so he will not spoil the performance”. As they put it. I defied them and cast the boy in one of the lead roles. During rehearsals, “Boyo” learnt how to carry out stage business. He realized and understood he had to wait for his cue before speaking, to enter and exit the stage without being prompted, and of course he remembered all his lines.

After the performance, his mother came to me with tears in her eyes and said, “Pamela, I don’t know what magic you used for my son. But I like it.” she did not hear when I told her the magic of performing arts therapy. Because by this time, the entire teaches and parent body, were congratulating her for having such a wonderful son.

The three characters by the way are roles in my plays, **THE REJECTED BLESSING AND I DREAM A CHRISTMAS.**

There was another child, I just call her “fine girl”. She was just timid because she came from the slums and lacked the self confidence to express herself. So I changed and said, “Ehen, tok pidgin English naa.” meaning, you can speak in pidgin English. Our local patois. She did her narration in Pidgin English and finally developed the confidence to speak in proper English. She ended up playing the “Narrator” in the play. I can go on with more examples, but I think these prove my point.



BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUNDING OF WESTERN-STYLED MENTAL HEALTH INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

The establishment of the first mental health institution in Nigeria dates back to 1907, and till date Nigeria boasts over 8 Neuro Psychiatric hospitals all owned by the federal government.

The first one, the Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Yaba, before its present name, was known variously as 'Yaba Lunatic Asylum', to 'Yaba Mental Home', 'Yaba Mental Hospital', 'Yaba Psychiatric Centre', and 'Psychiatric Hospital Yaba', now bears 'Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital Yaba'. It is pertinent to note that for almost fifty years of the existence of the psychiatric institution in Nigeria, the personnel were foreign and therefore totally out of touch with indigenous methods of therapies.

However, history informs that, in 1954, the pioneer Nigerian Psychiatrist, the late Professor Thomas Adeoye Lambo, returned to Nigeria to the Aro Mental Hospital, Abeokuta, and started what was known as the "village system". Where patients and their relatives stayed in the homes of villagers, attended clinic, and returned to those homes, and attended clinic the following day.

<i>TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES EMPLOYED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS/CLIENTS PER WEEK IN FEDERAL NEURO-PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS IN NIGERIA.</i>						
<i>DAYS</i>	<i>MONDAY</i>	<i>TUESDAY</i>	<i>WEDNESDAY</i>	<i>THURSDAY</i>	<i>FRIDAY</i>	
<i>THERAPIES</i>						
<i>COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY (GROUP & INDIVIDUAL)</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>INSIGHT ORIENTED THERAPY (GROUP & INDIVIDUAL)</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>RELAPSE PREVENTION THERAPY (GROUP & INDIVIDUAL)</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SUPPORTIVE THERAPY (GROUP & INDIVIDUAL)</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>INTERPERSONAL THERAPY (GROUP & INDIVIDUAL)</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>PSYCHODRAMA</i>	<i>FAILED OR NONE EXISTENT ATEMPTS AT ALL THE INSTITUTIONS</i>					
<i>SUMMARY</i>	<i>DESPITE THE FACT THAT ALL AGREE THAT PSYCHODRAMA IS A VIABLE FORM OF THRRAPY, IT IS NOT A THERAPY OF CHOICE IN ANY OF THESE INSTITUTIONS.</i>					



ANALYSIS OF THE TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES EMPLOYED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS IN SELECT FEDERAL NEUROPSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

From the above table, it can be observed that there are various forms of therapies employed by the mental health institutions in Nigeria to carry out the management of patients/clients.

The analysis is that Nigerian neuropsychiatric hospitals and other hospitals with mental health services departments offer cognitive behavioural therapy, insight oriented therapy, relapse prevention therapy, supportive therapy, interpersonal therapy, family and therapies. These exclude all the therapies employed by other departments in the hospitals which include medical and occupational therapies and counselling by the Social Work department.

From research, there are no specific numbers of times per week that these are carried out. The regularity is based on referrals or from diagnosis. It will therefore be assumed that with all that psychodrama has going for it, it will be used a lot as a form of therapy in the mental health institutions in Nigeria, but the reverse is the case.



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ANALYSIS OF THE TYPES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES EMPLOYED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PATIENTS IN SELECT FEDERAL NEUROPSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS.

The arts as a form of therapy is majorly employed in the Occupational therapy departments. The patients are put on medical therapy after initial assessment, to take care of their primary symptoms. Their secondary disabilities viz a viz their inabilities to perform their activities of daily living are then assessed by the psychologists and various therapies applied to take care of same. They are given therapies to develop coping skills. Therapies that can help change their behavioural patterns that led to the psychosis in the first place. Therapies can also be carried out to help them from relapsing, gain insight into their conditions.

All these psychological therapies can be done applying psychodrama to support the other types of therapies. Patients suffering from major depressions, schizophrenia or any other such psychopathological states need psychodrama to help them come out of their shells. They can be made to pass through such psychodrama techniques as “role play” “role reversal”, “mirrors”, “doubling”, etc. The “protagonist” who is the patient in focus, examines his relationship by interacting with the other actors and the “director” who is the leader of the psychodrama session.

The occupational therapy employs patients taking part in carpentry, welding, basket and mat weaving, shoe making, painting, drawing etc. These are all artistic in nature. These are developed such that on discharge, these patients are easily integrated back into the society, they can earn a living, and above all, prevent a relapse as their minds is focussed on something creative that prevents them sinking into the faulty thoughts, maladjusted behaviour and destructive habits that landed them in the mental health institutions in the first place.



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PROSPECTS.

The prospects of the application of performing arts therapies are dimmed by the dearth of personnel. Although psychodrama is based on the application of real theatre terminologies, the psychologist does not understand theatre and the theatre artist lacks the mastery of the science of psychology. There is great demand for the introduction of performing arts therapies in the management of mental health taking into cognizance the vast population of over 150 million people.

The expansion of the therapeutic offerings of Nigeria's health systems stand to gain perhaps even at the speed patients may recover from their conditions due to the advantage of the performing art therapies phenomenon.

Essentially, Nigerians believe in the efficacy of the theatre in healing and reconciling man with himself, family and people. The application of performing arts therapies with the interdisciplinary training programme of theatre arts and psychology students stands to ground such students to know what and how to plan and strategize sessions for patients. Such approach would bring more respect to and redefine the functions of the performing arts and psychology.



PROSPECTS.

This of course would create job opportunities and provide a very vital service towards ensuring that patients with mental challenges can regain their full consciousness and carry on with their normal daily activities in order to contribute to society than remain a burden. Indeed, there are prospects for experts in performing arts therapies and psychodrama in Nigeria if such experts are supported by Funding Organizations.

Such set ups have been credited with some of the groundbreaking developments in the mental health delivery systems in Nigeria. In an interview with the newly appointed Medical Director, Dr. R. Lawal, he ilaments that “dearth of personnel is responsible for the unavailability on a regular basis of Performing Arts Therapies.”

Folasade Jinadu, the Director and Head of the Psychology department, corroborates the Medical Director’s information when she asserts, that ...” the arts are very vital in patient treatment. Skilled personnel are needed to run the psychodrama therapy sessions. There is no established psychodrama programme in the hospital, but it is recognised that it is a viable form of treatment but due to the lack of skilled personnel, it is not done in the hospital.



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SUGGESTIONS.

It is clear that performing arts therapies should be employed in mental health institutions for the benefit of mentally ill patients, their families and the society at large and that this is absent in the offerings of the mental health institutions in Nigeria. It is suggested that, Human capital should be developed.

There should be inter disciplinary trainings, train the trainers workshops this will go a long way in opening up new career vistas for professionals in both fields. Performing Arts therapy, psychodrama organizations and institutions in more developed nations should extend professional assistance to Nigeria in this regard.

The World Health Organization, the Rockefeller Foundation and other such funding agencies should assist in the training of theatre artists and psychologists in an inter/cross disciplinary training to produce modern day psycho dramatists in order to push the frontiers of the theory and practice of Jacob L. Moreno who developed psychodrama as a method of psychotherapy, but now through the intersection of real theatre arts practitioners and psychologist sharing the understanding of the science and arts of their disciplines in order to fully comprehend the challenges of the mentally ill and the management of such condition through performing arts therapies. The relationship between the two professions should be seen as complimentary and not competitive.



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CONCLUSION

I am discussing this subject with confidence because I am the only Nigerian with training in both the performing arts, and psychology and I have experienced the potency of performing arts therapies even with the children I deal with and counsel through my Non-Governmental Organization Children Arts Development Initiative (CHAIN). After my internship at the Federal Neuro Psychiatric Hospital Yaba, I volunteer my services and am considered family. But like my people say, a tree does not make a forest.

Nigeria needs professionals in this field. It will be my joy to see such symbiotic relationship come to fruition as it will not only create new career vistas for the two professions, and it will make Nigeria to be at par with other countries in the world who are already putting psychodrama to good use.

In Nigeria, we are a community based people. Psychodrama which has a strong semblance to our community living, will draw out the best in individual and the audience acting as the community will help the healing process of those who are in need of treatment.

CHAIN IN PICS



ENJOY SOME PICTURES OF CHAIN'S PAST EVENTS

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME.



CONTACT

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