COMMUNITY THEATRE MEDIA AS A MEANS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF MAKHAMPOM THEATRE GROUP IN THAILAND

AHMED ABIDUR RAZZAQUE KHAN

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Thesis

Entitled

COMMUNITY THEATRE MEDIA AS A MEANS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF MAKHAMPOM THEATRE GROUP IN THAILAND

.....

Mr. Ahmed Abidur Razzaque Khan

Candidate

.....

Mr. Mike Hayes, Ph.D.

Major- advisor

Not available in Thailand

.....

Ms. Pornrat Damrhung (M.ed)

Co-advisor

.....

Assoc. Prof. Rassmidara Hoonsawat, Ph.D.

Dean

Faculty of Graduate Studies

.....

Ms. Sriprapha Petcharamesree, Ph.D.

Chair

Master of Arts Programme

in Human Rights

Faculty of Graduate Studies

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Thesis

Entitled

COMMUNITY THEATRE MEDIA AS A MEANS OF HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION : A CASE STUDY OF MAKHAMPOM THEATRE GROUP IN THAILAND

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.....

Mr. Ahmed Abidur Razzaque Khan
Candidate

.....

Mr. Mike Hayes, Ph.D.
Chair

Not available in Thailand

.....

Ms. Pornrat Damrhung (M.ed)
Member

PANIDA THAPANANGKUN

.....

Ms. Panida Thapanangkun (M.F.A.)
Member

.....

Assoc. Prof. Rassmidara Hoonsawat,
Ph.D.
Dean
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Mahidol University

.....

Assoc. Prof. Rassmidara Hoonsawat,
Ph.D.
Dean
Faculty of Graduate Studies
Mahidol University

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AHMED ABIDUR RAZZAQUE KHAN 4537442 GRHR/M

M.A.(HUMAN RIGHTS)

THESIS ADVISORS: MIKE HAYES, Ph.D. Ms. PORNRAT DAMRHUNG (M.ed)

ABSTRACT

The application of theatre media for social change and development is a common activity in the developing societies of Asia and Africa since the last century. Compared to traditional classic theatre, community theatres are different because they are rather political in their views and ideology. Contemporary Thai theatre NGO Makhampom Theatre Group has been working on development for the last 30 years, stating they are a Theatre for Development (TfD). This thesis explores the possibilities and limitation of providing Human Rights Education and social reformation through the community theatre process. For the study, one of the Youth Theatre projects of Makhampom, named Dao Loog Gai, in Pitsanulok province has been studied as a case study.

This Thesis argues that the development theatre implemented by the Makhampom Theatre Group develops community culture but it has not developed a rights based approach to participation and thus empowerment. In this context Makhampom Theatre Group as conveyer of Human Rights Education is not as strong as it could be, and their potential for being an agent for social change or reformation has been compromised.

From the in-depth interviews of a total number of thirty five subjects in Bangkok, Pitsanulok city and three villages of sub-district Nongkatao, Nakhornthai district in Pitsanulok province, this study finds that the Makhampom Theatre Group develops their own methodology according to culture and practice rather than follow participatory empowerment texts or tools from the development field, or from TfD texts. Finally this thesis concludes with some suggestions for the theatre process of Dao Loog Gai, i.e. Makhampom Theatre Group for updating practices and developing a more interactive relationship with the communities and audience.

KEY WORDS: COMMUNITY THEATRE MEDIA/ HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION/MAKHAMPOM THEATRE GROUP / THAILAND

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This study dedicated to all the members of *Dao Loog Gai*,
to all the members and well wisher of *Nattmandap*
and to the all the theatre worker in the world who want to change world
by theatre media
and lastly in the memory of *Nasir Uddin Shaheen*

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context of the Research

The application of theatre media for social change and development has been going on around the world for more than forty years, but it is more evident in the developing societies of Asia and Africa[1]. Theatre has been a very effective communication media from Greek theatre to modern popular or street theatre; it is regarded as an active medium which can entertain as well as convey messages that reform societies and people all over the world. The trend of using the theatre media as an educative tool for social change is a developing global trend since the 1960s, especially emerging developing countries from the 1980s. Community Theatre, Theatre for Development, or Popular Theatre are all forms or terms for this trend. These forms differ from the traditional theatre media of society.

In recent times all these forms have been used by development agencies or organizations to educate or to develop a rights-based awareness among communities. In this context, this kind of theatre activity directly or indirectly relates to Human Right Education (HRE). So, the media of theatre is developing a sort of development communication at the community level. But in recent times there are many other media, like Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), which also provide development communication at the community level and is aimed towards the global rights aspects.

ICTs are a new and increasingly powerful media for participating in global affairs, including promoting political accountability, basic services and enhancing local development opportunities. As an effective tool, its role for promoting human rights and HRE is obvious. Powerful networking capabilities, and a large information

[1] "The objective for rural development to use theatre art is increasing in recent times in many countries in third world. China, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Botswana, Ghana, Jamaica, Mexico and many other countries central government to many other NGO's, and local organization many different ways of attempts could be mentioned for example.(translation my own, from Bangla) Syed Jamil Ahmed, *Tritiya Bishwer Bikalpa Natyadhara* ***Unnyan Nattya: Tattwa O Prayog,*** (Shamabesh, Dhaka, 2001), 50

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capacity, makes ICTs an important tool for rights based awareness and social change. Specially, development actors like INGOs, NGOs and Governments also use ICTs for sharing information, promoting development and human rights. Currently community development policy around the world tends towards supporting ICTs for development projects. However, theatre can be a much more active and accessible tool for social development processes at community level rather than ICTs.

There are political and cultural contexts to bringing the theatre into the process of human development in each society, especially in Asian society. It was noticed in the last century that theatre emerged as a tool of socio-political communication and development in Asian countries in ways totally different from both the mainstream Western theatre, and the traditional theatre. The contemporary theatre movement in Asia established theatre as an effective means to attain social and political changes. Contemporary theatre differs significantly from traditional classic forms because it is more political in its views and ideologies (Erven, 1992: xii-xiv). Contemporary Thai theatre is not different from this trend.

Although Thailand was never colonized, like the colonial legacy of many other Asian countries, its modern theatre emerged with influences from Western theatre. Theatre takes a vital role in Thai politics and society, especially for the development of democracy. Even after the 1932 revolutions, theatre and performing arts becomes a part of politics and political campaigns in Thailand (Rutnin, 1993:xiv). During the student movement for democracy in the 1970s theatre emerged as dynamic tool of awareness under the leadership of veteran director Kamron Kunadilok (Erven, 1992: 209-211). At that time, theatre was a subject that could be studied at the University. Theatre Department of Chulalongkorn, and Thammasat University developed theatre for children and young people in their curriculum in 1974 and in 1979 respectively. Therefore, theatre practitioners and academics established a number of educational touring companies for children and young people. *Makampom, Maya, The Arts Theatre Touring Company, Krajok Nago* and *Carawan* are the most successful companies (Damrhung, 1997).

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Makhampom Theatre Group was founded in 1980.[2] Emerging from Thailand's democracy movement in 1970s, now Makhampom is a mature, non-governmental organization with strong roots in Bangkok and rural Thailand (Prasartthong, 2003). Like other touring theatre companies beginning at that time, the idealism of their founders sought to bring to young rural people the opportunities of an urban education and ideas promoting new knowledge for communities. The Makhampom Theatre group work is based on the objectives of supporting marginal communities to address social problems through strengthening youth, advocating issues, and encouraging cultural survival and development in Thailand. Makhampom call this 'Community Theatre' because "due to the presence of definitive communities, where a community's common culture and identity can develop in an environment that is both continuous and distinct geographically, socially and often ethnically" (Makhampom, 2000).

Over the past two decades they have produced and performed a number of plays in several provinces and organized capacity building programs for artists and community workers throughout Thai society. Makhampom's states this process is within the area of 'Theatre for Development' (TfD).[3] Activities termed TfD are part of a process which has already has been used by many NGOs in developing and third world countries. As their website states, Makhampom's Theatre for Development emerged from their experience and practice. Moreover, their TfD activities are project oriented and based on outside intervention, which totally depends on the funding from various agencies or organizations. In this context, this thesis shows that Makhampom Theatre Group while not directly addressing Human Rights, does provide education in Human Rights values. However, there are important limitations of the group's Human Rights Education, particularly in its participatory methodology, and its willingness to criticize violations.

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[2] The group is named after a small Thai fruit, similar to cumquat. The fruit has a strange taste at first bite but the longer you chew on it, the sweeter it becomes.

[3] This statement is made on their new website, : http://www.makhampom.net/ehome_new.htm Accessed on 4 August, 2004. At the time of printing this thesis MTG released a new website detailing a new theory call TCCD (Theatre for Community Cultural Development), unfortunately this was too late to include in this thesis.

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As Community Theatre is one of the major activities of Makhampom Theatre Group, so it is necessary to discuss the reality of Thai communities. Firstly, I will introduce the basic information about Thailand along with its political and cultural context. The Kingdom of Thailand is situated in the heart of Southeast Asian mainland which covering an area of 513,115 square kilometers and for centuries known by outsiders as Siam. Thais are well known for their friendliness and hospitality. Over 62 million citizen of Thailand are ethnic Thai, which is a large majority of the population of 72 million. Thais have strong communities of Chinese and Indian ethnic origins. Buddhism, the national religion, is professed faith of 95% of the population. Thailand has had a constitutional monarchy since 1932.

Right now, Thai people have a very good constitution; the 1997 charter which is labeled the "People's Constitution"[4] guarantees the human rights of Thai citizens. Besides there are several new mechanisms such as a Constitutional Court, Administrative Court, Ombudsman and a National Human Rights Commission to support these rights. But to enjoy human rights as an individual or for the community is still rather difficult because of social structures, religious and cultural practices and conflicts over development. The well-established bureaucratic public sector and the government has always largely been ignorant of human suffering. Jaran Ditapichai states that all governments and their bureaucracy have arrogated enormous power to themselves during their regime. He noticed that "they always want to rule their citizens" (Ditapichai,2000: 85). As he explained, the country had been under an authoritarian political regime and military dictatorship for most of its modern life. Opposition political leaders, media people, and communists who had different ideas from the government faced drastic penalties; they were killed or disappeared during this time. So, average people's situation was worse too. Poor people have been almost neglected and those who complaining about their poverty were branded as communists and locked in jail (Ditapichai,2000: 77-78). During this period according to Ditapichai, people adapted the habit of non-criticism without offending anybody in power.

The second barrier limiting the impact of human rights are the Siamese-Buddhist cultural practices that inspired people to avoid violence and criticism, thus

[4] Chris Baker, 2003:5, Human Rights and Thai Democracy, *Thailand Human Rights Journal, Vol-1, 2003*

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preferring negotiation and compromise to confrontation. According to Rama VI and Prince Damrong one of the three different aspect of Siamese identity is the dislike of violence, in other words if they have a choice the Siamese would prefer peaceful means or nonviolent ways to setting problems. And another basic characteristic is tht the Siamese are good at assimilation, or compromise (Sivaraksa, 1990). These religious values are also important in the development of people's attitude to social or individual rights. Most peoples attitude toward life are based on principles of Karma in Buddhism, which tends to view that whatever positive or negative things happen to them as justified as fate. This attitude and social structure makes for a culture of silence in the community.[5]

The development process for over last two decades, according to Scholar Sulak Sivraksa, results in a consumer culture with cola, fast food and jeans as a syndrome which replaced people's local Siamese ways of life. As he wrote, "Worst of all, the so called development model destroyed our village, and *baan* culture was at stake. The road the dam, electricity, the radio and television, in the name of development, effected our identity at every village and temple (Sivraksa, 1990:23). He also explained the social class context and reality. As to him,

> The present Siamese elite seems to care only for power and money, as well as other material aspect of life. Most of them only pay lip service to social justice…. Those who think they are in control of the country, whether they be in the army, the government, the civil service or in business, only work from day to day in order to maintain the status quo (Sivraksa, 1990:24-25).

Moreover, Thailand Development Research Institutes data shows in 2001, the inequality of resources and wealth in society. Thailand has the sixth widest income distribution gap in the world. The richest 20% earn 58.5% of the total income and the poorest 20% make 4% of the total income.[6] Poverty is the one of the major barriers to human rights and development in the society at the grassroots.

According to a report of Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education, Thais' rights are still in question, particularly rights of the poor and rural

[5] A term by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, where people become unconscious about their abilities and rights because of the formal power structure in society. See his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
[6] See Kamoltrakul Kamol, 2003, "Globalization and economic, social and cultural rights." *Thailand Human Rights Journal*, Vol-1.

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people that are obviously linked to long-time unsolved problems of rights to natural resources and rights to development.[7] It seems that the rural community becomes more helpless with each wave of economic development. In fact the development process in Thailand, according to Ditapichai, increases the number of landless farmers in the rural Thailand, increases the number of migrant worker in the city, and the amount of prostitution and drug addiction (Ditapichai, 2000:79). Besides, there are 29,000 new infections of HIV/AIDS each year, of which approximately 4,200 are children in Thailand.[8] In this context, HRE is a priority for rural Thai communities; and it would be more effective if it is assimilated with participatory community media. For that, Makhampom Community Theatre media is a practical activity to explore.

HRE is all the learning that develops the knowledge, skills, and values of human rights. The classical formulation of human rights education is contained in Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

> Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious group, and shall further the activities of United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

It is also discussed in the other international covenants like International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the 1978 UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and International Labor Organization (ILO) convention that focuses on the necessity of HRE. Moreover, 2004 is the last year of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). During this Decade, the UN has urged and supports all member states to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal school system and through popular and adult education. Makhampom Theater Group in Thailand has been developing social awareness through theatre for over two decades

[7] See Report on the Southeast Asia Human Rights Education Training of Trainers for Peace Building, 2001:50, Bangkok, Thailand

[8] Data from a press release of Oxfam, 2004, dated 12 July 2004, entitled "Peoples' lives before commercial interest: The US-Thailand FTA threatens HIV treatment" http://www.oxfam.org/eng/pr040712_aids_usthai_fta.htm accessed on 4 August, 2004

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and therefore, by implication it develops human rights awareness, promotion and education. Community Theatre is one of the processes that ensures human rights and human right education in Thai society.

1.2. Significance of the study

On the understanding of the above context, this study will explore the effectiveness of community theatre media for human rights education as well as social change through the experiences of Makhampom Theatre Group in Thailand. As it is known that theatre, especially TfD is a process by which it is possible to uncover reality through dialogical recreation.[9] Community theatre can be a fundamental tool of human rights education because, according to Jamil Ahmed, TfD gives a practical scope to exercise an 'open dialogue' in response to poverty driven by rights violations (Ahmed 2001). An open dialogue makes it possible to increase people's awareness and critical thinking (Bokul, 2001:26). Makhampom can provide this for Thai society by their TfD process when they work with the communities.

TfD is a very appropriate tool for illiterate poor masses, children and young people of developing countries. This study will examine the role of community theatre in social changes. But firstly the effectiveness of this tool should be assessed, otherwise the effort might become worthless. Because according to Kidd, "theatre is a powerful catalyst, but on its own it cannot achieve significant social change individually. It must be integrated with an organizational capacity for action. Otherwise it will never be anything more than an interesting and exciting spectacle."(qtd. in Bokul,2001:29). That is why effectiveness of community theatre media is an issue to look at. The central question which this study must answer is: what is the educative role of Community Theatre in the process of social change and Human Rights Education, specifically for the communities. And how is the use of Community Theatre as a small-scale medium to be evaluated? This study may bring attention of local as well as regional societies to promote Human Rights Education and issues by Community Theatre media at the end of Decade of Human Rights Education.

[9] As Jamil Ahmed stated, "Through the dialogical recreation it is possible to uncover the reality and its relativity that can be identified through the process of development theatre" (Ahmed, Syed Jamil, (2001)/ translation my own, from Bangla).

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Human Right Education is now a growing concern around the world among development workers and development agencies, especially in developing countries. Most rights based NGOs or development agencies have some popular cultural motivation programs by which they assimilate a rights based awareness with human rights education. As theatre has been promoting rights based education all over the world, this study may specify the application, method and strategy of those rights base organizations. Therefore this study is not only an academic document of Human Rights Education, but also a document on the practical aspects of human rights promotion. At the end of the decade of human rights education this study may add a pragmatic view of assessing Human Rights Education. There is much research on the Makhampom Theatre Group's Community Theatre activities, or Theatre for Development concerns. But there is no academic research questioning the Community Theatre itself as the method of Human Rights Education. Hence, the significance of the study is to critically examine the development of Human Rights Education through the Community Theatre process. The main contribution of this research will be to contribute to the poor communities of Thailand, who are the subject of Community Theatre, through questioning the development of Community Theatre media. The research will also contribute to academic concerns, theatre people, development workers and the general community.

1.3. Statement of the Research Problem

Makhampom Theatre Group has practiced theatre as a medium of communication and social change over two decades in Thailand. They developed Community Theatre as micro-media for rural communities. During this period they gained success and popularity with their methodology. They produced social issue and problem-oriented plays on topics such as drugs, AIDS, and sexual behavior, funded by different donors. The impact of the Community Theatre process on rural Thai communities has not yet been fully assessed. As Makhampom have been working for the rural communities in different provinces of Thailand and their Community Theatre for development is an well-exercised tool in the development arena, the output of their efforts need to be examined. Actually, it is important to study how much the process of Makhampom Theatre Group actively works for social transformation.

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In the context of people's empowerment, it is necessary to examine whether their work motivated and empowered the communities or just provided entertainment or acting like other intervention-oriented development works. Makhampom Theatre Group termed their work as Theatre for Development in their newly published web page (www.makhampom.net). Even though theatre for development mainly focuses on people's rights, the Makhampom Theatre Group does not mentioned people's rights or human rights in their documents and methodologies. Makhampom Theatre Group has provided HRE in Refugee Camp Workshops. The Australia Karen Youth Project facilitates workshops with Karen refugees on the Thai-Burma border. One of the areas of these workshops is human rights education. Makhampom Theatre Group are currently developing this area in their work and methodology.

There are examples of different theatre approaches or media, which deals with the problems of the communities or oppressed. But most of them do not focus on encouraging the people to be agents of change in their own situation. According to Epskamp, "The learning potential from theatre as an educative medium thus depends not only on the nature of intervention, but also on the message, the context and expressive qualities of the theatre used" (Epskamp, 1989:11). In this context what is Makhampom's Theatre Group's policy, and how does it work? There are two major problems which may occur in this process. First one is that, despite the potential of theatre to involve and reach audiences, it is perhaps misleading to expect too much from the performance alone. When people have become aware of the disadvantages of certain behaviors and are willing to change, or if people are empowered to act, but their effort might not become fruitful without support and follow up. As social change is related with other basic factors like politics and economy, how can a micro media unit like Makhampom Theater Group generating Community Theatre media become an agent of social reformation? This is important for my following argument which suggest that the Makhampom Theatre Group is very limited in its social reformation. The second issue is that theatre cannot exist long; it perishes away spreading its interactive effect just along with last moment of acting. How can Community Theatre play an effective role to overcome these limitations? In short, this research will examine the effectiveness of the Makhampom Theatre Groups Community Theatre

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media as educational tool for the Thai communities and examine how it can be a medium of HRE.

1.4. Objective of the Study

The major objective of this study is to assess the Community Theatre media in Human Rights Education, by using Makhampom Theatre Group as a case study.

The sub objectives of this study are:

1. Determining the relationship between Community Theatre and Human Rights Education.
2. Describing how Community Theatre transforms values and educates youth in Human Rights.
3. Assessing if Makhampom Theatre Group operates as a 'social change' agent.

1.5. Research Questions

The study will address questions as follows in order to achieve the above-stated objectives.

1. How does the Makhampom Theatre Group provide Human Rights Education and social development through Theatre for Development?
2. Is Community theatre a good medium for Human Rights Education?
3. How do the issues, which have been addressed by Makhampom Theatre Group relate to Human Rights?
4. How successful is Makhampom Theatre Group is in demonstrating Human Rights Education (HRE) in terms of audience awareness and knowledge of Human Rights?

1.6. The scope of the study

This study will analyze Community Theatre and its relation between social development and Human Rights Education. Though Thailand has much community theatre like *Maya, The Arts Theatre Touring Company, Krajok Nago* and *Carawan* and they are working for awareness raising or people's rights, this study is a case study on Makhampom Theater Group. This study will specially examine how Makhampom works to educate the marginalized rural people about their rights in specific

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communities. It is not possible to study two decades of Makhampom activities, however this study gives an overview of Makampom Theatre Group activities from 1981 to 2003. As Makhampom Theatre has different community projects in several provinces, this research will concentrate on one specific project in sub-district Nongkatao of Nakornthai district in Pitsanulok province for this study. The main focus period will be on development period of one specific Community Theatre Group from 1997 to 2003, the *Dao Loog Gai*.

1.7. Research Methodology

1.7.1. Selection of Study Areas and Sampling Strategy

Makhampom Theatre Group developed Grassroots Micro Media Project in 1981 to produce media for education and community development. Under this project in 1997 the group ran a "Theatre for Youth Development Skill Workshop" in Nongkatao, Pitsanulok province. There they formed a group called *Dao Loog Gai*. The present study addresses the impact of *Dao Loog Gai*, especially in the sub-district of Nongkatao of Nakornthai district. As the performers of *Dao Loog Gai* are the students of Intharatith Phitthayakom public school, the school was the main area of the field study to access the students, teachers, and parent's community. For the response of the audience I visited two villages of the same district where the performance took place on different days.

I used convenience sampling in selecting the Dao Look Gai because this worked the best for the theatre group. It was convenient in two aspects, firstly to get approval and assistance of The Makhampom Theatre Group, and secondly because the schedule of study and interviews in both field and urban areas could coincide with my period of research. The project area is in a province far from the capital city; here the community theatre process still exists, and the practitioners are children and young people. Makhampom has worked with the public school and its students for a project on social problems like drugs and HIV/AIDS. The area was chosen because it is one of the effective fields where the participants from first generation to new generation are practicing media for social change.

As Makhampom Theatre usually works with communities in rural and urban areas, especially with underprivileged people, data was collected from both areas. To understand this activity a series of interviews were undertaken. To maximize the variation of the

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sample in this case study, cross sections of participants in different communities have been interviewed, like urban volunteers and rural participants. In the urban community, mainstream Makhampom volunteers, trained new volunteers, and former members of the group have been interviewed. As shows have been performed to educate large groups, audience samples are mostly from the villages where theatre has been performed. The objective is see how Community Theatre has impacted on the rural community. The other purpose is to determine if there is are positive impacts on the lives of the community.

Rights based issues

As Makhampom theatre usually work for developing social awareness regarding some local issues, my research objective was to find out the rights based issues. In Nakornthai there were HIV/ AIDS issues and drug problem as well. According to the data of local health department there were 46 new patients HIV/ AIDS in the year of 2002 but the total number of patients was 267. Every year there are 29,000 new patients around Thailand. So, HIV/AIDS is a major social problem in Thailand. Besides, there is the problem of drug addiction, especially amphetamine, in the remote hilly areas of Nakornthai district. When the group was formed in 1997 a study by the group found that among the 728 community members of village Gang Wa, 122 were drug users, 17 drug dealers, and 6 seller/users. So, total number of people in the village who deal with drugs is 145, or about 20%. In the family level the scene was very drastic. Among the 230 families 175 of them deal with drugs, which is about 75 % (see appendix-C). This certainly has an effect on children and young people. Out of this related major social problems include child abuse, women forced into prostitution and drugs selling, domestic violence, and migration to the city.

1.7.2. Study areas:

Three villages were determined by *Dao Loog Gai* team for performance. The Gang Wa village where Intharatith Phitthayakom public school situated. Other two villages are Ban Pong-ka-chur and Wat Hua Rong where 6 teams performed *Dao Loog Gai* on September 2, 2003 and September 3, 2003 respectively. In Intharatith

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Phitthayakom school, teachers and volunteers were been observed from August 31-September 5, 2003.

1.7.3. Tools for data collection

This exploratory study focused on how effectively community theatre media inspires and empowers people to exercise their social rights. This study has been carried out through documentary research and in-depth interviews. Data has been collected through qualitative research methodology. For documenting data I use audio recorder and notebook, along with digital camera.

Documentary research:

In the first phase, important and related literatures have been reviewed to understand the existing knowledge and theories. This phase critically examined the Human Rights Education approaches and how theatre media has adapted to it. Literature reviews have been conducted to develop a theoretical framework of Human Rights Education and its application in the development field by the theatre process. A variety of texts are reviewed in this part including UN conventions, declaration and different committee resolutions or general comments, NGO, donors and government evaluation reports and academic discussions Human Rights Education. Data relating to Makhampom's activities and works have been collected from local newspapers like *The Bangkok Post* and *The Nation* library. Besides available articles, literature and research has been reviewed from libraries, concern websites and from the Makhampom Theatre organization's collection. I have also collected audio-visual data, such as some of Makhampom's productions in CD format data and audio musical story of *Dao Loog Gai* by popular folk singer Pom Pilom .

In-depth Interviews:

This research is an exploratory study relating to HRE, exploring the consequence and outcomes concerning impact and prospect of Community Theatre media as a tool of Human Rights Education. To find out the outcomes of Community Theatre, an in-depth-interview has been used to get an in-depth understanding of the outcome of Community Theatre and how it effects community lives and assists them

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in achieving social rights. A total number of thirty five people were interviewed (18 female and 17 male), during twenty nine (29) interview sessions in Bangkok, Pitsanulok city and three villages (Gang Wa :Intharatith Phitthayakom public school and community, Ban Pong-ka-chur and Wat Hua Rong). Semi structured in-depth interviews were conducted among the audiences and key informants groups on a random basis. I used different questions for collecting data from each group.

Interviews were taken from September 2003 to September 2004 in two phases. First phase took place from 30, August, 2003 to third week of September 2003. And later on four (4) more key informants were interviewed according to suggestion of examination committee in September 2004 in the second phase.

Key Informants Group

The key informants and were the a) the existing performers and former volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai*, b) parents of Community Theatre participants in Pitsanulok, c) the teachers of the Sri-Intratit Pitayakom School in the field area of Pitsanulok. After that d) three generations of Makhampom volunteer was interviewed from the senior level, mid level and new comers as fourth group in Bangkok. Aj. Sunet Sunet Thongkumpong, the director of the school, Duangkae Bauprakhon (Khun Jum), the founder co-ordinator of *Dao Loog Gai* project of Makhampom Theater Group were interviewed as key informants during field study in Pitsanulok. Later on Mr. Pradit Prasartthong, the artistic director and chief executive, was interviewed as one of the key informants in Bangkok at Makhampom's office (See appendix-A).

The theatre practitioners, Makhampom volunteers, teachers and parents were interviewed separately. Also other resource persons like Makhampom executives or core members have been interviewed according to convenience. Three former volunteers and seven existing volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* were interviewed in the field as performers and practitioners. Three teachers including director of school Aj. Sunet, two parents, eight Makhampom volunteers including Pradit Prassattong were interviewed in the first phase from August 31 to September 4, 2003 in Pitsanulok and September 9, 2003 in Bangkok. Only one volunteer of Makhampom was interviewed in September 20, 2003.

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In the second phase four (4) key informants were interviewed in Bangkok in September, 2004. They were Makhampom researcher and facilitator Richard Barber, Khun Jon, a senior volunteer of Makhampom, one theatre academic Khun Pasakorn Intoo-Marn, and one Actionaid Thai representative, Khun Vachararutai Boontinand. This interview took place in September 9, 2004. I selected at lest one representative from each profession. There were five (5) key points in for the key informants questioners and fifteen (15) questions and one comment or suggestion option for the performer volunteers questioners as key.

Audience Group

The audience in the field were interviewed after the shows or performances of the *Dao Loog Gai* Theatre Group. Eight people were interviewed in two different locations. The interviewee from the audiences were selected from different sexs, age groups, and professions. In Wat Hua Rong village three male farmers and one shopkeeper were interviewed on September 2, 2003 in the evening around 8 p.m. just after the performance of *Dao Loog Gai*. And in Ban Pong-ka-chur village two students, one female farmer and one school driver were interviewed on September3, 2003 just after the performance around 8.p.m.. In the field I interviewed people with the help of an interpreter, along with local volunteers. There were twelve questions and one comment or suggestion option for interviewees in general. My interpreter and me took notes on notebooks for keeping records. Most of the interview were conversational, rather than formal interviews. I did not record their voice during the time of interview as it could make unnatural environment for them.

For all the above mentioned groups the questions were about to exploring their idea of human rights, identifying the rights focus of the plays, and if the CT process added any social change. The questionnaires are in appendix-B.

Observation of rehearsals, performances and activities

I observed the theatre method applied at the school, especially rehearsals of the six performing groups as well as facilitation by the teachers in rehearsal, during the performance, and after performance. In this context I observed the teacher-student relationship. I observed MTG activities in Bangkok from April to December 2003,

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including the latest community theatre presentation of the Children's caravan 'Beauty of War', two classical *Likay*[10] performances, and two 1 day workshop organized by MTG.

1.7.4. Ethical Issues

For the field study in Pitsanulok, MTG group provided me with an authorized letter on their organization letterhead. As a researcher I always made appointment with the key informants according to their convenient time to be interviewed. The field study was scheduled according to the convenience of the *Dao Loog Gai*. The interviews were taken according to the wish and willingness of interviewees. Before taking interviews I always introduced myself, sometimes with the help of interpreter about my status and purpose of research.

I always was concerned to respect cultural values and differences throughout the research process. After a self-introduction I always asked for the permission of recording interviewee's comments and views. I also asked for permission before taking photographs of the activities in the field.

1.8. Limitations:

1.8.1. Time and accessibility, Lack of existing projects and Thai culture

As Community Theatre activities depend on available funding, at the time of research for this study, many projects were inactive. There was no choice except to study the project area of Pitsanulok, where Community Theatre is still existing after the project period finished. Evaluation of the total process was made only on the basis of rehearsal and performance observation for a short time of five days. This short time observation may not represent the actual view.

Moreover, I was stranger to the practitioners and the other informant groups as a man from different nationality (that is from Bangladesh). Being a foreigner the teachers and students could be biased about giving information because Thai

[10] A popular folk dance -drama of Thailand, see Dance, Drama and theatre in Thailand: The process of Development and Modernization, by Mattani Mojdara Rutnin, (1993: 184-186)

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wathanatham or culture is to not share negative views with other persons, especially someone unknown.

1.8.2. Language barrier

The language barrier was one of the major limitations. Although I have been living in Thailand for one year my Thai language skills are weak. My language limitations were a constraining factor, especially at the beginning of the research process as a foreigner. To overcome this barrier, according to the advice of both advisers, I took the help of a professional interpreter who is familiar with the idea of community work, but didn't know Makhampom Theatre Group. In June 2004 I revisited all the data with the help of a Thai colleague according to suggestion of the major advisor. In this context it is needed to mention that as a Theatre practitioner of Bangladesh for over two-decades I believe that Theatre has it own universal language to communicate to people. I developed this thesis proposal on this point of confidence. It is inevitable that I missed certain meanings and misunderstood parts of dialogues. As I cannot read so I missed some important written material. Language must also be problematical as in the field there were different dialects spoken in Laotian Thai communities. So, my interpreter also used the help of local volunteer who speaks this language.

1.9. Organization of Thesis

The first two chapters of this thesis are the introduction and literature review. The next three chapters are based on field study, in-depth interviews and documents. The second chapter discusses the history, development, and existing theory of development theatre media and human rights education and how it has been practiced by different groups around the world. The theory on theatre looks at Brecht to Boal thought according to claim of Makampom's Theatre for Development work process with *Dao Loog Gai* in Pitsanulok. Chapter three to chapter five discusses the field findings. Chapter three explains the context of Makhampom and Human Rights Education. The Makampom's objective and action for community empowerment are based on field findings on the basis of interviews and statement on existing and

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previous documents. There are different sections on theatre in community work explaining GMMP (Grassroots Micro Media Project) performed at the World Social Forum in India, January 2004. Lastly I developed a conceptual framework of empowerment on the basis of Makhampom's philosophy statement and existing ideas of participation in the development and theatre for development field. The fourth chapter discusses the view of different stakeholders.

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CHAPTER 2
HRE AND COMMUNITY THEATRE MEDIA

In the era of global media communication, and where the first few years of the 21st Century are already filled with wars, bloodshed, and shattered dreams, more than fifty years have passed since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was made. Still, most people do not have clear idea about their individual rights as human beings. Since 1994, the UN Decade for HRE has urged all UN members to promote training, dissemination and information efforts. The UN says this is aimed at the building of a universal culture of human rights. And at the end of the decade, in 2004, human rights are mostly an unknown notion among the people who are living in rural communities around the world. In this context this chapter will explore the theoretical understanding of HRE and its relation with Community Theatre media.

This chapter explores the theoretical context of HRE, and the relationship of the media to HRE. The main focus is on theatre media in general, its aims and purposes discussed from the historical, philosophical and theoretical aspects as well as on the basis of international treaties, declarations and national trends in Thailand. To develop the theoretical context I explain the notion of human rights and its difference between cultural rights and values, along with the Asian values in the beginning of the chapter. For theory I analyze from Brecht to Boal. This chapter also discusses the theoretical aspects of Community Theatre as a tool of HRE in the context of how theatre is used as an educational tool around the world. I define the Theater in Education (TIE) in UK, Boal's Theatre Of the Oppressed (TO). I also mention other Asian experiences like the TO process in the Philippines by Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) and the experiences of Theater for Development (TfD) in Bangladesh. A historical development of Makhampom Theatre Group is discussed at the end of this chapter.

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2.1. Theoretical context of HRE

2.1.1. Human Rights and cultural rights and values

Human rights entails all the basic rights of human beings such as the right to life, right to food, health service, housing, security, along with the right to freedom of expression and association. The universal nature of human rights is literally written into the title of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Preamble proclaims the Declaration as a "common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations." Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, repeats the same language to reaffirm the status of the Universal Declaration as a "common standard" for everyone. Adopted in June 1993 by the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights in Austria, the Vienna Declaration continues to reinforce the universality of human rights, stating, "All human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated." This means that political, civil, cultural, economic and social human rights are to be seen in their entirety. One cannot pick and choose which rights to promote and protect. They are all of equal value and apply to everyone.

Everyone is entitled to human rights without discrimination of any kind. Human rights are for all human beings, and according to the UDHR regardless of "race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." Non-discrimination protects individuals and groups against the denial and violation of their human rights. For that reason to deny human rights on the grounds of cultural distinction is discriminatory. Human rights are intended for everyone, in every culture. In fact, human rights are the birthright of every person. The denial or abuse of human rights is wrong, regardless of the violator's culture. On the other hand it is necessary to clarify that a good constitution and elected government cannot protect human rights of people alone. Amartya Sen (1999), winner of the Noble Prize for economics, asserted that poverty is a cause and consequence of

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human rights violations because it deprives the poor of the opportunity to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights, to increase their standard of living, and to have a human security. Presently human rights activists emphasizes this very point by saying that human rights means all that basic rights as a human being, including the rights not to be poor.

Cultural Rights

Identifying a comprehensive definition of culture is difficult, especially when there exists lot of definition from different aspects and subjects. A recent definition by the Intercultural studies project at the University of Minnesota put the idea in a nutshell: "the shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and effective understanding that are learned through a process of socialization" (Lowe, 2001). But in the aspect of rights, as broadly defined at the World Conference on Cultural Policies in 1982, "culture…is …the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs." Hence cultural rights encompass both the creative self-expression through arts and letters, as well as the more fundamental acknowledgement of cultural authenticity and its connection to development.

Among UN organizations, UNESCO's specific role is to protect cultural rights and to act as the custodian of the cultures of the past that have invaluable messages and lessons for all humankind to learn. In 1966, UNESCO's General Conference adopted the Declaration of the Principles of International Cultural Co-operation, which states in Article I that "each culture has a dignity and value which must be respected and preserved" and that "every people has the right and duty to develop its culture." According to Ayton-Shenker,

> Every human being has the right to culture, including the right to enjoy and develop cultural life and identity. Cultural rights, however, are not unlimited. The right to culture is limited at the point at which it infringes on another human right. No right can be used at the expense or destruction of another, in accordance with international law. This means that cultural rights cannot be

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> invoked or interpreted in such a way as to justify any act leading to the denial or violation of other human rights and fundamental freedoms (Ayton-Shenker, 1995).

This means a cultural right that violates human rights should be criticized. So, there are legitimate, substantive limitations on cultural practices, even on well-entrenched traditions. For example, no culture today can legitimately claim a right to practice slavery. Similarly, cultural rights do not justify torture, murder, genocide, discrimination on grounds of sex, race, language or religion, or violation of any of the other universal human rights and fundamental freedoms established in international law.

Theatre, as a part of performing art, is a kind of cultural production, which is a potent vehicle to disseminate ideologies and values of a certain society. Every culture has its own performing arts dance, drama and theatre form which emerge from a national tradition. Traditional cultures can protect the well-being of their people and illuminate the common foundation of human dignity on which human rights promotion and protection stand. In that aspect, art including performing art, theatre, and literature are the tools of practicing cultural rights. This thesis needs to be sensitive to the cultural aspect of Human Rights theatre while being able to criticize the success of HRE by the theatre. This means sensitivity to deference to authority. As this thesis engages in a critical evaluation of a cultural practice it may, at times, be critical of Thai culture. This criticism, however, is aimed at improving the Human Rights standards of Thai people and is not meant to devalue cultural values and practices.

Asian values and human rights

It is important to mention about Asian values, for Theatre or Community Theatre are western concepts and my study is about community theatre in Thailand. In this context HRE comes from west and my study will explore possibility of HRE though Community Theater in Thailand. To explain the differences and relations within the topics it is essential to clarify Asian values. There are debates that the concept of human rights is western. Especially when the UDHR was produced (1948),

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at that time the United Nation was dominated by the west. Pathak states that “not unnaturally the Declaration presented western concept of human rights" (Pathak, 1989). He also explained that the non-Western societies find alternative conceptions of human rights and human dignity from their own values and practice. More over, according to him, the problem for non-Western States remains one of adjusting existing traditional cultures and economic ideologies to the Western value-based UDHR.[12]

In each Asian society has its own cultural values. Asian cultures tend to give emphasis to the rights of the community rather than to individuals. As Hitam describes,

> The individual is viewed an integral part of large group. In these respects it is claimed that it is the interest of community, which take priority over the interests of the individual. In this regard the rights of individual are to be sacrificed for the greater good of community. Therefore, individual rights prevail over the interest of community (Hitam, 1996).

Thai culture and Human Rights

From the context of Thai culture people are polite, kind, friendly, non violent and respectful to older people. This human dignity is basic value of Thai culture and has been practice by generations as cultural rights. Pombejr clarified that there are certain traditional Thai values, which are related to human rights and peace. They are: Loving-kindness, Equanimity, Courtesy, Simplicity and Love for peace and harmony. However, as he remarked, the concept of rights, justice, equality and independence is considered to be Western and different from Thai traditional cultural values. For example, Thai people have a strong sense that an individual is an integral part of a network of family relationships and obligations. Thus, Thai values and situation does not encourage independence but it reinforces interdependence. Thus, it is difficult to make people understand universal human rights values (Pombejr, 2003: 218). On the other hand, the Buddhist view human rights as a kind of human responsibility and freedom. Freedom in the context of society and ethics as well, that

[12] See Introductory Report, Pathak Raghunandan Swarup, presented in the opening session of "The Universality of Human Rights in a Pluralistic World" Strassbourg,17-19 April 1989

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means getting liberation from natural environment through spirituality.[13] I will relate to these values in chapter three by interpreting the story of *Dao Loog Gai* and focus on how community values are established as cultural rights rather than individual rights.

2.1.2. Background of HRE

HRE is regarded as a process for the elimination of human rights violations and for building free and just societies. UN urges and supports all member states to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal school system and through popular and adult education during the Decade for HRE. But defining HRE is still a dilemma. In general it can be said that HRE is all learning that develops the knowledge, skills and values of human rights. But according to Flowers there are different definitions among the three distinct working groups on HRE:

A. governmental bodies, including intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), UN agencies, and UN-sponsored conferences;
B. nongovernmental bodies (NGOs); and
C. academics and educational thinkers (Flowers, 2003:2).

The basic concept of HRE of the first group, as stated in the 1993 Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights is:

> HRE should include peace, democracy, development and social justice, as set forth in international and regional human rights instruments, in order to achieve common understandings and awareness with a view to strengthening commitment to human rights (Paragraph 80)

This kind of governmental definition emphasizes the role of HRE to create peace, continuity, and social order, through learning about international and regional instrument along with the responsibilities of government. The classic formulation of HRE is contained in Article 26(2) of the UDHR. The UN Decade for HRE develops the definition of HRE from the references of the international covenants and other declarations.

These definitions are not familiar to general people. Rather definitions formulated by NGOs are clearer to them. NGO-formulated definitions according to

[13] From a personal interview of Aj. Sulak Sivaraksa, 2004, November 11, 2004

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Flowers, emphasizes violation, stresses the potential of HRE to enable vulnerable group to protect themselves and challenge their oppressors. Their definition relates to words like power, empowerment, conflict, protect, defend, oppressed and oppressor, victim, violation. The revolutionary pedagogy of Paulo Freire is evident in their analysis and critical examination leading to awareness. Flowers opines that from 1980 Paulo Freire's revolutionary pedagogy was changing the educators and the educators' thinking about the nature of learning and social change, the power dynamic between teachers and learners, and the importance of consciousness and critical analysis of one's own reality. Thus his thinking has profoundly influenced the development of HRE (Flowers, 2003:13). Therefore Freirian influence is evident in recent definition as below:

> HRE … is a process of learning that evokes critical thinking and system analysis, with a gender perspective, with the learners … women and learning to analyze their situations within a holistic framework of human rights about political, civil, economic, social and cultural concern relevant to the learners' lives … to result in a sense of ownership of human rights … leading to equal participation in the decisions that determine our lives and taking action to claim them (Koenig, 2002)

This definition points out the issues of teaching critical thinking for equal participation and decision-making. From this aspect, Asian Regional Resource Center for HRE definition is more practical. For them, "HRE is a practical process which contains deliberately designed sets of learning activities using human rights knowledge, values, and skill as content aimed at the general public to enable them to understand their experiences and take control of their lives" (ARRC, 2003:23).

In context of the above definitions, my research concentrates on last two definitions. This study defines HRE as a practical learning process of decision-making for the people to liberate them by raising critical thinking of social structures, to develop awareness of violations and equal participation through promotion of Human Rights related values like equality, dignity, justice and skill to enable them to take control of their lives. From this view any kind of learning process or educational activity that liberate people is a kind of HRE. Makampom's Community Theatre

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process is also a kind of HRE in this view, even if it does not necessarily entail the content of human rights documents.

2.1.3. Importance of HRE

The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action states that HRE, training and public information were essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace (paragraph 78). In fact, although newspaper and electronic media refer to human rights every day, “human rights literacy” is not widespread in the country, even in United States (Flowers,2003). Students of law and international relations or political science may study human rights in a university setting, but most people do not receive any education, formally or informally, about human rights. Even human rights activists usually acquire their knowledge and skills by self-teaching and direct experience.

Moreover, most people usually think that human right means civil and political rights, which includes freedom of assembly, freedom of worship, and the right to a fair trial. Only few realize that social, economic and cultural rights such as health care, housing, or a living wage, are also human rights guaranteed in the UDHR. And the marginalized people who do not know their rights are more vulnerable to be abused and often lack the language and conceptual framework to effectively advocate for themselves. A recent UN published report states that a growing consensus around the world recognizes education for and about human rights as essential. As to the report, it can contribute to the building of free, just, and peaceful societies. HRE is also increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses UN(1997).

Education in human rights is itself a fundamental human right and also a responsibility too. The Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) exhorts “every individual and every organ of society” to “strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms.” HRE' s goal is to help people understand human rights, value human rights, and take responsibility for respecting, defending, and promoting human rights. An important outcome of HRE is empowerment, a process through which people and communities increase their control

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of their own lives and the decisions that affect them. The UN Decade for HRE explains explicitly the necessity or purpose and means of HRE in paragraphs 12 and 13 in the guidelines for national plan of action for the HRE:

> There is growing consensus that education in and for human rights is essential and can contribute to both the reduction of human rights violation and building of free, just and peaceful societies. HRE is also increasingly recognized as an effective strategy to prevent human rights abuses.
>
> Human rights are promoted through three dimensions of education campaigns:
>
> (a) Knowledge: provision of information about human rights and mechanism for their protection;
>
> (b) Values, beliefs and attitudes: promotion of a human rights culture through the development of values, beliefs and attitudes which uphold human rights;
>
> (c) Action: encouragement to take action to define human rights and prevent human rights abuses.(UN,1998:35-36)

There are other aspects of HRE. According to Flowers, NGOs have goals of rights education through social change not only through influencing governments but increasingly to influence other sources of power such as transnational business and non-state actors. The Center for HRE (CHRE) of Atlanta, Georgia, an organization that educates principally on social, economic and cultural right or the lack thereof, in the USA, states that: “Through HRE we can create change. We can exercise democratic control over corporations, the media and our governments by making sure our voices are heard when we speak of values common to all of us” (Flowers,2003). In this aspect as an NGO, Makhampom Theatre Group should be doing this to ensure voices and media for rural Thai communities.

The Decade for HRE develops a guideline for plan of action for HRE. According to their evaluation, the active engagement of non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations and professional associations in the various activities of the Plan of Action is seen as a crucial element for success. At the national level, the Decade's Plan of Action provides for the establishment, upon the initiative of Governments or other relevant institutions, of a national committee for HRE. For HRE in Thailand, in 1998 a National Committee was set up to draft the National Policy and

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Plan of Action on Human Rights, which was completed and approved by the Parliament in October 2000. One of the 11 sections of the document concerns HRE. The National Policy and Plan of Action on Human Rights is implemented through inter-ministry coordination, and the Ministry of Education is the focal point for the specific section on HRE.

The Government has also advised educational activities undertaken by the Office of the Attorney-General (focusing on public information activities for vulnerable groups and training of legal professionals), the Ministry of Education (focusing on children's rights, including the development of school curricula, materials and training for teachers, and the elaboration of related legislation) and the Ministry of Interior (focusing on the empowerment of community organizations)[14].

2.2. Media and Human Rights

Media plays a very important role to preserve and protect human rights and create an environment of educating about people's rights in society. The media in general, by reporting on the events and facts, plays a key role in alerting public opinion. It helps meet the basic need for the right to information of citizens alongside the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Many incidences of human rights have been brought to light and documented by the news media for ages. Normally when people get information of human rights violation from news media they became aware, some times people mobilize demonstrations and campaigns against the violation of rights. And for that they also need to help the media for coverage.

In this age of satellite communication and electronic information superhighways, it is well recognized that no concept, however noble, can be of social significance unless communicated accurately and promptly to a wide an audience as possible, and in a convincing manner as possible. Public awareness of and action for human rights are essential. So media people are the guardian of human rights and torch-bearers of democracy. Unlike other sectors, the media can reach the unreachable groups of society, including the poor people living in rural and remote areas. The media is powerful in: (1) promoting knowledge through information about human

[14] Summary of national initiatives undertaken within the Decade for HRE (1995-2004), http://www.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/initiatives.htm accessed on August 7,2004

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rights; (2) harnessing value and attitudes through promoting a human rights culture; and (3) inducing action through encouraging people to defend human rights and prevent human rights abuses (Mizuta, 2000).

There are three types of media in general. Each of the types has different application aspect to communicate. There are print media such as daily newspaper, weekly, fortnightly magazine, and news bulletin. There are also electronic media such as radio, television, internet and digital device. But performing art media such as dance, drama, theatre, indigenous performances are live media, which provides effective transmission of information. At the same time it is limited, as it cannot reach not mass audiences like electronic media, but it can reach to a smaller group directly.

All of these types of media provide two types of media content. First one is information or news. All print media like newspaper and electronic media like radio, television, internet provide news and information. Second thing they provide entertainment. Performing art generally doesn't produce news content; rather it depicts values and philosophy through entertainment. Every society communities rural or urban develop their own media for communicating people.

All media have the responsibility to improve Human Rights standards. Especially the press (Newspaper, radio, television and web portal) as an instrument of advocacy and dissent, represents the collective voice of society. As the guardian of democracy and the catalyst of development, media must have a vision for itself, as it is often the last line of defense in protecting the rights of millions of underprivileged people across the country and world. Every country's constitution gives emphasis on the role of media for defending peoples' rights, and the right to information and freedom of expression. Actually, the media must provide the public with the type of information which enables them to become more actively involved in processes to help solve political, economic and social problems. That is why media is a practical tool by which people can exercise their specific rights. But on the other hand politicians and urban businessmen, to serve their interest, can control mass media. This kind of control over mainstream media does not allow people to uphold their rights. Later on I will analyze how Thailand failed to provide HRE to rural communities in the chapter four. In this context communities need to develop their

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own media to exercise their rights and promote human right education. In this aspect community theatre could be an effective practical tool.

One of the five objectives of the UN Decade for HRE is "The strengthening of the role and capacity of the mass media in the furtherance of HRE." But there is no mention about community media that does not belong to mass media. However community organizations are one of the target groups for the purpose of incorporating HRE into non-formal programs. It is also mentioned that these organizations, "should be encouraged and assisted in developing and delivering such non-formal programs, with the help of Governments and international donors and programs" (UN, 1998: 9) In this context community theatre could be an important tool to exercise, assimilate and create the environment of HRE among those communities who do not have access to the main- stream media as whole.

2.2.1. HRE and its articulation in Theatre

Theatre processes have long been utilized as a tool of community development and rights based awareness education, particularly in developing countries in Asia, South and Central America and Africa. It emerged from the popular theatre of colonial period but has been practiced during the post-colonial period. In Britain the Theatre in Education (TIE) movement from 1960s contributes to rights awareness education for children and young people. From this process, professional Community Theatre companies emerged. Volkar Ludwig's 'Grips'[14] theatre is an example of community theatre movement of last century that emerged from West Germany and got popularity around the world for identifying, articulating and promoting the rights of children and young people. The theatre has always taken up issues heatedly debated by young people, from xenophobia and Third World exploitation to pollution. Ludwig's plays became very popular in the Indian subcontinent in particular, also in Brazil, Asia and Latin America (Jahnke, 2004).

[14] 'Grips is an expression meaning "the ability to grasp things quickly." Grips Theatre is one of the best-known children's and youth theatres in Germany or abroad. Grips Theatre continues to take sides with children, its aim is no longer to give them room for maneuver in a political sense, but rather to advocate their essential basic rights, such as the right to be loved or the right to use their imagination. Volker Ludwig, the founder of the theatre and the Grips Theatre reflect the spirit of the times from 1966 to 21st century.

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This flow goes to developing world too. According to Erven, a new type of pragmatically oriented political theatre is developing in the developing world systematically since early eighties. These are named as Popular Theatre, People's Theatre, or Community Theatre. All of these theatres' objective is social change (Erven,1992: 1). Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) process another successful theatre process. It is an established form of people's education and empowerment in Asia, Latin America, Europe, United States of America and Canada. For example in India, Jana Sanskrit, an accredited theatre group based in Kolkata, supports 32 community theater groups in West Bengal that are using Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) for presenting plays about social problems like alcoholism, dowry deaths, and the accountability of panchayats the village councils.[15] And about 14 NGOs are working for community development by theatre in Bangladesh.

Makhampom Theatre Group as an NGO in Thailand has been assimilating social awareness and education through theatre over two decades. This group has the view about the process as follows:

> The basic premises that community theatre is build upon is that the notion of theatre has long been an important part of popular entertainment, expression and communication, cultural identity and social change. The important of such cultural production in promoting personal and community development, however, is subject to many social and economic pressures.[16]

Therefore, from the objective of social change Makhampom is working for growing peoples' awareness and education through Community Theatre. In other words, as a a kind of HRE process, we can say organizations like Makhampom use the theatre as non–formal education to address the issues of communities and thus ensure their rights.

[15] Community leaders forum of village termed as panchayat in India and in some part of Bangladesh.
[16] Makhampom 5 years program, Community Theatre for child rights project, no date.

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2.3. Theatre media and Education: Brecht -Boal

There is a story about the origin of *Natyasatsra*[17] that theatre has been created for educating the marginalized people as a fifth *Veda* in ancient India. Nowadays, theatre practitioner and academician use to give priority about the application of theatre rather than entertainment to education. In order to analyze education and its relation with theatre media or the role of theatre as an educational tool, in this section of chapter I would like to explore the notion of Community Theatre, the role and effect of Theatre in society. Further I will discuss the purpose of theatre as educationalist and for this I discuss theory of theatre, specifically educative thoughts of Brecht and Boal.

2.3.1. Theatre and Community Theatre

The term 'theatre' denotes any action produced by an individual or a group for another individual or a group in a three dimensional space.[18] According to Jamil Ahmed, " The said action can be predetermined and based on written text or it can be improvised and based on oral text, with innumerable variation between the two poles. Dramatic conflict as a structural device is not an indispensable element to construct a piece of theatre"(Ahmed, 2000:18). This notion proves that to perform any kind of theatre it does not need a proscenium stage or specific theatre stage; space, performer and audience are the three basic elements to perform a theatrical piece or theatre. With these basic elements theatre can take place anywhere. From the sociological or anthropological point of view, a theatre is not only a means of entertainment. As theatre anthropologist Schechner reads, theatrical metaphor is a root metaphor. He specified this as below:

Theatre = action = transportation/transformation.

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[17] *Natyasastra*, has been aptly described as a "compendium for the performance maker" dealing extensively with the art of evoking aesthetic response." (M. Christopher Byrski, *Concept of Ancient Indian Theatre*, New Delhi: 1974.156). It is ascribed to sage Bharata, but is believed to be a collection of various sources over a long period of history. The original compilation is variously placed between 5th century BC and 2nd century AD (Monomohan Ghosh, introduction to the *Natyasastra* by Bharata-muni,Calcutta:1967, lix-lx.).

[18] Peter Brook, in his *Empty space*, discussed theatre from the same point of view, as does Richard Schechner in his *Performance Theory*, and Syed Jamil Ahmed in his *Achinpakhi Infinity Indigenous theatre of Bangladesh*. See Brook, *Empty Space* (Harmondsworth: 1972), 11; Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York 1998), 30, 72; Syed Jamil Ahmed, *Achinpakhi Infinity Indigenous theatre of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: 2000), 18.

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From this point we can say theatre is a kind of activity that transfers information or knowledge. Actually it is a media by which people can exchange information and ideas about society.

Community theatre is an important device for communities to collectively share stories, to participate in political dialogue, and to break down the increasing exclusion of marginalized groups of citizens. It is practiced all over the world by growing numbers of people. Needless to say, that a community theatre based on a community and runs as a nonprofit organization. These theatres are totally different from classical or professional theatre groups. As Brockett says,

> Almost every town with a population of more than thirty thousand has a community theatre. Many of these theatres are operated entirely by volunteers; others pay the director of each play and may provide a small sum for designers and other key workers … The primary function of community theatre – in addition to providing theatrical entertainment for local audiences — is to furnish an outlet for the talents of adult volunteers (Brockett, 1988:412)

Here we get the basic philosophical viewpoint of Makhampom theatre group regarding the notion,

> Community workers are often described as idealists. Theatre workers are seen as doing little more than playing. So, community theatre must therefore be seen as playful idealism. Perhaps there is some truth in such stereotyping, but in fact, the discrimination and marginalization of community theatre workers offers a powerful test to their commitment to struggle, as community theatre implicitly based on the peoples struggle against discrimination and marginalization (Makhampom, 2003).

This philosophy fits Brocket's characterization that "almost all periods, some segment of society considered theatre to be not only an acceptable form of entertainment but also one of the most effective means available to human beings in their attempts to understand themselves and their world"(Brockett, 1988: 5).

However, the concept and application of Community Theatre is different in the west and non-west. In western countries community theatre generally is a kind of professional theatre company for the community or based in specific community. On the other hand in developing countries, Community Theatre is a process of

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development for the community and by the community, or by the civil society and NGOs. Actually the application or practices of community theatre depend on politics and social structure of the society.

2.3.2. Role and effect of Theatre in society

Romeo and Juliet, Mother Courage, The Dolls House, the Mahavahrata[19]*, the Bisadsindhu*[20] and *The 1932 Revolutionist*[21] are some eminent plays of different societies. Shakespeare articulated how social rivalry of families causes death in *Romeo and Juliet*. Brecht disclosed the irony of war in *Mother Courage*. Ibsen entailed the freedom and identity of women in society in *The Dolls House*. *Mahavahrata* and *Bisadsindhu* reflect the cruelty, enmity, love, anger and lust of human beings. All the productions describe the crises of society, power games, and vivid irony of warfare. *The 1932 Revolutionist* is a retold story of Statesman Pridi Banomyong of Thailand who ensured the security of Siamese people. All these plays depict the values of the societies. At the same time these plays or theatres develop the values of people in societies. In fact, theatre is a powerful cultural first-aid instrument. Of the public media, theatre is the most interactive because it has the capacity to influence hundreds of people in one arena through performances. According to Silva, "The theatre often serves as a conduit through which the encrypted codes of culture are deciphered and translated into a medium that is accessible to the public consciousness (Silva, 1999:1)

The history of humankind shows that, as a cultural media, theatre always organizes public opinion in national crisis and motivates them to attain political and social rights. It defines identities and realities. In this context the role of theatre is not only an expressive media in society but also a tool of empowerment for the people. As Silva explains,

> In terms of genre, the theatre has the potential to be much more discursive than other media because of its non-verbal language, as well as providing a public

[19] Mahabharata is the largest epic of the world; it has about 100,000 verses. The original author was Vyasa who tried to depict the Great War between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Peter Brook made a theatre production of this Indian epic.

[20] A narrative literature composed in Bengali by Mir Mussaraf Hossain based on the tragic warfare and killing of Prophet Muhammed's grandsons in Karbala (now in Iraq); Dr. Syed Jamil Ahmed made a theatre production of this Islamic historical literature in Bangladesh.

[21] A theatre production directed by Kamron Kunadilok about the life and struggle of Siamese Statesman Pridi Banomyong

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> forum where questions about the nation state can be provoked and visualized. It is evident that in the times of social transformation or national crisis, the insecurities, anxieties and fears of a nation can be either assuaged or exposed in theatre, even when simplified and made visible through the use of ideological stereotypes. These stereotypes are deployed in an attempt to establish a sense of security and identity amidst shifting norms and realities (Silva, 1999:2)

As a means of launching resistant movements against violations of human rights, abuse of power and manipulation of the media, theatre's strength has already been sufficiently demonstrated. The history of contemporary theatre practice in Asia shows that how theatre has been used as a tool of liberation. As Erven has argued,

> many contemporary Asian theatre practitioners regard theatre as a very attractive and effective means to attain indispensable social and political changes in their often undemocratic, corruption-ridden countries. In these efforts, they collaborate with other, more purely politically oriented organization like unions, women's groups, churches and educational institutions. Side by side, they fight in a symphonic struggle to attain sociopolitical change (Erven 1992: xiii)

In Philippines theatre contributed a drastic change to mobilize peoples' movement for democracy. According to Erven, "Cory Aquino's "People Power" revolution was punctuated by hundreds of theatre performances" (Erven 1992: 55). A strong stream of resistance Theatre developed in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh for nation building and struggle for democracy. In Thailand theatre movement also marched with the student movement for democracy and from this emerged a form of educational theatre.

Community theatre as an effective media can strengthen civil society and community. The role of community theatre is accountable by the view of Makhampom Theatre Group:

> In this era of global communications, the trends towards cultural production as a commercial tool for short-term consumption result in a continual cultural transformation throughout societies. Whilst being a powerful and accessible medium for mass entertainment, cultural production must always be measured in terms of the impact or expression and communication, cultural identity and

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> social change. As such community theatre also becomes important in redressing the balance, such cultural production reflects the expression of the people rather than the commercial industries, the culture of the local community rather than the global mass media, and a progressive participatory process of social change rather than an imposed, regressive form (Makhampom, 2003).

From the statement above we get following basic roles of theatre in societies:

1. Alternative media that communicates to people and clarifies their identity,
2. Redressing social and national issues,
3. Educate and empower people.

However theatre has limitations too. It cannot cover a wide audience or cannot be enjoyed from places that radio or television can reach easily reach. In that context it is for only small audiences. It needs preparation and teamwork for performance. And the media itself is non existential. Because just after the performance it does not exist any more, the media is perishable. In that context it creates an illusion to the audience during performance. For any participant of theatre it needs short or long-term training. In the modern time television have more access rather than theatre, and it can be may be assumed that internet or ICT will soon have more active access to the people than theatre.

2.3.3. Purpose of Theatre: Education or Entertainment

From the time of its origin theatre faced this very criticism, whether it is only entertainment or educational media. As theatre is originated from rituals we can analyze this dispute from the anthropological viewpoint. As Brockett refers,

> According to Joseph Campbell, most rituals are related to one of three basic concerns: pleasure (food, shelter, sex, children); power (conquest, aggrandizement of self or tribe); and duty (to the gods, the tribe or the mores and values of the society). Together these concerns include sustenance, continuation of the family and tribe, prestige, defense against enemies, introgression of the individual into society, and the good will of supernatural power (Brockett, 1968:4)

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Obviously theatre is a medium of social education from its origin. The significant participatory and educative role of the *Chorus* in Greek Tragedy is one of the examples of educational aspect of theatre.[22] From Greek plays to the twentieth century, various forms of theatre impact on societies as well as entertaining them.

Actually theatre is not only an amusing performance. There is something else in theatre. As Brockett wrote "While much of the theatre's appeals lie in the ability to entertain, if it does not offer additional appeals, it may be (and often is) dismissed as insignificant." (Brockett, 1988:10). Moreover theatre as a performing art, like other art, is one way whereby human being seeks to understand their world. Its approaches are to shape perceptions about human experience into forms (or patterned relationships) that help to order our views about humanity and the world in which we live. Theatre anthropologist Schechner analyzed the role of theatre in our times as follows:

> Chased from Plato's republic as non rational and subversive but existing always, sometimes marginally, theatre is now showing itself everywhere; in social dramas, personal experience, public displays, political and economic interaction, art (Schechner, 1985:150).

He interpreted its possibility as a learning tool of our everyday life. But Jackson's goes one step ahead to clarify the possibility to learn through theatre. He said,

> Part of the problem, for those who worry about such notions, no doubt stems from the fact that we often confuse 'education' with school, with institutionalized state education and they are not necessarily the same thing. Education can take place enormous variety of ways - not least through the medium of the arts. Any good theatre will of itself be educational – that is when it initiates or extends a questioning process in its audience, when it makes us to look afresh at thee world, when it expands our notion of who we are, of the feelings and thoughts of which we are capable, and of our connection with the life of others (Jackson, 1993: 34-5)

Needless to say, that from the Greek theatre's philosophy, which teaches the uncertain destiny of man, twentieth century's theatre becomes a tool of education and

[22] According to Brockett one of the functions of Chorus in Greek drama is to establish the ethical or social framework of the event and set up a standard against which the action may be judged (Brockett 1968: 26).

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empowerment of societies. Before the integral element in Greek theatre is the empathy generated towards the audience who watch passively; the actors act and the audience watches. But in course of time conventional or traditional theatre has been relegating to 'entertainment' by the end of World War I. Before the World War, the humanitarian French writer Victor Hugo attempted to found a theatre of the people and idea was taken up in many countries towards the end of the nineteenth century. In Germany the *Neue Freie Volksbuhnee* was founded in 1890, and the Schiller Theater in 1894, in an effort to present good plays to working classes at low price. Dramatic efforts have been taken in Soviet Russia after the Revolution of 1917 to entertain and educate mass people by theatre. In England, Board of Education encouraged drama in school from 1927 (Coggin, 1956: 274-277).

The importance and practices of theatre as an active communicative medium over first half of last century established theatre in University education all around the World. In 1947 UNESCO set up International Theatre Institute (ITI) to foster international cooperation by theatre. The 4th conference of ITI held in Oslo in 1951, dealt with the subject of the theatre for youth and asked the executive committee to organize a conference. As a follow up of this, Belgian Government invited delegates from the five countries to discuss drama and theatre in education from March 26 to April 6, 1952.[23] This conference made a distinction between creative drama and formal drama. The summarized committee proposal pointed that:

- National government should encourage the use of creative dramatics throughout all educational establishments.
- Education authorities for all grades should provide facilities for theatre performances of real dramatic value not only on school holidays but also on school days, it being admitted that the art of stage performance is powerful educational factor (Coggin, 1956:274-284).

From Brecht to Boal: political approach of education through theatre

Theatre practices in last century merged the political and social aspect of theatre through the theories and practices of Meyerhold, Brecht and Piscator in

[23] Under the Cultural Committee of the Treaty of Brussels Power; countries were: Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Holland and Great Britain

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Europe. It was in the 1920s that they opened up new relations between dramatists, directors, actors and audience. Brecht aimed at theatrical reform on the basis of his social commitment. Brecht himself explained the relationship between learning and entertainment of theatre as if it is good theatre it will amuse:

> "(…) it is the general opinion that very decided difference exist between learning and being entertained. The former may be useful but only the latter is pleasant…. Well, we can only say that all that the contrast between learning and being entertained does not necessarily exist in nature; it has not always existed and it need not always exist. (Epskamp, 1989:49)

Brecht developed his didactic dramaturgy 'epic theatre' that explains social behavior to the audience, and didactic theatre uses drama to activate a target group or a group of actors. According to Epskamp, in his 'epic drama' Brecht tries to achieve an optimum relationship between entertainment and learning (Epskamp, 1989:49). In his writing about 'epic theatre,' Brecht wrestled with a search for a balance between the educative and entertaining values of his play and production. Moreover his interest in 'epic theatre' was mainly practical. He related human behaviors and social relations to economic and political power structures in society, which in principal could be changed. "The essence of epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals not so much to the audience's feelings as to its intelligence (ration)"(Epskamp,1989:51).

In the history of theatre, Brechtian theatre first includes a theoretical learning process, the alienation or distancing of the audience in order that they can relate to theatre with clear judgment and not be entranced by any sentiments involved. The Alienation effect, or A-effect as Brecht calls it, enables the audience to think deeply about the issue at hand without being saddled with the illusory elements of theatre. Of the A-effect, Brecht says:

> What is involved here is, briefly, a technique of taking the human social incidents to be portrayed and labeling them as something striking, something that calls for explanation, is not to be taken for granted, not just natural. The object of this "effect" is to allow the spectator to criticize constructively from a social point of view (Brecht, 1987).

In the 1970s, development in the field took on a more radical shape when Augusto Boal, a Brazilian director, created his didactic dramaturgy Theatre of the Oppressed.

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He was influenced by the theory of his countrymen educator Paulo Freire, and dramaturgically by the ideas and work of Brecht. Boal shared Brecht's view that the audience must be critical with regard to what happens on the stage. The most effective way of making political theatre was to involve the spectator in the creation of the performance of the play. As he remarked:

> Aristotle proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the dramatic character so that the latter may act and think for him. Brecht proposes a poetics in which the spectator delegates power to the character who thus acts in his place but the spectator reserves the right to think for himself, often in opposition to the character. In the first case, a "catharsis" occurs; in the second an awakening of critical consciousness. But the *poetics of the oppressed* focuses on the action itself: the spectator delegates no power to the character (or actor) either to act or to think in his place; on the contrary, he himself assumes the protagonist role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plan for change—in short, trains himself for real action. In this case perhaps the theatre itself revolutionary in itself, but it is surely rehearsal for the revolution (Boal, 1979:122)

In that sense Boal's theatre, according to Epskamp, is a rehearsal, a preparation, for societal reform. But it is a direct tool of learning for the audience as an educative tool. For Boal, theatre is popular only if it represents the interests of the community of the people in their process of liberation. Like Brecht's 'Small Pedagogy' theatre it had to be produced in a more democratic manner: theatre as collective creation. Boal even went a step further in his attitude. He started to work in the direction of Brecht's ideas concerning Grand Pedagogy. If we dealing with a collective creation, he argued, then the audience will also have to be involved in performance as creative power (Epskamp, 1989:59).

The history and background of Makhampom that is at the end of this chapter shows that Makhampom also develop their ideology and methodology not only from Brecht and also from American political theatre. The political approach adapts their process as educational form of community theatre. In the context and discussion above this research will explore how do they undertake social change by Community Theatre process.

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2.4. Community Theatre as a tool of HRE

2.4.1. How Theatre used and can be use as educational tool

Theatre is frequently used as a tool for communicating information across a range of sectors, particularly health, to bring about attitudinal and behavioral change, and changes in life style. Subjects that are dealt with include family planning, safe motherhood, safe drinking water, environmental degradation, child abuse, violence against women, rape, and HIV/AIDS education. In this kind of theatre, a group of actors or puppets perform a play containing a particular message, often with little or no audience participation or discussion. As we see there are three forms of this kind of theatre activity to empower communities.

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO)

Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal developed the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) process during the 1950s and 1960s. Boal employs methodologies in order to explore his view that all human beings act and watch and are therefore spect-actors. This view embraces the idea that intrinsic participation that engages the participant in direct control of the action, the course and conclusion of a play/scenario is essential in theatre that directly addresses its audience. In Boal's dialectical aesthetic, where the actors and audience are engaged in exploring a common predicament in the hope of understanding wider social realities, he developed an "arsenal" of theatre games and techniques, namely: Image Theatre, Invisible Theatre and Forum Theatre.

Image Theatre uses human sculpting and tableaux as a way of "showing" oppression without the confusion and cultural conflicts posed by language. The rationale is that an image resonates in a more immediate way than verbal means. In Invisible Theatre, a theatre happening occurs without the audience even knowing that they are spectators. For example, in order to raise consciousness about sexual harassment, three actor's (two women and a man) board an underground train. The actresses start ogling the actor and touching his bottom. A scripted quarrel ensues between the woman and the man. The passengers join in the scene by commenting and intervening. A discussion ensues about how sexual harassment can victimize both men and women. Through their involvement, spectators engage in a learning process in which they are free to decide for themselves which stand they want to take.

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In Forum Theatre, again the didactical stand is eschewed. Here a fully scripted play with realistic characters explores an easily identifiable problem in an unsolved way. The spect-actors are invited to suggest solutions and enact them. The Joker acts as the mediator between the actors and audience and most importantly teaches the audience the rules of this theatre game. The Forum encapsulates all the different ideas, strategies and experiences of the audience. At no point should the audience feel that there is a hidden agenda that the actors and Joker are evoking. Both audience and actors are in the same learning situation and each has access to answers and solutions (Moorthy, 2003).

TO methodology, which has influenced several theatre movements in last two decades, also has widespread currency in the field of educational theatre. Forum and Image Theatre have been used as tools for addressing issues of race, gender, class, disability, and sexual preference in education, social services, and the workplace. TO process has gained remarkable success in Philippines in Asia. As it was seen from its origins in the early 1970s, the creative drama program has been seen as an instrument of 'conscientization.' This term introduced by Paulo Freire, Conscientization is an on-going process by which a learner moves towards critical consciousness. This process is the heart of liberating education. It means breaking through prevailing mythologies to reach new levels of awareness - in particular, awareness of oppression, being an 'object' in a world where only 'subjects' have power. The process of conscientization involves identifying contradictions in experience through dialogue and becoming a 'subject' with other oppressed subject - that is, becoming part of the process of changing the world.

As Erven mentioned, Cory Aquino's "People Power" revolution was punctuated by hundreds of theatre performances (Erven, 1992: 55). Actually from the beginning within the communities it has promoted the development of theatre groups and productions that have made the people conscious of their situation. The organized Philippines Educational Theatre Association (PETA) became a hub of alternative grass-root theatre practitioners training center from 1980s. At present PETA is working closely with Asian Regional Resource Center for HRE (ARRC). ARRC has

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developed an HRE Pack with recommended Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) processes as a means of HRE.[24]

Theatre for Development (TfD)

Theatre is used to analyze, discuss and identify problems and to seek solutions with the participation of the community affected by the specific problems. Both local workshops and public performances represent a process of learning. Through dialogue, it raises the level of awareness and contributes to the empowerment of all involved. It may also mobilize people to take action and support them in processes of social and political change. This type of performance may be devised through community workshops and participatory research. TfD activities of this kind may be performed by community members or by a group of actors/facilitators. The audience may participate by acting on stage or even in writing, and in discussion. Thus, the process of TfD is a strategic tool, which should be at the heart of any community development initiative that envisages social or behavioral change. Using participatory performance practices, TfD explores a full and participatory engagement with local culture, cultural action and change. According to development philosophy of those organization who apply TfD for development, the first step to development is a change of attitude, both individual and collective, and in that order, from declared helplessness to empowerment. This is the culture in action, and theatre is a cultural tool. According to Prentki,

> At its simplest Theatre for Development (TfD) is what it says: theatre used in the service of the development aims; a tool available to development agencies which pursue the goals of self-development and an improved quality of life of all people whose material conditions leave them ***vulnerable*** to hostile, predatory forces, both natural and human. In other words, it is an instrument in the struggle to help such people become the subjects, and cases to be objects, of their own histories (Prentki, 1988)

The use of theatre as a tool for development is easily accepted in developing countries. It builds upon the culture and traditions such as the traveling theatre, story telling, puppet shows, socio-dramas, mimes, songs, dance and riddles. For generations, rural

[24] See ARRC HRE pack, new edition 2003, page-94

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populations have relied on the spoken word and traditional forms of communication to share knowledge and exchange information on social, health and agricultural themes, and to provide entertainment. As a movement, theatre for development in Africa began in early seventies. Initially two initiatives were independently taken by the University of Zambia and Botswana to bring theatre to the people. Later on in conference in 1980 in Berlin, a group of termed this 'Popular Theatre'(Epskamp,1989:165). It is now a very useful methodology in developing countries of Asia also. Epskamp describes it as follows:

> In the most developing countries, the initiatives to make the use of popular theatre as a 'small' medium has been frequently taken by NGOs such as Proshika in Bangladesh. As a rule the NGO first tries to organize the target group, e.g. landless labors in Bangladesh, 'untouchables' in India or ethnic minority groups such as Tamil in Sri Lanka. The NGO uses theatre as an instrument with which to analyze the problem of the target group, or as a rehearsal for potential action (Epskamp, 1989:166)

He clarifies the relation of TfD and development in figures.

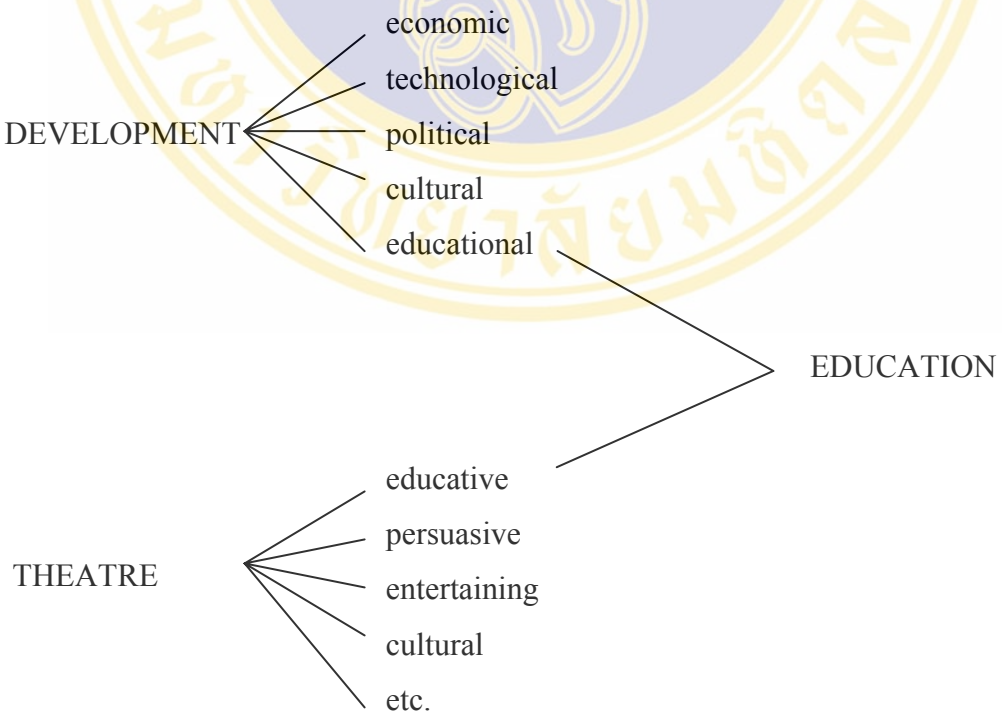

Figure. 1 Theatre for development: Fields of influence

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On the above context development is a vast area to work with where economic, technological, political, cultural and education aspects are co-related. The major relationship with development is education, persuasion, entertainment and cultural prospects.

On the other hand, TfD expert professor Prentki believe that TfD is not a series of random production events but a process of grassroots, concrete analysis which inaugurates a cultural movement for people's consciousness. He writes:

> TfD today is a social analysis conducted through practice by the members of a community who have a vested interest in using culture for transformation. Both space and process are made accessible to every person as a cultural right not as a privilege bestowed by a beneficent NGO responding to its notion of a perceived need (Prentki, 2004).

As according to the discussion above TfD changes attitudes and behaviors of people as a process of social transformation. In that context, this thesis examines the effectiveness through and evaluation of changes in attitudes and behaviors of Thai rural communities by the Community Theatre process of Makhampom Theatre Group.

Experience in Bangladesh:

Bangladesh is a fertile ground of TfD process from the early seventies. There are about 14 NGOs practicing theatre for development in Bangladesh. Among them Proshika, Gana Sahajo Sanghtha (recently closed), Save the Children-UK, Ain-O Salish Kendro, Losaouk, Theatre Center for Social Development(TCSD), Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA), Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) are major development organizations. There are some Theatre group like Dhaka Theatre and Aranyak who develop theatre for rural communities as a movement. Here I discuss only three NGOs and one theatre group activity and then I will conclude according to the view of theatre expert and academician Jamil Ahmed.[25]

Proshika

Proshika (an acronym of three words in Bangla denoting training, education and action), according to Jamil Ahmed, is a good example of those NGOs which use TfD as a medium for transmitting development messages. Proshika, who first

[25] Dr. Syed Jamil Ahmed, founder Chair and Associate Professor, Department of Theatre and Music, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. His reputation is well established as a director and designer with credits such *Chaka* (Dhaka), *Bishad Sindhu* (Dhaka), *Ek Hazar Aur Thi Rate* (Karachi) along with important research like *Acinpahki Infinity: Indigenous Theatre of Bangladesh*.

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introduced Theatre for Development in Bangladesh in 1978, seeks to engage in questions related to 'development.' It started when its chairman Kazi Faruque Ahmed met TfD expert Ross Kidd in Canada. They named it Popular Theatre. The organization's commitment to human capacity building and cultural empowerment is reflected in its People's Cultural Program, which uses "indigenous cultural forms as an effective motivational tool for raising people's awareness against various social injustices as well as asserting their rights." Another important work by Proshika is the use of these traditional cultural forms to fight fundamentalism, uphold true spirit of liberation war, and usher in democracy (Proshika,2001).

They organizes People's Cultural Troupes, at union (cluster of village) level, comprising of members of the primary groups who have previous experience as: (a) performers in indigenous theatre; (b) musicians; or (c) organizers of cultural events. The People's Cultural Troupes render songs and also perform plays at least once a month and on commemorative national and international days, in village fairs and in regional festivals of People's Cultural Troupes. According to a report prepared in 2001, 822 people's cultural troupes consisting of 12,054 members of which 3,577 women and 8,477 men have been formed till to date. These troupes have so far staged 62,095 cultural events.

They organize 3 to 5 days long Play-making Phase, where the issue is selected by village or union co-ordination committee or by the cultural troupe. The issues commonly dealt with in these plays are social injustice, dowry, polygamy, *fatwa*, arbitrary divorce, gender discrimination, illiteracy, unjust possession of public resources by the power cliques, superstitious health practices, degradation of the environment and its consequences, and the positive impact of various development actions on the lives of the people (Proshika, 2001). According to their internal monitoring of the program this process achieved the following output that shows effectiveness and success of PCP:

a) The poor people can identify themselves with the themes as they are drawn directly from their own life experiences; b) the form is entertaining and can easily communicate; c) the cultural troupes are formed with members from the local groups who truly represent their own class and, therefore, the enactment of the true-to-life themes appear authentic to the audience; d) performances take place generally in a

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familiar setting in the courtyard of a group member's house or in a village fair, which create empathy in people; and e) the dialects used in the performances articulate their own life and make it easily comprehensible (Proshika, 2001).

This organizations fiscal year budget is about $USD 240 million ("Dispute," 2002). Recently the director and organization itself faced difficulties from the present conservative government of Bangladesh, as a part of political rivalry. All of their popular theatre activity is effected by political harassment, especially their policy to fight fundamentalism and to uphold true spirit of liberation war. From a personal communication, the PCP coordinator stated that it is a hard reality that right now rural people do not want to listen to NGO workers for the micro-credit programs as well. [15]

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA)

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (BITA) was established in 1994, the organization operates exclusively in the south-east, Chittagong in Bangladesh. BITA's approach to development is termed as an "Alternative Development Approach" by cultural activities that enhance the consciousness of the people about their legal and human rights. Their plays dealt with the issues of women and child rights, environmental crisis, social injustice and poverty alleviation. Through all their activities, BITA seeks to provide services to the people in terms of consciousness raising, information dissemination, advocacy and mobilization. One of the six programs is Grass-root Theatre, which works on a community approach. It is estimated that 600 to 1,000 people work at the grass-roots level, urban as well as rural, directly involved with BITA's cultural programs (Zaki, 2002).

BITA has formed two types of Theatre Group. Firstly, a group is formed by the community professional, like rikshaw pullers, fisherman, blacksmith from slum areas. They have 16 community oriented theatre groups like this, 4 of them are womens groups. And second, school oriented theatre groups. Basically these groups forms at the primary school level. According to Bokul, BITA has its development activity in 27 schools, where 13 children theatre group are doing theatre regularly (Bokul, 2001: 161-167).

[15] Interview of PCP Team co-ordinator. Dhaka, February, 2005

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Ain-O Salish Kendra (ASK): Popular Theatre Unit

Ain- O Salish Kendro's popular theatre unit started from 1998 in Bangladesh. It provides Human Rights awareness along with law and legal awareness in Bangladesh. Their Popular Theatre unit trains local theatre activists to perform issue-based dramas so as to sensitize the local population about the law and to orient them to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Unit hopes to change people's perceptions on women's rights. Theatre is a dynamic method to convey information to a wider audience, particularly non-literates. Popular Theatre units train and mobilize local theatre personnel to perform plays on social and political problems and to provoke discussions on human rights. A theatre team member facilitates analyses by the audience on cause, effect and possible solutions to a social problem. Formerly known as Union Level Theatre Teams, these have been amalgamated into Manobadhikar Natya Parishad (MNP). Members of MNP are given orientation courses on laws, human rights and gender equality.

Normally, 15 members follow a 30 to 90 days long process to form an Union Level Theatre Team. They deal with the issues of women oppression, illegal judgment meetings in a community, giving divorce verbally, polygamy, rape, fatwa, Hilla, early marriage, child oppression, and torture by police. And these groups follow a 3 days long theatre making process by workshop (Bokul, 2001:131-136). MNP is responsible for performing issue based dramas in the area and transmitting their skills to others who are interested in becoming members of MNP or forming their own MNP. Union MNPs have federated at the *Thana* level. Moreover ASK Popular Theatre Units can design and conduct courses on Theatre (ASK, n. d.). This organization has a very good relationship with the regional human right education organization ARRC (Asian Regional Resource Centre for HRE) based in Bangkok and it contributed to the develop of a new HRE pack where popular theatre skill mentioned as a basic tool of HRE.

However, according to Jamil Ahmed, none of these groups can bring liberation to the communities. The causes are evident from his comment below.

> As far as the NGO-sponsored TfD in Bangladesh is concerned, all of them without exception depend on aid from international development agencies for sustaining their work. At the field level, the NGOs and not the people

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> determine the issues. Through subtle manipulation, ostensibly with altruistic motives, the issues are handled in the name of the people. In turn, the issues of the NGOs are determined by the donors' agenda, where the 'larger' have some bargaining power but the 'smaller' have none. Hence, at the end of the day, whatever be their vision, mission or goal, they are geared to fulfilling the donors' agendas. At the 'globalized' level, the donors' agendas are determined by the interest of multinational capital. (Ahmed, 2002)

But there is a real people's empowerment process by Theatre Activists. According to Jamil Ahmed, "An optimistic alternative was offered by a theatre group named Aranyak in the early 80s when it built up a movement called Mukta Natak, which was a network of marginalized farmers' theatre groups. The movement was initiated by urban theatre activists based in Dhaka who visited rural communities for a period of 15 days (Ahmed,2002).

Actually after 1981, group theatre oriented rural development processes by Aranyak Nattodol and Dhaka Theatre emerged in Bangladesh. I do not have the scope to focus on Dhaka Theatre developed 'Gram Theatre' (Village Theatre) movement. The Mukta Natok created their own plays through workshops with marginalized farmers and improvised their production i.e. without any script. Interestingly, it was entirely funded by the group members' personal resources and hence, it was not dependent on agendas of a funding body. They do not use any written script, rather local problems or incident were been selected as a plot of Theatre. Their processes involved a dialogic encounter of the Aranyak animators and the marginalized peasants. This movement created huge interest and at one time there were nearly two hundred groups in the Mukta Natak network. In a few cases, the workshops leading to a performance resulted in immediate action (Ahmed,2002). Not only that, Mukta Natok is a milestone in bringing revolutionary change in rural area of Bangladesh because it is quite different from feudal regime's spiritual and love content oriented folk theatre (Ahmed,1995: 80).

However, the movement collapsed by mid-90s after significant success. According to Jamil Ahhmed, "precisely because it was heavily dependent upon middle-class urban animators, who found out that ideological commitment does not materialize middle-class materialistic dreams in the southern half of the globalized

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world" (Ahmed, 2002). And thus, although a sort of pseudo-Freirean technique was applied in Bangladesh, as to Ahmed, the rhetoric of development in the NGOs is at odds with their practice; grass-root level organizations have failed because of their dependence on 'conscientious' urban middle-class leadership. These experiences I will related to the process of Makhampom's Community Theatre in the concluding chapter, for the power of the middle class, and the NGO community is still strong in Thai development discourses.

Theatre in Education (TIE)

Theatre in Education (TIE) began in Britain in the mid-1960s in direct response to the needs of both theatre and schools. It is now established or emerging force in many countries outside the U.K. The aim of TIE is to provide an experience for children that will be an intensely absorbing, challenging, even provocative and unrivalled stimulus for further work on the chosen subject in and out of school. According to Jackson,

> TIE stems from a number of distinct but related developments in theatre and in education evident throughout the twentieth century: the movements to re-establish the theatre's root in the community and in so doing broaden its social basis-manifested since the war in the revival of regional theatre and the rapid growth of community, 'alternative' and children's theatre. (Jackson, 1993: 3)

According to Jackson educational theatre divided into three levels:

> **Young people's theatre**: Intended to cover all forms of professional theatre for children and young people, specifically to cover play performances for the older age range i.e. usually between 14 and 18 years old (or over).
>
> **Children's theatre**: Refers to the professional performance (in theatres or in schools) of self –contained play for younger audiences (i.e. up to about 12 or 13 years of age).
>
> **Youth theatre**: Generally non-professional theatre work involving young people in the preparation and performance of group-devised or scripted plays (Jackson, 1993:7)

The practice of TIE in the past century has appeared increasingly as a subject of drama and education syllabuses in higher education, offering a valuable way in, practically

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and theoretically, to the study of the key questions about the role of theatre in society, as well as an alternative approach to educational drama in the classroom. Here we get two basic functions of TIE: first, as a method of education and therefore with a justifiable claim to be seen as educational resource within the school system; and, second, as an art form in its own right but one that is peculiarly suited to its specific audience and age range.

Theatre In Education earned popularity not only in UK but also in Finland, Poland, Tanzania, Kenya, Philippines, Australia, and Canada and even in USA. A viable TIE movement emerged in Nigeria by in the influence of various active theatre traditions and strengthened the national theater. Actually the popular theatre tradition developed in Nigeria from mid-70's at the Ahmadu Bello University, is influenced by Botswana's *Laedza Batanani*[26] and Freirean philosophy (Ahmed, 2001:63).

GRIPS Theatre

GRIPS in Germany means "having brain paired with wit." The GRIPS Theatre, mentioned earlier, was founded 35 years ago in Berlin by Volker Ludwig. The philosophy behind this famous children and youth theatre is to address and interact with children and youngsters in order to initiate a process of (self-) reflection that finally leads the children to understand and actively solve their everyday problems. Plays of the GRIPS theatre have been translated into more than 40 languages and performed internationally. Recently GRIPS Theatre has been seen in India, where Mohan Agashe, who was honored with the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2002, not only introduced this type of theatre in India but brought it to a whole new development: D.A.T.E (Developing Awareness Through Entertainment) (Reiffenstuel,2004).

2.5. Makhampom and its history: development, policy and projects

It is necessary to describe for the political and cultural background of Thailand to understand Makhampom Theatre Group. The purpose of this study is to elaborate on how modern Thai culture developed a participatory process of educational theatre,

[26] An initiative undertaken in 1974 at the University Institute for Adult Education in Botswana, where they use popular theatre as an instrument for programmatic rural development

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and the impacts of this agenda on social transformation. It will also include criticism about this process is perceived in society along with Makhampom's relationship to authority and government.

2.5.1. Development of Community Theatre in Thailand

Dance, dance-drama and theatre arts developed in Thailand over centuries from folk and religious origins. The court –centered "Khon" (Masked Dance –Theatre) and "Lakhorn Nai"(Court Dance Theatre) tradition based on ancient Sanskrit literary classics such as the *Ramayana* and the *Mahavarata* are examples of these forms. Besides, non-court based popular performances have been cultured by local communities. The use of theatre for political and social purposes was introduced from 1910 by the monarchy. But after the Revolution of 1932, government diminished the control of the court or palace regarding performing arts and utilized national performing arts for propaganda and political campaigns.

The purpose was successfully served between 1936 and 1957 through the talent of Luang Wichiwathakan, Minister of Culture and Director of Fine Arts Department during Premier Phibunsongkharm's two regimes (1938-44, 1948-57). In this period "Popular Theatre" motivated the masses effectively, which is a part of nationalistic movement during World War II and anti communist campaign in late 1950s and 1960s (Rutnin, 1993:xiii-xiv).

First modern dramas on social themes started during 1960s in the universities under Western influence initially as a part of English curriculum or an extracurricular activity. This developed the first generation of theatre people in Thailand. Kamron Kunadilok, the leader of Thailand's political theatre movement, was involved with this theatre process. From 1970 he started theatre activity based in Chiang Mai, dealing with true stories of peasant communities. His works developed a mutual relationship with student movement for democracy (Erven, 1992). This is the second phase of theatre and political relations. After the students' uprising against the military dictatorship on 14 October 1973, he developed a new political theatre movement over three years until the military returned to government in October 1976. In 1975 Kunadilok conducted a national workshop for student theatre groups. Erven writes

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"following the workshop several new groups were formed that committed themselves to participating in a progressive cultural front" (Erven 1992:210).

The academic practice of theatre played an important role for the development of children and young people's theatre. Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Arts (in Bangkok) first placed Children's Drama and Theatre or Young People's Theatre in Education in its curriculum from 1974. By the efforts of Khun Onchuma Yuthavong this approach become widely accepted in Thailand and integrated in several nationally prominent institutions. The movement was strengthened, when other universities started new courses in creative dramatics and theatre for young people. Thammasat University's major program in theatre for young people that began in 1979 is one of the significant among these. In October 1976 the political demonstrations of university students came to a bloody end by military crackdown. This reality forced many student activists to take shelter in remote rural areas of Thailand. Many of these tried to educate the villagers in practical skill and social issues by using popular art form such as story telling, songs.

This political situation sowed the seed of educational theatre for communities. According to Damrhung's observation,

> They encouraged their urban friends to come join them in the countryside to help them in their educational activities. Since most of these groups of people were interested and had studied in the social or natural sciences, few of them had background performing in the public settings. Yet they felt compelled to communicate with their rural hosts, and so learned to do it through learning to do theatre bit by bit. Eventually, some university students with more training in theatre traditions began accompanying them to the countryside, and they began to focus on teaching young people through theatre (Damrhung, 1997).

As a result, as Damrhung describes, educational and cultural activities aiming at young people – especially live drama and theatre – came to forefront around the country. From 1981 a number of Touring Theatre Companies emerged. *Maya, Makhampom, the Arts Theatre Touring Company*, *Krajok Ngao* and *Carawan* are the most successful company of them. By 1990 Educational Theatre becames a part of education system at the nursery and kindergarten levels. Each group developed their own form along with traditional elements and highlighted the social issues such as

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child rights, traditional culture, drug problems, sex education, teen pregnancy, as well as AIDS and other communicable diseases.

The political context and cultural trend changed from political theatre to educational Theatre. In course of this trend, Makhampom Theatre Group emphasized on issue-oriented performance for the school children. Obviously these groups developed their own participatory methods of theater. Not only that, as Damrhung mentioned, these theatre companies for the young people developed four main characteristics. First, dedicated individuals learned theatre to spread information and educate. These Bangkok-based educated young theatre practitioners adapted their performance to local tastes and expectations of their audiences, they learned from the interaction with their audiences. Second, they learned how to run a non-profit organization. Third, they learned how to win support from government agencies, receive funding from the social service, informal education, and anti -drug agencies including support from the foreign organizations. Finally, lack of budget and funding limited their activities (Damrhung, 1997). Overall, this trend lead to their own participatory management, theatre methodology, and relationship with communities, government agencies and foreign organizations.

2.5.2. Development of Makhampom Theatre Group: History, policies and projects

Background of Makhampom Theatre Group

Makhampom Theatre Group, emerged out of the political movement of the 1970s. From 1973 to 1976 Thailand enjoyed its “democratic sunshine” before being crushed by a brutal military crackdown that is known as the October Event. During that time a small, but vocal political theatre movement emerged as part of the student democracy movement. The crackdown destroyed the movement, and organizers along with workers either joined the Communist Party of Thailand in the jungles, went into exile overseas, or went into underground activities in the urban centers. From the above reality a civil society network emerged and formed NGOs. As to them,

> Following a government pacification program, the activists regrouped to develop Thailand’s network of non-government organizations (NGO). The

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> emergence of the community culture (*wathanatham chumchon*) school of thought through the 1970s and 1980s represented the development of such a new Thai ideological tradition. As a collection of various theoretical philosophies and methodological practices, this school of thought is broadly based on the popularization of a counter-cultural socio-political ideal within the framework of indigenous cultural traditions. With many Thai development organizations accepting the premise that indigenous culture, based on traditional values, folk wisdom and Buddhist principles, holds the key to alternative development, culture emerged as the major ideological current in Thai NGO circles. It was in this context that the notion of a socially-engaged Buddhism took root, introduced by Thai Buddhist monk-philosopher Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and popularized by such figures as social activist, Sulak Sivaraksa(Makampom's Background, 2004).

Makhampom emerged from above social, political and cultural context, originally created under the banner of a Grassroot Micro Media Project, with the objective of providing alternative, local media to marginal communities. Theatre was one of the major aspects of this project, which soon grew to become the dominant identity of the group.

Makhampom Theatre Group was formed in 1981 mainly by a group of activists. The group was formed by an ad-hoc group of teachers, journalists, actors, and dancers. As to their statement, "Makhampom, together with its sister organization, Maya, provided the basis of a community-oriented, educative approach to theatre, characterized by the term “grassroots.” Makhampom was fundamentally an experiment in theatre within an NGO movement that was itself an experiment in progressive social and political change (Makhampom’s Background, 2004). So in the beginning most volunteers joined the group with the socio-political objectives of the NGO movement. The annual volunteer introduction workshops have provided the ongoing mechanism for Makhampom's membership, having attracted different groups of people from students, artists, activists, unemployed workers, and even monks. However it is mainly a group of young people and a majority of the volunteer are still now student. Their ideology strongly based on social transformation. As they mentioned,

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> The combination of a ‘loosely-defined’ concept of ‘community theatre’ and the oppositional ideology of the NGO movement provided the basis for Makhampom's identity as a unique organization in the Thai socio-cultural lexicon. An educational approach to theatre, primarily targeting children and youth, was combined with an issue-orientation. Indigenous rights, environmentalism, prostitution, and democracy were themes adopted from a humanist perspective rather than a radical, class-orientation. Makhampom’s community praxis reflected the “socio-cultural” approach of the broader Thai NGO sector. As such, Makhampom's ideological development was consistent with the development of the NGO movement as a whole (Makhampom’s Background, 2004)

Makhampom’s new web site describes their history in five phases, which need to covered:

1. Foundation Phase 1981-85

Largely an experimental period, in the use of theatre and the way to apply it within the community context. The group undertook several large educational theatre projects throughout this period. There was also still a degree of street performance in support of the democracy movement. The leadership of the group went through several transitions as the membership waxed and waned.

2. Inactive Phase (or Dark Age) 1985-92

Political censorship, Makhampom's leadership problems, ideological conflict and financial insecurity led to a long period of limited activity. At one stage there were only two members maintaining the group in name only.

3. Reincarnation Phase (or Golden Age) 1992-97

Pradit Prasartthong, as director of Makhampom, committed to trying again with the group, leading to a resurgence in activity. He promoted the exploration of a contemporary Thai theatre style, marrying traditional and modern forms and styles. Four major touring productions, within Thailand and overseas, provided an opportunity to explore this 'new tradition', and gave Makhampom a strong profile as one of Thailand's key theatre groups. Concurrently, several long-term community theatre workshop projects were initiated, some of which have continued over a period of 8 years. This period also saw an increase in volunteers joining the group, such that

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Makhampom took on the form as a sort of alternative institute for training in community theatre and folk arts.

4. Survival Phase 1997-2002

The Asian financial crash of 1997 affected Makhampom severely. Due to the change in regional geo-politics, international funding agencies shifted their priorities away from Thailand, and the budgetary crisis in Thailand meant that traditional sources of support dried up. Makhampom began a period of reduced activity, semi-commercial performance and workshop programs, and fundraising projects, including the new international initiative of the Study Tour. This also included the 20th year commemorative event of Likay Apiwat, marking Makhampom's experiment in the popular theatre, likay form.

5. Coming of Age Phase 2002-current

From 2002, there has been a tacit commitment to develop Makhampom towards its potential. This has involved the development of a new generation of leadership to relieve the burden on Pradit Prasartthong, to develop financial independence through a broad-based strategy, to professionalise the organization, and to diversify Makhampom's program of activities. The Bangkok Theatre Festival represents a major initiative in supporting the growth of Thai contemporary theatre and the development of the training centre in Chiang Dao offers the potential for sustainability, exchange, networking, and capacity building of Makhampom.

Activity, projects and policies

Makhampom Educational Touring Theatre Company has been working in Thailand for more than two decades, mixing traditional element of classical dance and various folk musical pieces and stories into their performances, always themes of social concern. They have used theatre to help reach children facing the problem of drug use, prostitution, AIDS, among other topics. In order to teach people this Theatre Company developed a “Grassroot Micro Media Project (GMMP)” in 1981 (Makhampom, 1998). Its aim was to provide knowledge and useful information for the society, produce small-scale media such training, theatre for sustainable development and a better quality of life for children, youth and general public. In their training program each year GMPP recruits youth from formal and non-formal education systems to join this drama project. This group has been trained in basic performance

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skills, the educational process to research the various social issues, and presentation of information through drama (Makhampom, 1994).

Makhampom organize in-house training for performance and facilitation, and also training and trainer program for local and international artist and community workers, including annual New Volunteer Workshops and Community Theatre Study for Australians. Within the Community Theatre Program they organize long-term youth development workshop in targeted village communities in Audhaya, Pisanulok, Phayao and Mae Hong Son and marginalized urban poor communities in Bangkok (Makhampom, 2003). I will describer more detail about this in the next chapter. The group also consolidates its activities in rural areas around the towns of Nakorn Ratchasima, and Buriram in northeast of Thailand. The company returns to those areas once a year and works with schools and communities. One major program is public performance; within this program they produce a major production every two years for international and national touring, together with up to ten mini productions each year (Erven,1992: 214).

The theatre company has already developed their skill in organizing fund raising and functions. Their theatre productions can be defined in terms of four target areas:

- Theatre in Communities;
- Educational Theatre;
- Performance Collaborations; and
- Public Events and Festival Performances; with productions often covering several areas.

The group developed relationships with people's organizations, community development groups, human rights organizations, alternative education institutions and cultural groups throughout its history. Within the last decade, there has been an increasing focus with Makhampom on networking, both local and international, to strengthen and broaden the impact of the work and to develop support to survive.

Makhampom has a strong regional and international presence, particularly with links and networks with other theatre groups. Performance tours, festivals, collaborative projects and workshops have taken the group to Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, England, Scotland, Germany and Australia. Makhampom has also conducted workshop programs in Thailand on

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community theatre techniques for Hong Kong and Taiwanese participants, and hosted numerous theatre workers and regional performance groups (Makhampom: 2004). The recent contribution of Makhampom to Thai youth is the performance of “The Beauty of War” as a part of Children's Cultural Caravan, 2003 (in Germany and the Netherlands). In 2004 they trained and produced a performance by ten Thai young performer to expose problems created by globalization and the development process at the World Social Forum, India from January 16-21, 2004. The last performance was organized and funded by Action-Aid Thailand where three different youth groups from different areas of Thailand participated and told about the suffering of their communities from infrastructure projects such as dams and pipelines and HIV -sex education issues (Nation [Thai], 2004). The performances of Thai youth reached from Europe to south Asia. The membership of Makhampom has remained stable and even grown slightly in recent years.

From the history and policy above it is evident that the theatre group Makhampom developed its method from the student movement and new cultural traditional in civil society related to a Theatre of liberation methodology[27] in their form and philosophy. Although they have been working with the community for decades, it is distinct that they did not exclusively focus on Human Rights formally. Pasakorn states: [28]

> Actually the reason for establishing Makhampom was to dissimilate information from city to rural areas. Information on impacts of development to rural people. There was a kind of middle class good will, a romantic concept. But they never talked about Human Rights as far as I know. What Makhampom has done from the past to now they inform impact of development process to community people (Pasakorn, 2004).

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[27] "For approximately twenty-five years - and more systematically since the early eighties - a new type of pragmatically oriented political theatre has been emerging in developing world. Some observers refer to it as people's Theatre, other label it Popular Theatre for Social Change. Both terms, unfortunately, evoke previous, unsuccessful Western attempts at making political theatre for underprivileged. I therefore prefer to call this type of political theatre from the developing world "theatre for liberation" instead." Eugune Van Erven, (1992: 1)

[28] Pasakorn Intoo-marn is a Theatre academic, Lecturer of Community Theatre in Thammasat University, Rangsit campus. He is a former volunteer of Makhampom Theatre Group. He opined this in an interview on September 11, 2004, Bangkok. This interview has taken by the suggestion of examiner Panida Thapanangkun.

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The information above establishes the fact that the theatre group was established with a new vision to work for communities as a part of national civil society movement by the young peoples for the rural youths. Community theatre, for the Makhampom group is not a matter of theory into practice, it is more about using theatre as a practical way to address a variety of social porblems. Researcher Richard Barber explained it:

> In terms of theatre for development it is really been less about study of TfD than the application of theatre on to development policies or development philosophies. I don't see much of the history of direct study of TfD. What I see is the theatre group like Maya using theater as medium in the communities and emerged with the community development philosophy (Barber, 2004).

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CHAPTER 3
MAKHAMPOM AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

3.1. Makhampom's objectives and actions for community empowerment

From the very beginning the Makhampom Theatre Group has been a noted independent community media aiming to communicate and disseminate information to rural society via theatre. The nation-wide performances and drama training for university student resulted as an outstanding "micro media" award by the National Youth Bureau in 1982 (Chindawat, 2003: 28). Makhampom Theatre Group claim "our theatre productions can be defined in terms of these four target areas: Theatre in Communities; Educational Theatre; Performance Collaborations; and Public Events and Festival Performances; with productions often covering several areas."(Makhampom's Theatre Work, 2004).

One of Makhampom's main objectives from the beginning was to work for local communities. As they were committed to develop society and culture they started as grassroots micro-media. As highlighted in their background statement:

> the social, political and cultural context within which Makhampom emerged was originally created under the banner of Grassroots Micro Media Project, with the objective of providing alternative, local media to marginal communities. Theatre was one, although major, aspect of this project, but soon grew to become the dominant feature of the group.(Makhampom's Background, 2004)

This statement specifies their social commitment and target group of people which they start their activity for marginal communities. They further add "Makhampom's community praxis reflects the 'socio-cultural' approach of the broader Thai NGO sector. As such, Makhampom's ideological development was consistent with the development of the NGO movement as a whole." Moreover they provide a clear statement of identity as follows:

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> We do theatre for development, community theatre… We provide marginal Thai communities with a micro media form to address local issues and discriminations. We maintain a dual focus of community development workshop programs and theatre production work. (Makhampom, 2004)

From these statements of activity, it can be seen that their theatre work is both to support community-based programs and to develop contemporary theatre in Thailand. So it is evident that they want to provide an alternative communication tool to the marginalized communities.

Makhampom started the Grassroots Micro Media Project (GMMP) in 1981. At that time their aim was

> to provide knowledge and useful information for the society, produce and promote small-scale media such as training, theatre (Makhampom Theatre group) and printing material. GMMP is willing to join with individual, groups, government and private agents to exchanging experiences in the production of various media's for sustainable development and a better quality of life for children, youth and the general public (Makhampom, n.d.).

However, in the beginning their GMMP activities were basically training. They did three other kinds of activity annually such as Youth's Theatre for Development, Theatre (by the Makhampom Theatre Group), and information for promotion. So, from this information it is clear that this GMMP was formed to provide information for sustainable development for the communities. Their activities were a kind of awareness raising movement thorough theatre media for different communities. Makhampom's objective was to ensure social rights for communities by using theatre media.

An interesting point is that the group never specifically mentions or included Human Rights as an agenda in their activities, but the documents and their activities prove they have been working for specific people's rights from the beginning. As I have previously mentioned in chapter two, the concept of HRE in this thesis, is that raising critical thinking of social structures, developing awareness of violations, and the promotion of Human Rights related values like equality, dignity and justice, which can clearly be considered HRE, are evident in the theatre processes of Makhampom Theatre Group. In Chindawat's study, she mentioned that when Makhampom was

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formed in 1980 as an affiliate theatre group of the Religion and Society Group, "It functioned to produce media on mobilization and sensitization of people from gambling, drug problem, vicious cycle, as well as a campaign for human rights and cooperatives." (Chindawat, 2003:27). [29]

As previously mentioned, Makhampom Theatre Group have specifically provided human rights education for refugees with their Refugee Camp Workshops and through their relationship with the Australia Karen Youth Project. These workshops cover areas are cultural exchange, human rights education, conflict resolution, and facilitator training. Makhampom is currently developing this area for more extensive work. Therefore, whether they directly mention human rights or not, their activities and objectives goes towards to develop awareness of violations and promotion of Human Rights related values. In this aspect their process is Human Rights Education.

Theatre in Communities

The development of the Community Theater project was a second step from GMMP. GMPP's main task was to tour around in villages in northern, north eastern and eastern region of Thailand to promote development concept through drama from 1981 to 1992. Their target audiences were villagers and children in the village. And the style of the drama was rather entertaining while also educating to support various development activities (Makhampom, n. d.).

Makhampom have been performing in a cross-section of communities, including urban poor areas, rural villages, factories, refugee camps, youth detention center, hill-tribe communities, and Buddhist temples. The touring theatre is a part of campaign on issues specific to the communities such as health and safety issues in the workplace, community response to HIV/AIDS, child sex trafficking, indigenous rights, etc. Their performances always involve pre-performance games (for the volunteers) and audience participation. Post-performance discussions, audio-visual presentations, and workshop or community forum activities are also organized occasionally. They have developed long term projects for the local people and youth in five provinces of Thailand. These kind of workshops might involved a group of 10 to

[29] Religious Coordinate Body for Social Work, see (GMPP, n.d.)

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40 youth, usually with a large facilitation team, including senior facilitators and new volunteers in support roles. Some of their workshops elements are the culture of fun, an experimental approach, the strong presence of music in generating energy, the use of Thai games and folk songs with theatre games, and the emphasis on the power of performance as a tool for community dialogue. The period of their long-term community-based theatre projects varies from 1 to 4 years. This period is normally set out in stages as such: Preliminary Stage (local community level) - 1 year, Secondary Stage (local community level) - 1 year, Training & Outreach Stage (district level) - 1 year and Networking Stage (provincial level) - 1 year.

During the theatre workshop Makhampom follow their own methodology. As to the web content of "Makhampom Workshop Program" this is structured as follows: Introductions/Orientation, Familiarization, Personal Context, Community context, Skills Training, Thematic Community Research (from participants), Defining form/style, Performance making, Community event, Feedback Evaluation and Wrap up/Forward Planning (Makhampom,2004). In the Preliminary Stage level, when they work in local community, they follow some processes to form a Community Youth Group as a local micro media. Those are as follows:

1. Logistical Planning / Define Community Liaison Process / Select Project Leader,
2. Makhampom Introduction / Mini Theatre Presentation / Introductory Workshop,
3. Youth Group Formation / Outline Program Structure / Issue Identification,
4. Conduct Full Community Theatre Workshop Program,
5. Performance Creation / Production Process / Community Performance Event/s and
6. Documentation / Evaluation / Forward Planning

(Makhampom, 2004).

In every Community Theatre workshop process they develop a Mini –theatre production such as popular folk entertainment, local traditional artists, and ceremonial ritual activities which are performed in the community. These mini-theatre productions accompany the issue-based performances by the workshop group, to

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create a significant community event. All these performances are typically one step in an ongoing community-based theatre process. Some of these community-based projects have now consolidated autonomous youth theatre groups within the communities who continue this work and expand the approach with their communities and neighboring districts (Makhampom's Workshop Program, 2004). These are: *Dao Loog Gai* (Phitsanulok Province), Krong Krang (Ayudhaya Province), Makheurjae, (Phayao Province), Makhamkaew (Mae Hong Son Province) and Fun Lamai (Songkla Province).

The existence of these groups is a remarkable achievement of their Theatre in Communities. These activities were developed in the Reincarnation Phase or. Golden Age phase of Makhampom's history from 1992-97. At that time some of these projects have continued over a period of eight years, and have seen an increase in volunteers joining the group. Thus Makhampom took on the form as a sort of institute for training in community theatre.

Target Groups, Philosophy and Methodology

Makhampom's Community Theatre project is particularly targeting for the youth of rural communities. Now I examine their community theatre for youth and later on will analyze it from the point of development context. According to their Workshop Program statement,

> We work particularly with young people to counter the existing power structures in Thai society that create conditions of social, economic and political discrimination. This involves a process of challenging the Thai people whose psyche has been engendered with a regressive approach to education, patriarchal traditions, the influence of formality, parental subjugation of children, and the impact of poverty, all of which present barriers to the introduction of progressive community theatre processes (Makhampom, 2004).

Elsewhere they mentioned that an educational approach to theatre, primarily targeting children and youth, was combined with issue-orientation. Indigenous rights, environmentalism, prostitution, and democracy were themes adopted from a humanist perspective rather than a radical, class-orientation (Makhampom, 2004). Later on the

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evaluation of my study will show that in terms of effectiveness their process does not achieve the above aims.

Makhampom have thus developed their own theatre philosophy and methodology from their progressive origins in the national student movement. Their politics are influenced by the new cultural context of emerging Thai civil society. The history has involved exploring the adaptation of Thai folk, popular and classical genres with a Western-based theatre form. Initial influences come from Brecht and Thai political theatre groups like Crescent Moon (Makhampom's Theatre Work, 2004). According to their explanation, their workshop process, philosophy or methodology, combines techniques developed through Makhampom's history of practice and those deriving from training programs with groups such as SEARICE, the Philippines Educational Theatre Association (PETA), and Gonghouse, together with Thai Drama Education Curricula, folk games, and ad-hoc collaborations (Makhampom, 2004).

In their workshop program section of web page they also defined their Community Theatre methodology.

> The methodology involves a philosophy similar to Paolo Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, using a problem posing approach. Alongside the development of the workshop participants, there is a strong focus on community building, both in terms of socio-economic sustainability and cultural identity. As such, community-based projects will be fully inclusive projects, involving the cross-section of community members at different levels" (Makhampom, 2004).

They explained the effect or output of Community Theater from their view as follows:

> Community theatre for young people is particularly effective in combining several positive features of development - creative expression, freedom from inhibitions, energy release, knowledge gathering, and working collectively - whilst challenging the negative pressures faced by young people. In Thailand, the three important characteristics of community theatre for young people are
> (i) at the individual level, it offers an open, participative and accessible medium for expression whilst developing artistic and communication skills,

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(ii) at the family and community level, it provides a medium for young people to express themselves in front of elders and peers in a non-confrontational form and

(iii) at the regional level, it provides a popular medium with broad outreach for advocating youth issues (Makhampom's 5th Community Theatre Study Tour, 2004).

Chindawat also stresses the youth and community focus of the group:

> [Makhampom] focuses on knowledge based media for people in rural area. Especially theatre and training for basic skill on media in production with groups of people, agencies, GOs, NGOs to produce micro media in various kinds that are useful to sensitize and empower people and youth. (Chindawat, 2003: 29).

Makhampom defined the political role of community theatre as:

> When applied in broader contexts, community theatre can play a political role in people's conscientization, in social advocacy, in community building, in issue analysis, in cultural survival, in technical training, in rehabilitation, in problem solving, and in social entertainment. Therefore, Community theatre is, in essence, a process, and the stage is fundamentally one venue within this process. As such community theatre workers should recognize their role as performer together with that of facilitator, researcher, social worker, mediator, technician, activist, director, friend, and more often than not, kitchen hand. And, of course, as playful idealists (Makhampom's 5th Community Theatre Study Tour, 2004).

The idea or philosophy of playful idealists comes from Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. When Makhampom give a symbolic comparison with bamboo their vision becomes clearer:

> Bamboo provides a good analogy for the community theatre worker. When clustered together we will spark and create fire. When the wind blows we will bend with the wind. And when we put to use we can offer food, building materials, music and dance, design, utensils, bags and games. Let the bamboo grow strong."(Makhampom, 2000)

My study will analyze their political role in the community in next chapter.

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Makhampom's researcher and facilitator Richard Barber[30] evaluated that whatever philosophy and craft Makhampom developed, it is the result of a gradual development. The organization picks up ideas and methods at different times. Theatre for development, then, is a result of this process. However, its political commitment, as Richard Barber said, has changed from the beginning. As to him, during the first six to seven years, Makhampom is very close to political ideas of 70s, but it has shifted. And there was a point when Makhampom was split and some radical members of Makhampom left, then Khun Tua become the leader of Makhampom. From that point he emphasize the importance of culture and community culture rather than focusing on political ideology. For 15 or so years Makhampom has been operating basically on social democratic ideas, but on very specific globalization issues. The group took a soft position on development philosophy, human rights, democracy, and liberal traditions. Barber adds, that in 2001, there was a production in which Makhampom focused on the history of democracy in Thailand, and from this he thinks that Makhampom basically rejoined the political movement (Barber, 2004).

Other Workshops and activities

Besides Community theatre Makhampom have some other activity like Community Theatre Study Tours, Educational Theatre, and Performance Collaborations/International Tours. They also organize workshops targeted to Schools and University, Teacher Training, NGO Train the Trainer, and activities for marginal groups like Youth in detention, commercial sex workers and refugees from Burma. Makhampom's New Volunteer Workshop is perhaps the most important workshop program as they run it for bringing new volunteers into the group.

The Educational Theatre programs mobilize national campaigns for young people on issues such as HIV/AIDS, drug use, teenage pregnancy, energy conservation, and mass consumerism, by developing touring theatre productions for schools and educational institutions throughout Thailand. From 1993 to 1997, major

[30] Richard Barber has been involved with Makhampom since 1995. He mainly works on projects like the study tour program. Now he is an advisor and researcher of Makhampom as he is doing Ph. D research on the group.

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touring productions dominate Makhampom's work. *Phitsukarn Er* (Daeng Between Two Worlds) and *Malai Mongkol*, addressed child prostitution issues, *Cao Lo Lo Lum*, responded to the increasing incidence of teenage drug abuse, and *Canthakorup Co* (Sex Before Time) provided a mechanism for teenage sex education. These productions toured throughout Thailand, where as *Phitsukarn Er* and *Malai Mongkol* were taken to Germany, UK, and Australia as part of awareness-raising campaigns.

With Performance Collaborations or International Tours they conducted International performance tours primarily for awareness-raising and fund-raising including Makhampom's renowned annual Study Tour programs. The training program within the annual community theatre-training program has become a remarkable inter-cultural training process. The participation of international participants and workshops with Makhampom volunteers has offered a tool for community theater training, inter-cultural exchange, and an internal training mechanisms for Makhampom volunteers. One of the six objectives of this study tour is to raising funds to maintain Makhampom's ongoing program, as there is no existing form of support for theatre groups in Thailand.:

> The tour provides an introduction to Makhampom's community theatre methodology through a practical training program and exposure to the community context [by] visits to some of Makhampom's target communities. [This] aims to present the social and cultural context of these communities and the nature, style and approach of the youth theatre groups developed by Makhampom's community theatre workshop programs.

One of the three facilitators of this program is Richard Barber, Makhampom's resident visiting expert.

From that time due to the budgetary crisis, Makhampom began different project including fundraising projects and the new international initiative of the Study Tour. Thus their activities and their productions are diverse, ranging from solo works to major productions, extensive school tours to one-off events, traditional folk-styled pieces to contemporary theatre productions, performances in the nearby slum community to international festivals. According to Thai press,

> The Makhampom drama group represents the people … the messages are conveyed through dramas, which combine contemporary methods and issues

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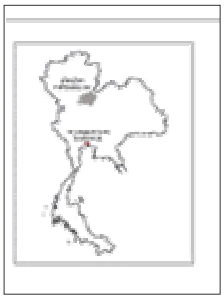
> with traditional Thai culture and settings.… Makhampom group … are like the carrier Pigeons that dutifully carry news from the city to the countryside and back. They believe that drama is the best way to present the problems of society. (Vechakorn Boonmee, 1999)

The Beauty of WAR: an aftermath of the process

Another successful outcome of CT media process is "The Beauty of War" production, performed in 2003. The production participated in the Children's Cultural Caravan in Germany and associated activities in Austria and the Netherlands. Some of the youth came from the *Dao Loog Gai*, in Pitsanulok. This kind of International Tour was an out come of the Asian financial crash of 1997 that affected Makhampom severely and thus enforced new survival strategies. All the nine performer of this production come from different community theatre projects process. These productions basically visualize the three major problems of young Thai peoples at present time. The first story depicts the unequal life and discrimination of a girl child named Nee where as her brother always get privileges from family. The second story focused on the miserable life of a son of a HIV positive girl prostitute. The last story is based on a male youth who is jailed, and deprived of social justice. The three sequences depict war in minds of young Thai people and conflict in their daily life. The main objective of the play was to develop the moral dignity of young people as a human beings.[31] This play was directed by anti-static director Pradit Prasartthong.

3.2. The *Dao Loog Gai* in Pitsanulok: a Community perspective



Daw Loog Gai group was formed by Makhampom Theatre Group in Pitsanulok to address the local social issues. At present *Daw Loog Gai* is an individual theatre group that runs autonomously, but they are dependant on Makhampom for expertise, training and guidance. To analyze the background of *Dao Loog Gai* I will explore it in two parts. First part is the Spirit of *Dao Loog Gai* and

[31] As a researcher I was allowed to observe the first performance of Beauty of WAR in , Goethe Institute, Bangkok in May 16, 2003

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its formation. In the second part I will elaborate development and production process as whole.

Spirit and formation

In socio–cultural context of the name of any organization reflects the attitude of the community. To realize the sprit of name and formation I need to describe the story of *Dao Loog Gai* (ดาวลูกไก่) or the seven star story of Thailand. Actually rising in the east is a small compact group of stars called the Pleiades. They are so compact that people can identify them easily. The Pleiades are known as the seven sisters by many cultures. In Thailand the Pleiades are seen as the Seven Chicks according to story of *Dao Loog Gai*. The really strange thing is that only six stars can be seen with the naked eye. In Thailand the story of the seven chicks is told as follows:

> There was a very poor old couple that lived in a forest. All they had was a little brown rice and a hen and seven chicks. One evening a monk camped near their hut. The old folks were worried, because it was the custom that they should offer the monk some food in the morning (the monks did not eat after noon.) By placing some food in the begging bowls, which the monks carried around, people acquired merits, which would benefit them in future lives. And so this couple wanted to give the monk the very best food that they had, but they were very poor. In the end they decided that they only thing they could offer him were their hen. The hen overheard this, and was very sad. She took her chicks aside and told them that they must look after themselves from now on. Very early the next morning, the old man killed the hen and began to roast her to give to the monk. The chicks were so overcome with grief that they threw themselves onto the fire so that they might always be with their mother. The seven chicks were reborn as stars in the sky, and they are called Dao Look Kai (starryskies.com, 1999).

This story is a known to most Thai people, and children learn this story in primary school. This story simply represents the fact seven chicks sacrificed their life to be with their mother. This seven chicks may represent the young people and mother could be interpreted as motherland. So, from this point we can assume that young Siamese are bold enough to sacrifice their life for the motherland, for freedom. The other value

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that is in the heart of this story is communal feeling of the seven chicks. The traditional cultural value of this story is to show respect, as the chickens did. No chicken said that I am young and I don't want to die. Here the story represents community values and practice, where individual rights, even right to life of individual chickens were placed second to their community obligations. Obviously this is quite different from human values and human rights. Even in western societies this kind of rights violation (right to life) takes place as a 'sacrifice for the country' or Nationalism. This is a conflict between cultural values and human rights. Human Rights Education should change this type of cultural values.

At the same time it is a politically conservative story. It indicates poverty and religious power structures in society. It reveals that because of religious superiority the old man killed the hen although it's a great sin according to religion. And this causes the death of a mother of seven chickens. A social analysis locates three generations of sacrifice, and a value to the powerful authority of the monk. The old man killed his only hen, and the hen did not try to escape as she was obedient to her owner. This may be because she has been feed and taken care by them and the seven chickens sacrificed their life for their love to mother. In this context this story is a cruel example of conservative political structure. There are evidences of power structures and hierarchy in Thai culture. According to Khun Prosakorn, in the past absolute monarchy period, people said 'whom you are depending on is to whom you belong.' It means your master will define your identity. He think this still exists in peoples minds, as a cultural root. Actually poor people think that there is a higher power above them in a relationship like master and subordinate (Prosakorn, 2004). Interestingly, the founders and local people don't look at this version of story. Rather they remarked at the rebirth of the seven chickens in the sky as seven stars and praise their holy spirit. They see them as defenders of love and freedom. From the field study and document it is evident that *Dao Loog Gai* was formed by the youth to address local social problem (Chindawat, 2003: 38). Chindawat states that name of "*Dao Loog Gai*" means the grouping of the minor people aims to contribute to their community. According to her, "It is a guiding star for their community" (Chindawat, 2003: 42). Even in her study it

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is evident that local people regarded it as a guiding star that educates the community.[32] Every member of *Dao Loog Gai* knows the spirit and meaning the story.

According to Makhampom, *Dao Loog Gai* adapts popular folk styles along with the Makhampom theatre form, and has been recognized throughout Thailand for their performance work together with initiatives in community radio. Makhampom states:

> The *Dao Loog Gai* youth group in Nakhonthai are from a poor community, facing discrimination as a minority Lao-ethnic community and struggling against a severe drug problem. Nakhonthai in Phitsanulok province is particularly famous in Thailand as the stronghold of the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) which waged an armed struggle against the military dictatorship in the 1970s. Whilst the Communist movement has disappeared in Thailand, the political influence on the communities in Phitsanulok remains, with many maintaining progressive ideals. Geographically, Phitsanulok marks the beginning of the mountainous terrain of northern Thailand, but the region is nevertheless a predominantly rice-based farming area (Makhampom, 2004).

Besides this political, economic and geographic context of the area there are other facts as well. From the very beginning the entire founding member of *Dao Loog Gai* comes from Sri-Intaratit Pithayakom School.[33] The school is located at Nakronthai district of Pitsanulok province. The school enrols around 200 students a year. Students mostly come from peasant's families and working class families. The main problem of them is poverty and along with the crisis rising from drug use. Most of the people and student only know their community and school, and some know Bangkok where they have vacationed or gone for income generating work.

Chindawat's study reveals that most of young people never participate in any social activities except in-school activities. In this environment, the *Dao Loog Gai* formed at the end of 1997. There were two major causes that initiated formation of this group. First one, Makhampom was funded by UNICEF (Thailand) to organize training workshops on theatre for development under the project of San Fun (Weaving Dreams). UNICEF continued this project until 1998. Also Makampom got support and

[32] Ibid: 65
[33] The English spelling of the school is given by the director of the school

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cooperation from Pitsanulokian Unity Fighting on HIV/AIDS Foundation, and the the Foundation of the Indo-China Intersection Institute. Makhampom formed this project for AIDS prevention in Communities.

Another vital cause was leadership. It was Archan Sunet Thongkumpong, who was selected to participate the first workshop; she fully supported and was committed to form this micro media unit. According to Makhampom, "The project group in Nakhonthai was formed through the initiative of a progressive school of a progressive school headmistress, who is strong and active in maintaining community culture… The school, which is located outside the communities, in the base for this group. (Makhampom, 2000). Until now the school is the base for the group. From the interview with Archan Sunet it is revealed that her commitment arose from the national student movement for democracy and good governance during her youth. When student movement failed, she decided to work in communities far from the capital. She started the school and established it in April 30, 1996. So, when she showed interest to allow her student to learn Community Theatre media there was no one who opposed her.

The location of the school was very important here. It is situated outside the communities, in a separate place and next to district highway. Children from the all communities can reach it easily. The School becomes a common gathering place for the children and young people, as there is no other place like this in these remote communities.

Development and production process

It takes time to form the *Dao Loog Gai*. From the support of *San Fan* project, Makhampom organized a creative theatre skill and management training program for the students of Intharatith Pitthayakom School. The purpose of the training is to target youth skills in youth theatre for community development. The first Theatre for Youth Dream workshop took place in 1998 for AIDS awareness and ran for the whole year where 16 students of the school participated. All these participant attended a three day

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long theatre workshop which builds their techniques and confidence to develop drama on social issues like AIDS.[34]

According to Chindawat, The project requires youth participants to develop project proposals and submit them for a grant. The proposal of the *Dao Loog Gai* group was accepted, funded by their community, and operated very successfully. In late 1998, *Dao Loog Gai* came up with the "little frequency, Pitsanulok Boys/Girls" radio program. This radio program was broadcasted in on national radio. The program was on career development, agriculture, earning the living, health and environment. It was produced with the cooperation of Makhampom and Indo–China Intersection Institute. The program operated for 4 to 5 months till the radio Thailand Pitsanulok station changed their program schedule and could not provide time for this program (Chindawat, 2003: 43-44).

Also they produced and performed three productions: *Seoul Punish*, *Tum Tud Tu* (Thai and English version), *Maparang Plad Thin* (The displaced girl). The first two productions were performed in *Mooban Kaengwa*, *Ban Na Bodi* and *Ban Huay Teen Tang* from 6 to 10 April in 1998. At least 500 people enjoyed these performances. On July 20, 1998 the *Dao Loog Gai* won first prize in the Rajprajanukron school competition for performing *TumTud Tu* in English. Their success continued when they performed *Maprang Plad Thin* on August 21 in 1998 in *Kaengwa Kaenghai* in front of an audience of a thousand people. They performed this production in March 1999 among five different communities and around 1200 audience members enjoyed the performance.

From 1998 to March 2001 they produced and attended 11 different types of activities. Makhampom regularly developed new project for financial support. Although UNICEF continued the *San Fun* project only until 1998 (Makhampom, 1999), they extended the project till 1999. The budget of Makhampom showed that they spent around 300,000 baht for the Grassroots Community Theatre Workshop Program in Pitsanulok in 1999. Chindwat found in 2000 the *Dao Loog Gai* were funded from local government authorities, too. As she wrote, "In 2000, they submitted a proposal to the sub-district Organization and Provincial Health office. The group was granted 100,000 baht for the activity of theatre training programs and

[34] from video of Makhampom's Theatre for Youth Dream workshop, 1998.

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performances in 10 *Mooban*" (Chindwat, 2003: 44). And from the budget summery of Makhampom, it is noticeable that the organization itself spent an amount of 1,690,225 baht from 1999 to 2003 for Pitsanulok Community Theatre Projects (Makhampom, n.d.). Makhampom's efforts for organizing funds contributed the development of *Dao Loog Gai*'s while the Makhampom organized funds to continue their own community theatre process. At present at least half a dozen participants in *Dao Loog Gai* have been working in community projects during the last year.

Production Processes

The *Dao Loog Gai* usually follows a three steps theatrical process to perform their productions in the communities. These are the pre-performance process, the performance process and the post-performance process.

Pre-performance process

In the pre-performance process the volunteers identify the problems of communities. They visit the communities and apply the participatory action research method to get information and identify problems of the communities. Each group visits different communities. From this time they interact with the communities. It is very important as volunteers collect data from the communities. They need to be careful about the sensitivity, values and behaviors of communities and individuals. It is important too that from this data they develop the storyline of the productions. After collecting the data they return and develop story and sequence of the production. Volunteers of former generations and a teacher usually help them as facilitators. After developing the story they start the play production process on the floor through rehearsals. In the mean time they contact the community and set a schedule for the performance. Different groups work together for the preparation of props, costume, and designing. They compose introductory music for each play and develop it by the participatory process. Rehearsals on the floor are also interactive and participatory. Each volunteer’s idea and view is taken into account to develop team work and play.

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Three days workshop training

In this phase they get three days training in practical knowledge of theatre skills. Within the first two days they learn 19 different kinds of theatre games, such as ice breaking, improvisation, and acting on floor. They practice those for the first two days. The last day they go to the village for surveying and collecting data. First they do some games to breaking the ice, make the body free for acting, and activate their inherent creativity and imagination. The 19 different theatre games are adapted for child and young people according by Makhampom. All of them are fun games; as Makhampom developed fun games specifically for the children young people.

Performance and post-performance-process

Before the day of performance they do a rehearsal in school. At the same time they organize props and properties for the performance. On the day of the performance they arrive at the performance place at least 3 hours before. The members of the group fix the performance venue by fixing a curtain and setting musical instruments. As their performance is open air and they do not need a stage. It can be organized in front of shop, in front of village headman house, the school playground or the market place. They need a bit light source as the performance starts in the evening. These venues are selected by the communities or by the volunteers according to a meeting with the community leaders or village headman. After managing this, the volunteers join the with rest of the team to help get dressed, apply make up, and other necessary preparations.

The performance venue must have easy access to community members. Before the performance they attract the audience by doing some comic songs. Performance usually takes place after 6 in the evening. Each time three plays of three different groups are performed. Each play's duration is around 15 minutes. All the performances start with a song and end up with song. Each of the groups present three or more sequences in this short period. After the performance they discuss with the audience, but it is not mandatory as sometime they have time constraints. They evaluate their performance immediate after, and also keep a written record to make the performance better next time.

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All the information above revels the overall key concept of Makampom's Community Theatre process as a kind of participatory activity for the young people of the rural communities, which is mainly based on values education. Throughout the Community Theatre process they mainly provide information for awareness rising and build capacity in communities for empowering people, specially the young people. As I have discussed, an importance of HRE is as values, believes and attitudes. Thus the promotion of human rights culture can be through the development of values and beliefs which uphold human rights. Makhampom's Community Theatre process is quite similar to this dimension of the education campaign. Unfortunately no volunteer, not even the artistic director, knows about this. Regardless, they still teach human rights values even if they do not know anything about the national action plan and policy on HRE developed by the national human rights commission of Thailand. Organization like Makhampom do not get anything from the nation action plan and policy on HRE. I will develop in my conceptual framework in the next part of this chapter on these fact and findings. This framework will explore the exact theoretical concept of empowerment through participation from the Human Rights Education perspective as well.

3.3. Conceptual framework of empowerment through participation

In the beginning 21st century, it would seem that participation in development has gained a privileged status in the development mainstream that was envisaged in the resounding declarations of support for ‘popular participation’ by international agencies and activists alike in the mid-1970s. Actually, participation occupies a central place in development thinking and practice. Governments, funding agencies, donors, and civil society actors including NGOs and multi-lateral agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have all arrived at a near consensus that development cannot be sustainable lasting unless peoples’ participation is made central to the development process (Kumar, 2002: 24).

However participation means different things to different people. The way participation is defined largely depends upon the context and background in which participation applied. Cohen and Uphoff viewed that participation includes the people’s involvement in the entire decision-making process: “Participation includes

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people's involvement in decision making processes, in implementing programs, their sharing in benefit of development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs "(Cohen and Uphoff, 1997). Like Cohen and Uphoff, FAO (1982) emphasizes participation in all decision-making processes but by the people's own organizations and through self-organized action. Paul introduces the concept of enhancement of well being in terms of values cherished by the community as being the ultimate objective of participation. According to him, "Community participation is an active process by which the beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their well-being in terms of income, personal growth, self reliance, or other values they cherish."(Paul, 1987).

Therefore, participation is viewed as a process of empowering the local people. The focus is on the transfer of power to change the power structure. But there are differences between passive participation and self-mobilization. Passive participation, as the term suggests, is where people are told what to do. On the other hand self mobilization is where the local people themselves are in command. As Kumar wrote, "While participation by manipulation and passive participation can disempower the community, both interactive participation and participation by self mobilization can be highly empowering" (Kumar, 2002:26).

In this context, when theatre group like Makhampom declare that their philosophy is similar to Freire's philosophy, we need to look at Freire's view of participation. The three key arguments from Ferire are 1) Each person has the capacity to learn and participate and has right to do so; 2) If education is to have a liberating outcome, the process itself needs to be participatory and liberating; and 3) Real liberation is possible only through popular participation and a key to popular participation is popular education. According to his philosophy, a liberating education practice helps people to break the culture of silence and identify their true potential in new learning and by engaging in new social struggles for a better life. Any transformation of culture involves moving away from holding the oppressors' world-view to the oppressed developing their own perspectives and world-view (Phnuyal, n.d.).

From the point of human rights approach to development, participation is important: "proper participation requires an adequate access to information. The people involved must be provided with necessary information and all information and

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all information should be used in the participatory process (Action Aid, 2004: 119). Participation is a major dimension of the human rights approach to development. A focus of development policy must be the human rights education of the people. Only by knowing their rights can people participate meaningfully and comprehensively (Action Aid, 2004: 119).

The discussion above analyzes the nature and application of people's participation. But the question is how people can participate. The need someone or some media which can teach or inform them about the proper participation. Here an media like Makhampom Theatre Group is very important. Because in many cases participation is initiated by state actors, which are mostly top-down and full of structural and administrative obstacles. As Kumar writes,

> Structural obstacles comprise those factors which from part of the centralized political systems and are not oriented towards people's participation. The situation is typified by a 'top-down' development approach adopted by development initiatives like IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programs). The other set is administrative obstacles. The administrative structures that are control oriented are operated by a set of guidelines and adopt to a blue print approach, providing little significant space to local people to make their own decisions or control their resources (Kumar, 2002:29)

In the next chapter's findings shows that Makhampom's participatory approach is sometimes a blue print approach.

There also exist social obstacles like mentality of dependence, culture of silence, domination of the local elite, or gender inequality, which militate against people's participation. Most participatory development projects fail to take in account the large obstacles and hence the impact is hardly sustainable and pervasive. We know UN agencies do not necessarily work with communities to implement their programs, but they can support community-based actors (Jonson, 2002). In this situation NGOs or organization like Makhampom has the potentials to organize and train local agent that are called mobilizers such as *Dao Loog Gai*. Here Makhampom can initiate, organize and implement community participation through their Community Theatre process. They provide training, support and guidelines to develop local micro media groups and thus build capacities of local youth. Thus they act as facilitators. Before

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discussing the relationship of facilitator and mobilizer I need to clarify the distinction between facilitator and mobilizer. As Jonson wrote, "*Mobilizers* work and live in communities; often they are highly motivated individuals who work by communities. Mobilizers foster community-based action and serve as a link between communities and service delivery and other 'external' support systems" (Jonson, 2002: 69-70). From this view *Dao Loog Gai* could be acting as a club of mobilizers. And if we look at the notion of facilitator according to Jonson,

> Facilitators are normally paid staff of a government agency (such as extension officers) or an NGO or CBO. Facilitators may live and work in the communities they serve, but do not necessarily originated from the same community. Ideally, facilitators play a supportive and problem-solving role for mobilizers and may also help to train them. Facilitators form a link between community based-mobilizers and the "outside world" (Jonson, 2002:69-70).

So, in this context Makhampom's role is as facilitator. I will analyze the role Makhampom's facilitator role in chapter four. Here we need to look that how Makhampom can foster active roles to empower communities by their participatory Community Theatre process. As Jonson pointed out, since communities must address a broad range of problems, frequent contact is required between mobilizers and communities. Because, people in communities communicate primarily through dialogue with one another and with people whom they judge to trustworthy and dependable. Information from other sources may either be received with caution or seen as difficult to understand. Even if they receive important pieces of information and advice from the radio, or newspapers, or from an extension worker, community members often want to discuss it with persons whom they feel can help them to fully understand the issue and what it implies. This is the role of mobilizers. When there is a close collaboration between facilitator and mobilizers, issues are likely to be better understood. Such collaborations also promote effective feedback from the communities. This study will explore such collaboration processes through the Community Theatre process of *Dao Loog Gai* and Makhampom. In the next chapter this research shows that the collaboration relationship tends to become a rather top-down.

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From the discuss above about participation, young volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* may become self–mobilization. But for the rest of the community it is not evident. As an NGO, Makhampom's philosophy might match some educationalists view of HRE, which is almost influenced by Freirian Thinking, but they do not formally or intentionally focus on Human Rights Education.

On the other hand, as David Shiman emphases, while HRE must present values, learners themselves have the responsibility for their own choice and actions. He stresses that, "Finally we can challenge student to determine which, if any, human rights issues they care about and what, if anything, they will do to translate their concern into action" (Folwers, 2003). Community Theatre Media gives an alternative space to understand social crises. This is a type revolutionary approach in Thai society as it is advocating youth issues. This is a kind of activity develops HRE values and ethics indeed. However, in the next chapter I focus on what cultural values are criticized by Community Theatre process to raise Human Rights Education and awareness.

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CHAPTER 4
EVALUATION OF STUDY

This chapter contains the field findings of the research along with the analysis and discussion of the findings. I have also referred to my documentary research in this chapter. This chapter examines the Community Theatre media process's success or failure in Thai urban and local realities and its impact on the lives of communities. The discussion has been organized in this chapter to look at the Makhampom Theatre Group and its impact in rural and urban communities, and analyse this according to existing ideas. However, at the end of the discussion on these sections of theatre process, I focus some additional issues on the limitation of Makhampom's Community Theatre media to address HRE.

The discussion on the relationship between Community Theatre media and HRE and its impact firstly looks at views of the different stakeholders, their access to information, and the effectiveness as an educational tool. These two sections draw from the field data, in addition to documented sources. All these sections examine the reality of the Thai cultural context and development process.

Although in the last twenty years a wealth of HRE resources have been created to serve the people from nursery school teachers to judges, health professionals, social workers and police, impact of HRE has not fully been evaluated. In developing countries, the application of theatre media as a development and educational tool have been exercised over the last forty years too. The evaluation of the application of Community Theatre media as a tool of HRE is a new area of research. The situation is that it is relatively easy to measure HRE activities in terms of quantity and quality of output, but it is much more difficult to assess the impact. The underlying hypothesis that education produces a cultural shift in behavior remains a hypothesis, unproven (HREA, 2003). However I will try to analyze the findings by comparing existing concepts of TfD with Makampom's ideologies, documents and processes. In particular, TfD expert Prentki's view is that empowering

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people for social change must occur through a participatory Theatre for Development process.

4.1. View of the different stakeholders

There are four direct stakeholders in the community: first, the young people of the Intharatith Phitthayakom School, who are student and involved in the community theatre process; second the teachers of the school; third the parent groups; and the fourth group is the community as an audience. Besides there are also the theatre people of Makhampom mainly in Bangkok city. So, altogether five stakeholders views in the findings of this study.

All of the stakeholders agreed that the problems or issues have been played in the performance of *Dao Loog Gai* are existing in their community. The reality is that the people who are living in the communities with these problems do not have the proper media by which they can get information about solutions to them. A lack of media and information existing in that context means CT media performances are one of the few sources to give them information concerning the issues. The community expressed that community theatre media reflects their daily life problems in a meaningful way. According to volunteer and performer Wuttipong Chantharungsri,

> Comparing the community theatre with other media like TV and Radio that most audiences like to watch, this community theatre is relevant more than other media because the stories of this performance are similar to their daily life. For example, most stories in TV programs are about the rich and urban life but most audience stay in rural areas. So these are real time and real life oriented performance to them and which enable two ways communication with audiences.

This indicates the failure of the Thai media to communicate to rural people and reflect their expectation. Community Theatre media is making a bridge with the communities and reflecting their expectations.

Although around one third of the interviewees[36] considered the plays did not contain new information, most of the people were aware that this process could be

[36] From the audience interviews, 3 of 8 people

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effective if it comes up with some sustainable solutions to the problems. The findings reveal that people of the community, especially of rural communities, are glad to see their children doing something meaningful. Participants and actors feel empowered when involved in the process.[37] A sense of interactive participation makes them aware of their own community. The performers and volunteers opined that the process of the CT media has given them an opportunity to study a situation and practice performance in public.

One of the volunteer performers said, "After joining this group for a while I developed the method of public participation to solve the village's problems like drugs, HIV disease, etc." The same performer said that the process inspires people to join the process again. He enjoyed his acting be he experienced teamwork and gets to know the community problems. It allowed him to co-operate with others. Another first generation volunteer of *Dao Loog Gai* said now she knew how to be leader and how to be a follower. Pandwaj Boonart wrote about himself, "It freed me from some conditions and freed me to think by myself. Before I was committed to drugs. Joining this activity grants me a good alternative way" (Chindwat, 2003:59). Actually this process has changed the way of his life and makes him a positive citizen in society. This participatory process even inspired audience members to request for new plays regarding their own basic problems like the root cause of drug addiction, poverty and the political situation.

The study reveals that although the people in communities and the volunteers do not have exact idea or notion about human rights according to UN documents, they have their own sense of human rights. The Community Theatre process helped to develop their sense of rights more clearly and distinctly. Although they have a sense of rights, it was not clear and the theatre process made them more aware of rights. In a cultural environment where peoples' attitude to the life is that they lead a miserable life because of Buddhism *Karma*, there is a place for social awareness indeed.[38] From

[37] Field study based information from 3 villages area of Nakhronthai sub district

[38] "Among the people, though the majority of them have been formed by the by a religious teaching which stress the sanctity of human lives. It preaches people to consider their fellow humans as brothers who share the same fate, both benevolent and malevolent. Therefore humans are supposed to be compassionate and kind to one another and not to violent to each other's rights. But in reality people have not applied this concept due to their attitude towards the other principles such as *Karma* and Buddhism. Thai people tend to view that whatever happened to them as justified, whether it is positive

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that point the Community Theatre provides new learning of rights and awareness especially for the rural marginalized communities. Here I elaborate the findings in detail as below.

4.1.1. Empowering stakeholders:

a. Development and participatory process at the grassroots level

The Co.mmunity Theatre of the Makhampom Theatre Group was developed by middle class educated people based in Bangkok as an objective to liberate grassroots community, as a part of Thai cultural reformation. The theatre group introduce themselves as:

> We are Makhampom.
>
> We are not makhampom, the fruit.
>
> We are Makhampom , the theatre group.
>
> We do theatre for development, community theatre, people's theatre, folk theatre, contemporary Thai theatre. We are 24 years old. We grew out of Thailand's 1970s pro-democracy movement. We provide marginal Thai communities with a micro media form to address local issues and discriminations. We maintain a dual focus of community development workshop programs and theatre production work (Makhampom, 2004).

As to Makhampom's statement above and others documents mentioned in chapter three, it has been noted that this small scale micro media process emerged under the influence of Freirean Pedagogy of Oppressed. But interestingly, they did not adapt Theatre of Oppressed (TO) methodology, which emerged from the basis of Freirean experience by Boal, nor follow Theatre in Education (TIE). Rather they adapted the Theatre for Development (TfD) model. The irony is that the Community Theatre, or people's theatre, comes from the north Atlantic as participatory development tool.[39]

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or negative. Such believes makes people rather stoic and forget sometimes that their rights have been violated allowing the crooks and the corrupt to be loose." (Ditapichai, 2000: 87)

[39] "While on the one hand popular theatre was politicized, on the other hand the notion of popular theatre remained unsettled by the changing views in society on development strategies. When post-World War II development workers discovered 'popular' media, including theatre, could be used as instrument for development, they extended the meaning of the term 'popular theatre', to any form that appealed to rural and marginal urban populations. The term 'people's theatre' which has gained fame in the North Atlantic on the same grounds, was now introduced into the third world to denote socially committed theatre. (Epskamp, 1989: 165).

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And it has been using to get rid of from the curse of development by globalization. Here the context cited by Ditapichai, is an important:

> During the bubble economy, the country enjoyed overwhelming growth in fields of industry, trade, finance and banking, communication technologies, infrastructure, trade centers, and condominium construction while people in the rural areas suffered the impact from construction of hotels and resorts, environment destruction caused by setting up of golf courses, high cost of living, debts and cheap product prices. Some farmers lost their land and property. Workers migrated to cities to sell their labor and girls entered prostitution. Some become narcotic victims (Ditapichai, 2000:79).

Here, community media like Makhampom emerged as an effective tool to raise consciousness as a parallel consequence of this cycle. When Makhampom joined the Edinburgh Festival in 1994, the local press quoted their representative that there were as many as 800,000 child prostitutes in Thailand.[40] Moreover, the attitude of clients and the government to this is totally different from the social awareness programs. The same reporter states "the government's attitude used to be to hide the problem away, thought it was an embarrassment," and the clients attitude is, according to director Pradit Prasartthong, "The men like to buy young girls because of the problems with AIDS. That way they know they're probably quite safe from the infection." The influence and work of their theatre media was a remarkable miles stone in the society to bring forward this information. Makhampom got funds to carry out this kind of awareness raising activity from the very beginning, and it has now become one of the major characteristics of the group. Recently, Makhampom contributed by training ten Thai representatives participating in the World Social Forum in January 2004 who told of their suffering by development and globalization processes.

The positive aspects of the Community Theatre media process is that it involves young people of the communities as volunteers, and these volunteers provide rights-based information through their performance and activity. The process creates a

[40] "Tum Tim said statistics showed there could be as many as 800,000 child prostitute in Thailand and the number of available youngsters was now on decline." *Scotland on Sunday*, Festival City, Monday, August 22,1994, Edinburgh festival 1994, *Spotlight on sex trade*, Reported by Gillian Currie, (Makhampom, 2004)

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participatory activity for the volunteers and develops a network with the different bodies and stakeholders of society. Thus it empowered them and makes them confident about their activity, in other words, it builds their capacity. According to Richard Barber, the process is has a high participatory level. He opined that in the one hand it empowers the community. For him, Makhampom's process works because they take time. At the initial stage, social dialogue develops relationships. However there is some limitation to their participatory process that I will discuss later on.

Actually the process gives the young volunteers the opportunity to look back into the crisis or problem of their respective communities and explore the solution. Within this process and performance develop awareness among grassroots. Young volunteers develop participatory relation with the communities and people. As Chindawat found *Dao Loog Gai* developed relation with eight different body or organizations of Thai society, such as School, Makampom Theatre Group, community/village, other youth group, community outside, NGO, media and public agencies (Chindawat, 2003). My study found that *Dao Loog Gai* have network with public agencies like provincial health department and municipality[41].

In relationship to Thai culture, this process may make a window to share and be aware. Because of cultural values, people may not like to discuss negative issues of community. When they observe the performance they start rethinking about the crisis and that inspires them to discuss. For example, the use of condoms for preventing HIV/ AIDS infection is an accepted reality to them. According to a 56 year old farmer in the audience, "[CT] is useful for the students and the audiences to know how to avoid drugs and AIDS. These activities also help the actors and actresses to abstain from drugs." Actually, groups directly benefiting are the young participants of the community. An interesting comment from a driver of Intharatith Phitthayakom School is that most stories from other media like TV and Radio is far from the audiences daily life, but CT is closer to them. Apart from the driver, most other audience members and participants specially mentioned this positive aspect of Community Theatre.[42]

[41] Field study based information from 3 villages area of Nakhronthai sub district
[42] Five of the eight interviewed made this comment.

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Here, HRE is made through Community Theatre, for they are giving rights based information like the rights of children, women, and the right to health. These link to other rights such as the right to life, right to food, right to good health, right to education, rights to shelter and housing, right to access to information and the right of freedom of association and expression. The field study reveals that when people want to see theatre about political situations, or the root cause of drug problems, HIV/AIDS, or prostitution, it means that they are concerned about them. The theatre process develops an interactive environment like a Habermasian "public sphere" in the communities where everyone can share views and opinions for getting solutions to the problems. *Dao Loog Gai* has the scope to become a "public sphere" in the communities.

b. The process of raising awareness in communities

The total process of raising awareness in communities mainly builds awareness in two different age groups in the community. First, the young group who are involved in the process, and second, the audience who are the senior members of the community. As young generations of *Dao Loog Gai* are school students, and the theatre process is a part of their curriculum, they are becoming aware of the problems of the community through this process. The process enables them to find out the basic problems of communities, and then they develop the story and the performances around this. There are seven different groups of performers among the students in Intharatith Phitthayakom School.

Every group gets at least three days training by the Makampokm volunteers. For two days they learn and practice about the practical theatre process, and on the last day they go to the villages to survey the problem of the community. Then they come back and produce their own play, which is then performed. After that they record the feedback from the audience and rearrange their performance according to the feedback.[43] Through the total process they learned two basic things: how to work in team, and how to successfully produced theatre. The program develops leadership

[43] They did the same during the field study, in the second evening of their performance at *Wat Hua Rong* village on 3 September, 2003

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capacity. They also gain practical knowledge on understanding community problems and then trying to solve them within their means and media.

Most of the senior performers and volunteers, along with the teachers, expressed their view that they did not expect that the audience would learn from their performances. But only present student volunteers of school obviously wanted the audience to be aware about the problems. Three of the interviewed first generation volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* opined that they did not expect that audience would learn anything from their performance. Khun Pen believes from observation that 80% of audiences can perceive what the plays about. But he expects that the audience will change its behavior and this activity will help to increase awareness among the audience. Further, the like that their children do something meaningful. As he explained, "When we play a story like HIV disease and villagers do not know how it can spread, so when they know that some people are infected they stop communication with infected patients. After watching the story in the play they change their attitude and behavior to infected patients." Two other volunteer noticed that the plays can bring back traditional community musical performance among the villagers.

Two teachers remarked that they did not expect that the audiences is going to learn anything from their performance, but they expect that their students who are acting in the performance will learn how to do teamwork, how to improve about their skill in public, and it will unify the students. On the contrary, new student actors and actress of Intharatith Phitthayakom School expect that the audiences will change their attitude when they learn how to protect the AIDS disease and what is the effect of addiction to drugs. Another volunteer, Narissorn Srichantorn said that although she did not expect the audience will learn anything from the performance the activity will help to increase awareness among the audience.

However, the field studies reveal that it does change the attitude of audience in some contexts. Especially in the case of HIV / AIDS patients, the audience changed their view. They learned from the performance that the patient cannot infected anyone without physical involvement, and sufferers should not be look down on. A young man of 29 years who saw the performance for the first time in his life remarked that he got the idea how to avoid the risk of HIV/AIDS. A 34 year old women who is a

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mother of one volunteer and actress remarked that all the topics of the play addressed real situations in the community, although situation in their village is rather better. The most important thing for her is that her daughter is learning how to address the problems of her own village.[44] Rather interestingly, this young lady farmer suggested that they should have a performance in the community every month.

The philosophy of Makhampom is to develop social awareness through their Community Theatre media. Senior volunteer artistic director, Prasartthong explained this during the in-depth interview,

> The organization prefers to receive any relevant information from the audience to improve their performance, such as the question of 'do you like to be a bad character in this performance' or 'what did you decide for solution about the situation from their plays?' An objective of Makhampom is teaching the communities how to develop their own process of community media to help each other solve any particular problems that occur in their own society. For the training process will develop the thinking system for the trainee to learn how to live with other people, how to think systematically, how to grasp the problems that hide in the society, that will be directly benefit to them (Prasartthong, 2003).

This statement points out the positive aspect of this process, which directly engages them in developing awareness. This objective of Makhampom reveals the sustainable development of the communities in that sense. Young generations are becoming aware of the weaknesses in their community and society in general. It has been observed that although first generation volunteers have left school couple of years ago, they still have direct contact with their own communities. Community theatre has changed their views. One of the first generation volunteer of *Dao Loog Gai* stressed that if she was not involved with the process she might try to migrate Bangkok for a job. This process changed her mind. Now as she wants to work for her community and she will try to manage a job in her area after her graduation. One of the first generation volunteer said that the process not only improves her life, it can improve the awareness of people of the villages by reflecting in their weaknesses. One senior performer of *Dao Loog Gai* remarked that especially young participants became

[44] Kor's Mother's comment, see appendix-A, session 6

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aware of their rights and their performances may help the audience to realize and to preserve their rights too. Before being involved with the process they might have the idea of rights but it was not that clear in concept. This reveals that the process helps them to develop their values and inspires them to take decisions about their goals in life.

The *Dao Loog Gai* Group has two generations of volunteer. First generation started the process in 1997 and they have already left high school. Right now the new generation are developing and organizing Community Theatre. In fact, when *Dao Loog Gai* was formed in 1997 the Makhampom Theatre Group worked with the community actively and found that

> half of the group, 15 persons, are young people of Kaeng Wa Village who meet significant problems in their own families. Nine of their parents sold or both sold and used amphetamine-type stimulants and some became addicts. Of course, 9 youths of these families almost used amphetamine-type stimulants, and some also became addicts. Two of these 9 youths were forced to sell drug, and 1 of them was forced to sell sex by their families.[45]

During the study on October 2003 it was found that parents communities are aware of the drug issues and were concerned about the negative effects. Most of them do not force their children to be involved in drug dealings or selling. This was noticed from the open interview of one volunteer's parents and another girl's mother's view. Also the teachers stated that the attitude of the parent were changing to be more positive, especially on issues of gender equality among community. A former village headman suggested that next time they should make a play about the topic of women's equal rights. One female shopkeeper in the audience also remarked the same. Two girl participants who play the role of HIV infected girl expressed that, "the production about awareness of rights makes us more aware about our rights."

For the parents and audience, Community Theatre is as an interactive participatory media. First they learned that their children are doing something meaningful and important. It makes them happy. Also they felt that they need to be aware of the issues and they need to change their behavior to their children and community. The audience interacted and suggested developing play on other issues

[45] Survey done by Makhampom, 1997 (see appendix: C)

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like equal rights of women, other diseases, children's own problems, the political situation and poverty.

The development process of Makhampom Community Theatre is innately grassroots. Esteva and Prakash detail the power of grassroots organization:

> The grassroots initiatives that we are alluding to and drawing upon are autonomously organized by "the people" themselves, for their own survival, flourishing and enduring; both independent and antagonistic to the state and its formal and cooperative structures; hospitable to "the Others" and thus open to diversity; mainly expressed in reclaimed or regenerated commons, in both urban and rural settings, and clearly concerned with common good, both natural and social (Esteva & Prakash, 1998:13).

The director of Intharatith Phitthayakom School sees a failure of present education system because it cannot inspire students to think about the community, rather it inspires them to get a job or further education in urban areas. Community theatre may provide an alternative process to indirectly encourage student to look back and try to solve their own problems in their local villages.[46]

In that sense it is a wonderful opportunity. The student production is developed by the young people of the community, for the community and of the community. In this way young people are visualizing the problems of community by Community Theatre media that make aware all class and age group's people of the communities. When the student first goes to the community for collecting the data about the problem that make curiosity in the community but when they come up with the performance that make a total awareness process. This is a kind of learning through entertainment for the communities.

4.1.2. Access to information

Every kind of media provides information that helps a community and people to protect their rights. Community Theatre media can give useful access to

[46] From in-depth interview of the director in September2003, see appendix-A, session no -8

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information on these problems as well. The state controlled mass media, or capitalist mainstream media, usually do not much care to produce media content for community empowerment; rather they like to focuses on incidents or worse situation for their interests or business policies. Some of them produce some media content but poor marginalized people might have very limited access to them. As Habermas pointed about the present context,

> Modern media fell under the sway of public relations, advertising and big business. Where as the early press had facilitated participation in reasoned public debate, the new mass media encourage consumer apathy, presented politics as a spectacle and provide pre-packaged, convenience thought. The media, in short, managed the public rather than expressed the public will (qtd. in Curran, 2002:34).

In this context I will focus about the lack of content in mainstream media for the rural communities from my field study and other related documents.

a. Alternative access and voice from lack of access in mainstream media

According to one of the first generation participants of *Dao Loog Gai*, "Most stories in TV programs are plays about the rich and urban life but most audience stays in rural area. So this (Community Theatre) is a kind of proper media and which can be two way communication with an audience." The same view comes from the audience and other members of the community. The volunteers said that their plays are different from other kinds of media because the stories are close to the daily life of the audience, and the plays used a dialogue that inspires the audiences more than other media.

Community Theatre enables access to practical information. In other words, it creates an environment of non-discrimination in the community. Here Makhampom's views are significant:

> In this era of global communications, the trend towards cultural production as a commercial tool for short-term consumption is resulting in a continual cultural transformation throughout societies. Whilst being a powerful and accessible medium for mass entertainment, cultural production must always be measured in terms of the impact on expression and communication, cultural identity and social change. As such, community theatre also becomes important in redressing the balance, such that cultural production reflects the expression of the people rather than the commercial industries,

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> the culture of the local community rather than the global mass media, and a progressive, participatory process of social change rather than an imposed, regressive form (Makhampom's 5thCommunity Theatre Study Tour, 2004).

From this concept above Chindawat study found that *Dao Loog Gai* giving an alternative access to the communities. As to her,

> The communities in the area of Nakhonthai are mostly migratory people. They do not have any local festival or social communication media. So, therefore *Dao Loog Gai* became community media for them, which present information to the communities along with entertainment. (Chindawat, 2003:72).

Such reality is very much like Habermas's "public sphere."[47] According to findings from the field, most of the audience have not seen any performance or theatre before, and only a few of them have seen the performance of *Dao Loog Gai* earlier.

Erven mentioned that "Bangkok is full of media, but the villages have nothing" (Erven,1992: 214). Further, public participation in mainstream media is very small. Somchai Homlaor has described this situation:

Media … is under the control of business sectors and State. In Thailand's constitution the ownership of media is different in practice as ownership of the media, half is being given to business sector and another half in the hand of the state. So, they found … very little space for the people (Homlaor, 2003). [48]

In fact, Thailand's media environment is very liberal as prescribed in constitutional legal framework. But in practice broadcast media is fully controlled by the State and by the army who owned most of the radio and television stations. As Sunai Pusak[49] analyzed in the context of the extra judicial killings in the war on drugs in 2003, the government enjoyed unprecedented control over the media and in particular broadcast media. The control of the media had limited the activities of civil society in Thailand. Within this situation, community radios are a growing concern in Thailand. But they have their own limitations

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[47] "Habermas develops the normative notion of the public sphere as a part of social life where citizens can exchange views on matters of importance to the common good, so that public opinion can be formed. This public sphere comes into being when people gather to discuss issues of political concern." (Thornton, 2004)

[48] Somchai Homlaor is a renowned civil society member of Thailand, former secretary general , Forum Asia, This statement was recorded by the researcher in December 2003, from the opening speech of an regional workshop on Democracy, human rights and role of media

[49] This statement was recorded by the researcher in December 2003, from a speech by Sunai Pusak at a regional workshop on Democracy, human rights and role of media

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too. They have no formal government policy to run their activity and getting pressured from present government to close their activity.

The above reality reveals that government control of the media causes an inadequate provision of information for the rural communities. This is evident in the development history of *Dao Loog Gai*. *Dao Loog Gai's* "Little frequency, Pitsanulok Boy/Girls" radio program was closed after just 4-5 months when Radio Thailand Pitsanulok station changed the programming (Chindawat, 2003: 44). There discrimination in the mainstream media to the communities. Thus mainstream Thai media fails to provide HRE to the rural Thai communities.

In this context Community Theatre is only media for the local people to share and access. Khun Jon, a senior volunteer of Makhampom, states that the youth in the community get their own voice by the process, where as usually the young generation do not have much voice in the society:

> In Thai culture people have the values to respect the elders. Another thing Thailand develop from the monarchical political process is that they will order people to do something, and you cannot say no. I think this culture still exists. Also, the education system in Thailand do not teach children about critical thinking, they just teach you to memorizes, like a bird … that is a main problem for the children because they have no idea how to stand up. For *Dao Loog Gai* the process is effective at different levels. Like for themselves, they understand that they have the ability to think, they stand up for their own rights…. And then they stand up for other people. They talk about the issue of AIDS in the community and become representatives for the vulnerable. They establish their own dialect. They even start to criticize the school system as well. That was quite successful (Jon, 2004).

In the context of Thai society and culture it is a revolutionary process. But there are some limitations of the process that I will discuss in the effectiveness part of this chapter.

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b. Provide health and social education

The study reveled that most of the problems in communities are about health and social issues. This section looks at how the CT media of *Dao Loog Gai* is providing a kind of health and social education.

Problems of the community: Amphetamine drugs (Yaba), HIV/AIDS, Child rights, Child prostitution and domestic violence

The performances and the plays of *Dao Loog Gai* mainly focused on the local social problems. Drug is a major problem in the Nakhronthai district of Pitsanulok province, and a common problem in Thailand. In Kheng Wa village out of 230 farmer families, 175 families dealt with drug (76%) (see appendix: C). [50] From a community discussion they figured out the basic cause and effect of the drug problem in 1997 when they start forming CT, the first generation of Dao Loog Gai. It was as follows:

> Failed in farming work → Parents have loans at banks or are bankrupt (borrower) → stress of pressure → Come to loggerheads → Father uses drug → Father becomes drug addict → Mother can not work alone → Suffering of children → Children become hopeless → Go to cities to find jobs → Live alone → Children Use drug → Community become weak → health problem (Makhampom, n.d).

This is a kind of viscous circle. A cyclic reality which still exists in the community. The volunteers admitted the situation during the field study. From their observation, most of the stories in the plays concentrate on the conflict of families whose parents are addicted to drugs and try to push their child to work like prostitutes, labor, or drug dealers so they can get some money. The audience also recognized the basic problem in their community such as amphetamines (which is locally named *Yaba*), HIV/ AIDS, child rights, child prostitution and domestic violence.

As the participants develop the story of performance according to their findings in community they can realize how deeply all these issues affected the community. So, when the old generation or senior people observed or enjoyed the performance they became happy that their children are concerned about their problems and young people will be careful about being involved in the problem.

[50] Survey done by Makhampom, 1997

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The positive sign in the community is that audiences are realizing the problems when they see the performances and they appreciated the process. Although no interviewee reacted or avoided the problems when they were been interviewed just after the performances but it does not mean that they do not have other problem or issues that need to address by Community Theatre media.

During the field study six teams of *Dao Loog Gai* performed six plays in two different villages of Nakornthai district in last week of August 2003 and first week of October 2003. All of the six plays mainly focused on the problem of drug addiction of the people in the communities which further caused other issues like domestic violence, dealing drugs, child prostitution, HIV infection and AIDS. According to view of the audience most of the plays showed teenage behaviors, child prostitution with AIDS, and degradation of social value during this time. Most of them identified two major issues that are "Drugs" and "AIDS". Some others pointed out the violation of child rights, and abuses like rape. All plays had a sequence of taking drug and getting HIV infection or using prostitutes.

About one third of the plays highlighted teenage drug addiction including drinking alcohol, and two thirds came up with domestic violence in the family, especially on women and girl-child caused by drugs. Besides these, according to some other audience there were local political issues in some of the plays. As every play consists of 15 minutes, each group cannot come up with more than three problems. From that limitation major, the issues are similar in the plays. These plays all address specific human rights: 1) right to health and care, 2) rights of child, 3) rights to non-discrimination and participation, 4) equal rights of women and 5) right to get social justice.[51] Richard Barber, the researcher of the group, pointed out that this process addresses freedom of speech, freedom to participate in community dialogue and strengthening community culture in response to globalization in the village level.

These discussions above justify that Community Theatre of *Dao Loog Gai* have many positive aspects. It empowers communities by raising awareness about social crisis; it gives access to information for the rural communities, and it provides a rights – based health and social education for the young people and other adult

[51] Audience survey of 6/8 people

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members of communities. It is also important that there is no other media that exist in the communities, for the communities, and by the communities like this.

4.2. Effectiveness as an educational tool among Thai society

As according to the "conscientization" concept of Paolo Friere, the purpose of education is not only literacy ,but also to understand and realize the social, economic and political situation which can enable people ideas on how to change their own situation. Community Theatre media can be a practical tool of "conscientization" or liberation. Richard Shaull explained this educational thought:

> There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of younger generation into the logic of present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes "the practice of freedom," the means by which man and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world." (Shaull, 1968: 15)

This explanation focuses the power of liberation in education. Augusto Boal who implemented this philosophy in theatre stressed that, "the theatre can also be an weapon of liberation. For that, it is necessary to appropriate theatrical forms," (Boal, 1985: ix). According to Friere there are two different types of education, literacy and realization. Although Makhampom ideologies were influenced by Frierian philosophy but they did not work for the first basic type, that of literacy, but rather mainly work on the realization processes by theatre media.

In terms of effectiveness as an educational tool, the response from the participants, parents and audiences are remarkable. The most important and positive response that is about its communicative power along with educative role. As to the participants and audience, the media is more communicative and interactive than other media like television or newspapers. They learn about their social rights like the rights of a HIV/AIDS patient as a member of the society, or the rights of children, and they get ideas how to preserve these. The stories or situations reflect problems of people in the community. As theatre itself is an interactive media so participants get feedback from the communities immediately. They are performing in their own dialect, which give the audience an easy and effective access.

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According to the teachers, traditional educational curriculum cannot provide such effective learning when the student are almost engaged with the textbooks and grading system. The audience spontaneously remark to the performance regularly as this is the only media they get easy and effective access, especially for remote rural communities where people do not have any other two-way communication access to information.

The coordinator and founder member of *Dao Loog Gai,* Khun Duangkae Bauprakhon thinks urban children cannot have the same success with community theatre because there is a lot of competition in urban areas. But for rural children, community theatre is an inspiration for them that make kids develop their imagination and practice their process of thinking. However, Community Theatre media might not be enough alone to educate some communities in crisis. As she opined, to eliminate some problems such as drugs in some red zone villages may not be easy by just using community theatre. There are some difficulties like the lack of participation among some villages.

Chindawat's study noted two types of impact by *Dao Loog Gai*:

> Well aware of positive impact of the media in sensitizing people at the community level to escape from adverse impacts of social problems, the group, therefore, works hard on the issue, especially on drug problems. The group feels highly confident that drama has a high potential to stimulate people in the learning process and to convince them to become aware of social problems of community, to mobilize cooperation among them, to realize the responsibility to preserve their community that previously unaware. (Chindawat, 2003:71)

Though the group was formed in 1997, *Dao Loog Gai* started working from 1999. Only one school of the Nakhonthai district has developed Community Theatre media in their education curriculum from 2003. So it is obvious the media itself did not get enough time to prove its potentiality, although the comment from the audiences, communities and volunteers proves that it is an effective educational tool. The process has been recently added as an alternative educational method in the school curriculum. Some of the parents and teachers worried that it could be a burden for the kids and family in terms of time and money both. My study reveals both positive and negative effect of this process.

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One negative aspect is Makhampom's limited use of the Frierein political model. Here Makampom's researcher, Barber viewed that in some aspect this process is Frierein as Makhampom rejected the hierarchical education and the education system in Thailand as regressive and destructive. What Makhampom has done is simply giving a young people an opportunity to tell the story and to analyze social problems in their community. It is Freirein in this sense. But the difference is the Frierein framework is based on the Marxist belief where Makhaompm's is not. Later on I will analyze this point in details.

a. Weak participatory approach

The participants of *Dao Loog Gai* opined that the process activates them to participate to community affairs. As detailed above there is an opportunity to publicly perform, to develop the skills and methods of public participation, and to develop the confidence of the young people. However, following discussion will critically analyze how effective the participatory approach is.

The production process

The process, discussed in chapter three, required the students to complete three steps: pre performance, performance and post performance. They get three days training for the process, with 19 different kinds of theatre games. In the evening of second day they develop the plan for theatre and collected data. On the last day in the morning they develop the play and in the evening performed the play. When they collect data from the communities they developed a relationship with people and communities. It is very crucial part, as they have to get personal information on family affairs that may be sensitive. So, they need to explain the motive to community that it is a part of learning from each other. It develops personal relationship skills and participation opportunities among the young and old people.

After that they develop the story or theme with the coordination of teacher, divide it into a sequence according to dialogue, and then rehearsal, make costumes, design make up, props, back drop, and music for the final presentation. Obviously this process raises their confidence and creativity. At the same time they set a date and

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place for performance. So, they need to consult with the village headmen, community leaders and youth groups, which also develops their organizing capacity.

On the day of performance the team reaches in the venue a minimum of 3 to 4 hours before performance. Then they fix the stage, musical instruments and backdrops or screen, audio instruments, and so on. Some of the performers sings some popular songs or country songs to cheer up and attract the audience. The performance starts in the evening with some musical chorus and most of the characters joined in. During the performance they need smooth teamwork. From the beginning to end of performance the role of communities are passive as audience. After the performance the community is invited to give feedback. They record the comments and they have instant evaluation among the team member that is recorded, too. On the next show they rearrange the play according to the suggestions and evaluation of the audience. The performance and production thus becomes a follow up participatory process, too. In general they do not get much time to interact with the audience as the volunteers and the facilitators teachers need to get back to their houses.

There are limitations of this approach. This production process is not an "endogenous"[52] development process. As Epskamp states, it does not stems from the autonomous process of the change within the community, an inside-out process. Rather it is project oriented, based on an outside intervention process. He remarks it is evident that "Initiatives here are based on decisions which are 'foreign' to the community target group" (Epskamp, 1989: 11). In such a context, this is exogenous development, from outside intervention. Here is the risk of weak participation. As Epskamp wrote,

> Some projects leave more room for an active contribution from the community or target group, and note the developments which are taking place locally. Here, use is made of a participatory approach. In other projects, the participation of the community or the target is limited to the minimum

[52] This is Epskamp's term, "During the last twenty five years there has been a perceptible tendency in developing countries to use theatre as an educative medium for social change and development. Worldwide, two different approaches in the use of theatre may be distinguished. The first approach stems from the autonomous process of change which, on a community level, originated inside-out. This is known as 'endogenous' development." (Epskamp, 1989: 11).

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> necessary and is operated along the lines of a strong interventional model in the modernization process. (Epskamp, 1989:11)

In that sense, in reality this Community Theatre process leaves a little room to participate for the communities or the local people. Communities just observe the performance and can give their opinion. They cannot take part in decision-making process to develop plays, they merely give suggestions. More over this participatory process is a kind of top-down intervention as the Makhampom volunteers go from Bangkok to facilitate training, and then Volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* visit communities to collect data to produce a play. Their production and performance process follow the lines of a strong interventional model in the modernization process as the audience have no direct participation. Also the participation is only output related - it is all about the final product and not how to make a final product. It is ends and not the means in that sense. This is evident from the criticism of Khun Prosakorn. As he explained,

> Makhampom process is not really participatory. The first question is who analyzes the problem, this is a top down process. Makhampom decide the questions, they analyze those, they train the local youth. During the training Makhampom decide the questions and data collecting method. They declared it as participatory as they collect data from community and they train youth to do the same thing that they did in the past. They are theatre people, they are not development workers, but they try to bring the issues from rural community. As it has become an identity of Makhampom, so they have to do this. And maybe one of causes is for funding (Prosakorn, 2004)

As to his analysis their notion of participation is not exactly like development participation, rather it is limited in to collecting data and involving people to ask for opinion. Moreover the duration of the performances are very limited, so the issues must concentrate on the problems of surface level in society.

The process of volunteership

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Community Theatre in Asia and Thailand runs mainly by the non-paid volunteers who are either committed to social development or develop career and life skill of their own. Its true that through the Community Theatre media the volunteer youth of *Dao Loog Gai* learn how to work in a team, how to do action research and how to apply their creativity for public awareness. Thus they learn about their community and participate in development process. This process inspires and educates young people about their rights and realities too. Even it is evident that some of the volunteers involved in the process become regular volunteers. It is an exceptional finding thateven though they never get any money for the work they continue their participation. Six senior and new volunteers of Makhampom were interviewed who opined that they liked to continue the participatory so they became fulltime or regular volunteers without expecting any recognition.

But there exists different facts also. As Erven notes "Many of the volunteers in Makhampom regard their internships as stepping stones to glamorous career in films and television…. One of its founding member is now important movie star" (Erven, 1992: 216). It is also evident that students of Theatre Art from public universities become volunteers of Makhampom because of its reputation and training process. One of the new volunteers of 2003 who is a student of Theatre said that, "I think I'm lucky that I get the chance to be a volunteer at Makhampom. It is a reputed group and it will add opportunities for my career." Moreover we need to analyze the basic cause of volunteership. Epskamp writes on volunteers:

> Local aid organizations in developing countries generally operate with a minimum paid, professional staff. They rely mainly on voluntary manpower. These NGOs often follow their own policies independently of the government aid organizations. Education played a major role in the objectives or project proposals of these development organizations, which often explicitly make a point of organizing their activities with a high degree of target group participation (Epskamp, 1989:24).

Although volunteer are committed, most of them are not professional. Most of them are active when they are students. But when they get into the career, which has no relationship with the theatre, they cannot continue, or they become seasonal workers or they volunteer according to their ability and time. So this kind of development

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activity actually cannot make them active participatory agents in the long run. Some of them may become paid staff to run the organizations out of their long term experience and dedication. Makhampom Theatre Group has few paid staff.

In case of first generation *Dao Loog Gai* volunteers, of the three former students of Intharatith Phitthayakom School (two males and one female) who were interviewed, one became a volunteer of Makhampom and trainer of Community Theatre. The other two expressed their deep feelings to be involved with the process again if they get any further opportunity. From the present generation of *Dao Loog Gai,* seven (5 males and 2 females) students were interviewed. Five wished to act more, but they do not consider to continue this process after passing high school. It is interesting that they said the community theatre gives them a chance to practice their skill in acting and they like it. So, it is obvious that fondness of acting is one of the main causes of participation for these young volunteers.

Even though some of the teachers who guide the teams in school said the participation of the non-interested young students is valuable, this does not clearly indicate self–mobilized participation, as to Kumar's view discussed in the chapter three. According to the teachers, some students were not interested in the process as they thought of it as an additional activity. But when they got involved they changed their mind and were interested. The field study reveals that former volunteers, the first generation of *Dao Loog Gai,* liked the process as well the acting because they can participate in community welfare processes.

The present generation mostly likes to act and the process provides an opportunity to practice it. There exist some different views, as some of the students and teachers do not like the process. According to the first generation members, "The new group of *Dao Loog Gai* may not intend to participate as a group." It reflects the participation of the present generation is degrading. Some of the teachers thought that the process might disturb the student's regular studies, as it required extra time from them. But they may not want to express their views as the director of the school promotes the process. This could be same from the teachers, but as most of them were former student of present director of the school they might not share their views with her as to the Thai cultural practice not to oppose a senior.

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The director of the school expressed her opinion that traditional education curriculum and system cannot give the opportunity to the students for their own community development and participation. She encouraged her students to be involved in this participatory process which enables them to think about how they can solve their own community problems with their means and efforts. From the findings above it is clear that leadership is one of the key factors, rather than participatory development processes. The discussion above points out that for the production and volunteering, community theatre could be stronger and more participatory.

b. Not an inside out process:

One of the major demerits of the formal education system is the top down process of education, for they are designed to develop students into productive elements of a capitalist economy. Obviously this process excludes them from their own community. Freire calls the traditional Western pedagogical principle "the Banking Concept of Education," in which "Knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing" (Erven,1992:13). Ervarn also considered that most educational systems in the developing world are, in fact, instruments of the status quo. Even Epskamps study about media and education argue the same realty. As he said, "Education, as well as media, both aiming to transfer information, are still regarded as magic charms of national development, the concept of development not from a Buddhistic, Hinduistic or Islamic perspective but from the Calvinist angle of economic growth and technological advancement" (Epskamp, 1989: 36). Chitrachinda remarks that the founding member of another Community Theatre group *Maya*, considered the limitation Thai education as, "It does not allow student to think creatively and independently." In this situation, although Makhampom's Community Theatre process emerged as an alternative and practical tool in non-formal education, it is limited too as it is not really inside out in practice.

The views of participants and volunteers revealed that the Community Theatre media has an immediate and easy access to any community level as the story of the plays are adapted from the reality of community and audience. As they use their local dialect for performance it can communicate to the audience and the participants as

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well as inspire them too. The action oriented interactive nature of Community Theatre development process as it is not different from formal development measure by formal educational institutes or NGOs, which are mostly top down in the nature.

As Paulo Freire pointed in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, open dialogue is an important emancipatory development instrument, and Community Theatre does not really allow the space of open dialogue, rather it narrows down peoples view in specific directions. According to Freire (1976:48), the educator's role is fundamentally to engage in a dialogue with the illiterate about concrete situations and simply to offer him the instruments with which he can teach himself to read and write. This teaching cannot be done from the top down, but only from the inside out, by the illiterate himself, with the collaboration of the educators (Epskamp, 1989:19-20). Here the field study reveals that it has been applied in the context of awareness rising only, not for creating an extensive dialogue.

After participants involved with the process learn themselves, they then cannot take the role of educators in communities without scheduled performances. And the theatre group does not regularly schedule performances Makampom's evaluation is mainly developed on the view of trained volunteers or from specific audiences just after the performances. In that sense their participation is limited. As Khun Prosakon analyses, their notion of participation is to collect data and just ask for opinions from people, though they involve youth in the process. Thus it cannot provide enough space to the local people to make their own decisions or control their resources, rather it is in danger of adopting the blue print approach that I mentioned in last chapter.

Even both Makhampom and *Dao Loog Gai* as facilitator and mobilizer can not foster active participation for the communities as it is top down process in nature. That is evident as *Dao Loog Gai* as mobilizer cannot really foster community-based action and serve as a link between communities as well as perform service delivery and other "external" support systems. Their activity is limited to providing information. It means that Makhampom as a facilitator cannot really develop close collaboration with the mobilizers of *Dao Loog Gai*.

Chinadawat's study and my field findings both suggest that the theatre develops capacity of young people in communities. No doubt that it develops thinking, makes the youth more confident, and develops personal communication skill

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in dialogue. So, the process can contribute to specific young groups in communities, to develop personal skill. It cannot work like the Freirian teacher activates the inherent capacity of oppressed target group. However, in no way does it change the position in society or the class structure for the youth.

From the view of theatrical media process: Partial participation

In this section of the chapter I intend to explore the implementation of Community Theatre media as tool for rights based education, in other words HRE. For the purpose I will not criticize the process from the artistic viewpoint, but rather from the artistic process. According to Schechner, the artistic process of theatre has a seven part sequence: training, workshops, rehearsals, warming-ups, performance, cooling-down and aftermath (1985:16). The analysis of the artistic process of community theatre of this study is discussed in the previous chapter about training, workshops, rehearsals, performance and aftermath. My study reveals that organizing group *Dao Loog Gai*, Makhampom or the school does not much care for accuracy of performance, rather they concentrate on the process. One of the main causes is that these are project-oriented activities and so they have time constraints. It is also difficult to get authority on acting within three days training. The students are very active and act on their creativity and imagination. In these aspects I rather mainly analyze the process instead of criticizing the quality of the production.

As a media tools theatre itself is action oriented. Augosto Boal pointed out that theatre is a very efficient weapon for liberation (Boal, 1985). But the question is can the Community Theatre process give the opportunity to liberate people from the existing crisis or the social structure of the community. Theatre makes the environment of “Dialogue” and from dialogue inspired people to take “Action”. According to development theatre activist Bakul, this process provides continuous theatrical activity of people to upgrade their standard of life (Bakul, 2001: 26). People see their situation through the process and pave a new way for their responsibility or duty. On the contrary the Community Theatre media process mainly focuses on sharing information and inspiring others to change their behavior to get an immediate solution to the problem instead of “Dialogue”. The performance cannot open the floor to “Dialogue” as it does not allowed audience to participate actively where people can

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analyze and then take “Action” to reach their expected goal. In other words this process does not go through the three steps: Theatre, Dialogue and Action. Rather it goes: Theatre, information sharing and social awareness. As the performers present the theatre and the audience gets the information, then communities develop their sense of rights and reality. Also the subject mater or the topics of plays are not criticizing the government or existing power structures, but rather the focus is on what is wrong in the community. The Community Theatre media process by Makhampom is limited from this point, the participatory process is low for the people as they are just observing performances mainly. I will now turn to the issue of what the consciousness and “conscientization” process can offer as a theatrical process.

Low “conscientization” and the seed of hope

Like every process of development media, Community Theatre media has its limitation and barriers. In the context of educational processes, although it has an impact on the communities, it does not prove how effective it is to solve the problems of the specific communities. The findings reveal that their work can be broadly seen to serve as:

1. A medium for transmitting development messages and
2. A ‘tool’ for training and capacity building.

When the students researched they identified HIV/AIDS, drugs, domestic violence, child rights and child prostitution as the main problems of communities. These issues supposedly come from the people of the communities themselves. As audience and communities pointed out, some vital issues like politics and poverty are avoided by the facilitators and mobilizes.

One major cause might that they are getting funds for doing theatre about AIDS, drugs, child prostitution and health concerning issues. It seems that if they get funds for doing human right education they will do it accordingly. And according to their statement, they are providing HRE in refugee camps too. It is not clear why they did not provide HRE in the communities as a major task. Their activities are reliant on funds. And reality might be that they are not getting any funds for doing theatre on basic problems like poverty or politics, or they are not interested to do that.

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Moreover, as the process of playmaking shows, the volunteers, the trainers, the group, and the structure of making play are a kind of top-down messages. Therefore there is no room for a Freirian "dialogue" with the spectators. The structure of play making formula can be found in the comment by volunteers and teachers as well when they said, "There is no exact message of the play. It assimilates general information to the audiences, and the story will always adapt to suit the audiences that will always change from place to place depending on the context and available information of the local problems." On the contrary only one volunteer said, "Most of the stories focus on the problem of drugs." The reality is that all of these crises derived from drug addiction, as I found that most of the families were involved with dealing drugs or had drug addictions. But the structural frame of those plays cannot reflect the root cause of these problems and also the proper solutions as well.

Chindawat claims that the plays devised by the *Dao Loog Gai* create a level of awareness which empowers them. According to her, "the group worked continuously from 1999 to present (2003), and during that five years it is so powerful in empowering people to solve the huge burdened [sic] social problems" (Chindawat, 2003: 71). According to some volunteer accounts, and findings from Chindawat's study, the following reasons for the supposed effectiveness might be: (a) people of the community can identify themselves with the stories drawn from their lives, (b) the plays are in local dialect and are easily communicable, (c) the performers are drawn from amongst them and the performance is given in a familiar environment. But these alone cannot be reasons for empowering. Surely, none of the reasons cited above reflect Chindawats's claim that the plays are "so powerful in empowering people to solve the huge burdened social problems."

Another point is that all issues are similar in their plays. Except HIV/AIDS, drugs, domestic violence, child rights and child prostitution, there are no other problems identified as basic problem of communities like poverty or even right to health. For example, as to Jerrimy Mock the root cause of getting drugs is the life style from forces that have come from outside to cover over the traditional way of living. Families are fragmented, breaking apart, because of the external pressure, which is that the cost of living is high, so now both parent have to work to support the family. And also from the internal pressure, they want to buy, so they decide to go out and

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work more (Mock, 2003). People work hard and they are getting addicted in Yaba/ amphetamines. This reality does not come up in their plays.

There is no in-depth analysis of the complexities of life. So it is obvious all these plays focus on the problems at surface level that does not really identify the root cause of the problems of communities. One of the main reasons for this could be when the *Dao Loog Gai* was formed it was funded to advocate problems of drugs and HIV/AIDS in the communities. But it seems that Community Theatre media cannot open its scope to stir up the volunteer's critical consciousness concerning social and economic reality, unity and action.

It also reflects the absence of political analysis in Makampom's TfD methodology. But political commitment was one of the major objectives of Makhampom which is mentioned in their statements, which I discussed in chapter three. They believe that Community Theatre can play a political role in people's "conscientisation" but in practice they do not always create it. Here we need to get the meaning of the Freirian jargon of "conscientisation". Henry A. Giroux, one of Freire's friends, and an educationist himself, summarized that in a participatory liberating education process, participants learn a "language of critique" of existing power relations and also a "language of possibility" for creating a new society. So, Freirian "conscientisation" can be understood as meaning the process of acquiring the language of critique to gain a genuine hope and to engage in new social struggles (Phnuyal, n.d). But in practice Makampom do not do this although their methodologies have tended to adapt this in their philosophy linking awareness through theatre.

As far as TfD is concerned, it seems that they have partially used a Freirean methodology by identifying the central problem not as oppression but as HIV/AIDS, and drugs, which are social issues, by converting 'dialogue' into 'information sharing', which is a neutral technique devoid of 'politics'. All of these are forms of information dissemination directed at adjusting to the existing social structure instead of transforming it. This process may or may not be intentional, for the Makampom volunteers themselves are caught up in a net of contradictions, for most of the volunteers are conscientious and committed to the vision, mission and goal of their Theatre Group, *Dao Loog Gai*. The positive aspect of the process is that although the

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urban middle class leadership and volunteers formed it, it is developed by the second-generation volunteers in rural areas. Compared with the Aranyak's Mukta Natak process in Bangladesh, Makampom's Community Theatre is successful in this aspect, for their process is more interactive and pro people. However this comparison should not be undertaken as every country's culture is different.

It is really an achievement that only within five years of practice of the Community Theatre process by the student volunteers, now Intharatith Phitthayakom School has taken on this process in their formal education curriculum. In September 2003 when I did the field study, they already done one month of this process. Around three hundreds students of this school have been practicing this process as a part of their alternative education. And it is a part of their 30% credit in education curriculum. This Community Theatre media process has been adapted in this school by the scope of Thai education reformation law. According to National Educational Law and mentioned in section 26 and section 27 [formulated 1999 and revised, (2nd edition) 2002], the Ministry of Education, Department of formal education, allowed this kind of process in the formal school that. It is says:

> basic education institutions shall be responsible for prescribing curricular substance relating to needs of the community and the society, local wisdom and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society, and nation (National Education Act of B.E. 2542, 1999).

So, in the context of need of the community and local wisdom Community Theatre media is adapted in the school. But it is a kind of test case indeed. Because only one school's Community Theatre media process may cover the whole sub district but not the district as whole.

There are some limitations of organizing the shows regularly. The director of the school tries to organize the shows in a different village every month. But there are factors like rainy season, managing transport, or contracting with the local people for show, performance time, examination of the students along with funding which make the process a kind of irregular media. These findings also consider that Community Theatre is a kind of exploratory research-oriented experimental media that has the possibilities and prospect of becoming a grass-root media of concerned communities.

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Besides these, there is some demerit within the process. The lack of follow up and further activity smake the skilled volunteer inactive when they pass secondary school. According to the volunteer who passed the school,

> As I am a founder of *Dao Loog Gai* I think that the present groups have some problems like most actors who complete their education from school and go to work in other places and some of them continue to study at the Bachelor level. They feel a lack of organizing the process because they have no budget and time to practice the play as before. That causes a lack of practice and practice for young blood of group should be careful consider such as this situation.[53]"

Out of three first generation volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* two of them expressed the same view. This is a kind of dramatic irony for the volunteers as when they become skilled performers they are getting out of school and there is no scope to participate in the process for them. As there no follow up process is available all of their acting and communication skill become useless. The Makampom Theatre Group or the *Dao Loog Gai* do not have future plans of activity to use those skilled volunteers or young people. Where most of the member of first generation *Dao Loog Gai* expresses their concern about this: "The discontinuity of training and practice for young bloods should be carefully considered."

As far as Human Right Education is concerned, through Community Theatre media, it seems that people of the community and even the trainer volunteers do not have clear idea of human rights, but these processes make them aware of their specific rights or increase a sense of rights. The study reveals that although people of the community, volunteers, teachers, parents does not have exact idea they are concerned about individual rights as well as civil and political rights. According to the volunteers of first generation *Dao Loog Gai*, "Human rights are something that everyone already has and that should not threaten to other people's rights, that is he has right to say something to the public but that statement should not break other individual rights or transgress the law." This is about the individual rights. They also mentioned about civil and political rights. One volunteer said, "It is like the rights to live as a citizen in

[53] Wuttipong Chantharungsri (Pen), Patrawat Boonart (Boy) and Sudai Thinnamsai (Jai)'s view and remark, See appendix-A,interview session-1,2 &3

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their own country, rights to use the explain what he think in the public, rights on they own body, etc. that should not threaten to other people's rights." More interesting finding is that they pointed three things about rights,

a) everyone deserves to protect their rights

b) we need to be carefully about putting them into practice

c) community theatre can address some knowledge of Human Rights as well.

For the new volunteers, Community Theatre raises their sense of rights. Two new girl volunteers of class 8 who have been involved for over 3-4 month, and who play as girls infected by HIV disease and women who involve with the violent in family, explicitly shared that both of them do not understand the meaning of human rights. But they heard about the child rights and they recognize that rape, or parent obligations are rights, and they know the protection of rights according to the story that they play, like the violent family is against the child and women rights. Five other volunteers of age 13-15 interviewed said that they do not understand the meaning of human rights, but they know the protection of rights according to the story that they perform. Community Theatre makes them aware of their social and individual rights, especially about the major problems of communities.

The director of the school described the educational aspects of Community Theatre media. She explained that every performance would give some alternative solutions for the audiences to think about. The story of violence in most families come from the drunk men, so to minimize the problems men should avoid drink. For HIV disease, patients should not be marginalized from their communities because it cannot be infected through breathing or touching. This makes the communities more rational and creates peace among them. For the solution to drugs, there are some alternative solutions that are given by the students.

In fact like the young volunteer it is effective for the general people such as the farmer or the working class people. Because most of them do not even know about human rights. The study reveals that around 50% of the interviewed audience, (4 out of 9) who are farmers, or belong to working class do not even know the term human rights, but obviously they are concerned about violations of rights according to their reality and experience. Community Theatre media helps them to get the proper

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information, especially about the problem of communities that make them aware of individual and social rights. It is evident in their spontaneous responses such as

a) next time they should play about the political situation,

b) next performance should address kid's gratitude[54]

c) they should have more clear conclusions and alternative solutions to the problem

d) next play should be equal right of women.

From the discussion it is evident that Makampom's community Theatre process does not create scope to raise consciousness about the cause of their dispossession as to TfD expert professors Prentki's view of empowering people for social change. As he believes, "Instead, the task of TfD is to supply a vehicle through which the dispossessed and marginalized cannot only assert their rights as human beings but also raise their consciousness about the political cause of their dispossession" (Prentki, 2004). The processes is limited in this aspect.

But in the context of Thailand, the necessity of this type local or community media is obvious. It does not empower the people to change their situation that much, but this is the easiest way to exchange development information for the communities. This relates to the practice of Travedan Buddhist culture where people do not like to criticize about any problems or they adapt the culture of 'Be smart Play Safe'[55] without offending anybody in power. In that case Community Theatre media could be a way out or public sphere for affected remote communities. According to the final comment of Makhampom's volunteer, they believe in the efficiency of Community Theater to develop society and they expect to widespread of this activity in every region of the country. As Pradit Prasartthong said, "There are few groups of Community Theater that can perform in only some part of this country and there still a lot of places to perform. So if there is a lot of groups that will help more effectively to communicate the society."

[54] This suggestion comes from the interview of the audience on September 2-3,2003, in the field area

[55] See (Jaran Ditapichai, 2000: 7)

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CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

5.1. Conclusion

Every research has its limitation and by including all these facts I will try to come to the conclusion of this study, and then come up with a few suggestive remarks. There will not be any formal recommendation in this thesis. On a personal note, in the course of completing my research at the Human Rights and Social Development program of Mahidol University I always tried to be concerned about Thai culture with full respect and willingness. This research was accepted by the concerned Makhampom theatre group, who formally allowed and co-operated with me to carry out this research. However, if anyone feels aggrieved from this discourse I beg apology for that as a part of my limitation, as I really come from the other side of Asia, South Asia.

Studying the Theatre for Development process carried out by Makhampom Theatre Group in Thailand as a case study, this thesis provided a critical analysis of their Community Theatre process. In doing so focus on their project in Pitsanulok province, the *Dao Loog Gai* youth group, and focus on analyzing the role of Makhampom in promoting Human Rights Education for the rural Thai communities.

In searching for a constructive framework in analyzing the role and limitation of Makhampom Theatre Group, the thesis firstly explored theories of development theatre and human rights education along with the history, development and ideologies of Makhampom Theatre Group. After that, it constructed a systematic analysis of the Community Theatre process of Makhampom in developing Human Rights Education.

The thesis formulated the conclusion that the development theatre implemented by the Makhampom Theatre Group develops community culture, in response to globalization at the village level of Thailand. However, the process does

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not properly comply with the rights based approach to participation and thus empowerment although their commitment and ideologies based on people's participation and empowerment. In this context Makhampom Theatre Group as conveyer of Human Rights Education is not strong.[56] Their process does not really become an agent for social change or reformation, rather it works as a medium of capacity building and conveying information.

One of the main reason of such limitation, as the researcher Richard Barber states, is mainly because the volunteers do not come out of that education process really aware of Human Rights Education. But it is also true that they do not have knowledge of participatory development. However, the positive aspect of their activity is the development of rural young people. This kind of activity develops capacities and values of young people in the communities and thus preserves cultures. The process in the end can exert a positive influence in this aspect.

This research has also found that Makhampom's Community Theatre process becomes a kind of project-oriented activity driven by fund from donors. This adds to their limitation. As to the views of the skilled volunteers, they become inactive when they pass high school, as they do not have any follow up projects or plans for them.[57] This is an irony of the process, especially for the young skilled volunteers. Moreover, these kinds of activities make the people neutral about politics. As study found that Makhampom claimed to develop a sort of Freirein methodology, but this becomes pseudo Freirein in practice. These limitations might not be intentional as they have to struggle with existing government and fund crisises at the same time.

This study reveals that MTG's political commitment turned them to do this kind of educational theatre. But at the same time the funding crisis forced them to adopt issues based activities. We can compare them in the context and reality of The Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA). Cecile Guidote who had dreamed of a theater that would reach the people founded the Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) in 1967. It is a non-profit and non-governmental theater organization; a registered institution based in the Republic of the Philippines. Right now they have above 70 active members who thrive on the spirit of kapatiran

[56] From in-depth interview of researcher Richard Barber, September,2004, see appendix-A, session -18
[57] from interview of 3 first generation volunteer of Dao Loog Gai, September, 2003

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(sister/brotherhood/solidarity). But even if theater is their passion, passion cannot sustain their practical needs. Some of them are also active in broadcast, film, advertising, education, community and development work, and various organizations and movements for children, the youth, women, gender, indigenous people, human rights and the environment (PETA, 2004).

Makhampom have the same reality too. That's why from 1997 they have changed their policies or strategies for survival. In the present phase, which started from 2002, they also started to work towards sustainability by developing a new generation leadership, financial strategy and professionalism. However, Makhampom, never worked on the politically controversial human rights violations issues, like for example the problems of Muslim community of South Thailand. Even right now when they are more organized, they do not have any plan to do so. Probably the main cause is not to make conflict with government, as they follow a soft policy. This is the time to take action and update their ideologies and methodologies. The positive point is that they have good workforce of 60 volunteers right now; it is increasing day by day. In this respect they need to revise and rearrange their rights base community theatre activities.

In the context of Human Rights Education in Thailand this research found that awareness has been increased on the importance of human rights education during the Decade of Human Rights Education. The mid level evaluation of the decade recommended that, Human Rights Education should be introduced in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools on a compulsory basis. Teachers should be given the choice of programs but not the choice of not teaching Human Rights Education. Actually over the first five years of the decade of Human Rights Education, a large number of countries have incorporated Human Rights Education into pre-school, primary and secondary school level curricula, either as a cross-curricular theme, an optional course, or as "attainment targets" in the overall curriculum.

And as a part of this discourse a National Committees for Human Rights Education and National Plans of Action exist in Thailand. The strategic plan of National Human Rights Commission of Thailand (2002-2007) mentioned that:

> Academic institutions should support studies and research on human rights development nationally and internationally, encourage human rights education

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at all levels by integrating the issue in their curriculum, and give recommendations to the government concerning the necessary changes to improve human rights protection. (NHRC,2004).

Also a major objective of the six-year Strategic Plan is to reduce cases of human rights violations and to develop a culture of human rights as a way of life in the Thai society. The NHRC has specified five focus areas for their work as follows:

- Children, youth and family
- Law and justice system
- Social policy
- Natural resource base and the community rights
- Human rights education. (NHRC, 2004)

These focus points combine three topic that I discussed before in this thesis, children and young people, community, and human rights education. So there are very positive aspects to advocate human rights education through theater media in communities by co-opting as a part of formal education in primary and secondary educational institutes in Thailand. Thailand as well as Makhampom theatre should avail themselves to these opportunities to be the pioneer of promoting Human Rights Education through theatre.

Although the *Mukta Natak* of Aranyak in Bangladesh was empowering it failed. Here Makhampom's community theatre process is growing as their target groups are young people. However, the sustainability of *Dao Loog Gai* becomes possible because of leadership and remoteness, where young people have no other opportunities. It is important that *Dao Loog Gai* can grow from their own community level, otherwise it might be disappear like middle class originated *Mukto Natok* movement in Bangladesh. The first generations volunteers already express their anxieties about this. And the field study reveals that the interest of present generation already decreases as an effect of foreign interventional into development projects. The role of Makhampom as facilitator is not really effective and does not really make the bridge within mobilizers of *Dao Loog Gai* because of top-down development activity.

However, as far as *Dao Loog Gai* are concerned, this kind of theatre activity will exist as long as inhumane child prostitution and drug use will remain in the communities, and fund and volunteers are available for the activity. This kind of

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activity might develop their capacity but cannot bring forth economic freedom and sustainability. According to Epskamp[58] and other experts development, even TfD should include economic development and freedom. In that aspect this process has limitations too, where it cannot stop the sale of a seven years girl.[59] However, the skilled volunteers are getting an opportunity to practice their skills in communities where they adapt traditional community performance in their style.[60]

From the discussion above, the *Dao Loog Gai* need a theatre which would not rely on HIV/AIDS and social issues but look at the spirit of *Dao Loog Gai* in acting, inspire and activate the new generation, and make people aware of basic problems that develop their consciousness to address political issues. Chindawat mentions that in Nakornthai there is no indigenous or local performing arts as most of the people are migrant. However, my field study has a different finding. Most of the first generation volunteers of *Dao Loog Gai* and more than one-third community people mentioned about local drama. They mentioned community theatre activities remind them about the old style traditions among villagers like community musical performance. It is very important for them to find out or revive that traditional musical performance. I suppose if they can regenerate that kind of traditional performance it will be a life spirit of their communities. And if they can reform that the process through Makhampom's empowering community theatre, it is obvious that the theatre group can become a genuine guiding star (*Dao Loog Gai*) not only for the Pitsanulok but for Thailand. I would like to bear this dream for *Dao Loog Gai*.

From the discussion above I have suggestive remarks as bellows.

5.2. Suggestive Remarks

5.2.1. Makhampom Theatre Group, and *Dao Loog Gai* may update their participatory methodology in the context of latest practical Theatre for Development theories and practice. As their works is mainly for community rights they need to

[58] see figure and explanation in Chapter -2
[59] A seven year old girl being sold for prostitution Pradit Prasartthong, said to the local press at Edinburgh Festival in 1994, source: Makhampom's publication, 2004
[60] From the information of Aj. Pornrat Damrhung, advisor to MTG, December 03, 2004

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develop the concepts of participatory development, Human Rights and necessity of Human Rights Education. They might explore the notions of participation in community development. As Theatre of the Oppressed process already has been developed by ARRC in their Human Rights Education curriculum for Asian communities so, it might be great to know their methodology for Human Right Education and empowerment of rural Thai communities to foster social reformation and look for the possibilities for reforming their own process.

5.2.2. Each play should last at least 30 minutes, containing more characters clarification and root causes of problems along with solutions in depth.

5.2.3. Explore other possible processes like image theatre of August Boal according to researcher Richard Barber's view.[61]

5.2.4. *Dao Loog Gai* could adapt their methodology with participatory Theatre for Development processes having a scope of creating "Dialogue" for ensuring the sustainable empowerment of communities.

5.2.5. *Dao Loog Gai* may develop a more interactive assessment strategy.

[61] from in-depth interview of Richard barber, September,2004

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX-A: List of interviewees

Key informants Group

a). The existing and former volunteers ofDao Loog Gai, Nakhornthai

a.1) Former Performers and volunteers

Session no	Name / identity	Age/Sex	Background/ Occupation
1	Wuttipong Chantharungsri (Pen)	21 /M	Class 12/ volunteer: Integrated media/ Actor and trainer.
2	Patrawat Boonart (Boy)	19/M	Student: Naraysuan University/ Volunteer: Iintegrated media /Actor
3	Sudai Thinnamsai (Jai)	20/F	Student: Ratchjabhat Institute, Volunteer :Integrated media/ Actor

a.2) Existing performers and volunteers

4	2 girl students	14/F	Class 8/ Sri -Intratit Pitayakom School/Actress
5	5 students: Pichai, Tup, Tarn (male) and Tal, Yen (female)	13-15/m/f	Class 7-9/ Sri -Intratit Pitayakom School/ Actors and actresses

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b) Parents of Community Theatre participants in Pitsanulok

6	Kor's/ an actress's mother	34/F	Class 12 / farmer
7	Host volunteer's parents	30,36 /F,M	Primary level of Education, Farmer

c) The teachers of the Sri-Intratit Pitayakom School in the field area of Pitsanulok,

8	Sunet Thongkumpong	50+/F	B. A. / Director of Sri -Intratit Pitayakom School /Stage organizer
9	A male teacher (do not want mention his name)	35 +	Bachelor degree/ Teacher: Sri - Intratit -Pitayakom School
10	Ajahn Wanida	31/F	Bachelor degree/ Teacher: Sri - Intratit -Pitayakom School / Trainer
11	Lumyai Kudchachun	35/F	B.A. / Teacher: Sri-Intratit Pitayakom School / Trainer

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d) Volunteers: Makhampom (three generations)

Seniors and executives

12	Pradit Prassatong	43+/M	B.A./ Artistic Director, Senior Volunteer and perfomer for last 24 years
13	Duangkae Bauprakhon	30+/F	B.A./ Volunteer of Intregrated Media, founder c-ordinator :*Dao Loog Gai*
14	Khun Guay	30+/M	B.A./ senior volunteer: Makhampom/ actor/trainer
15	Khun Jon	25 + F	B.A. /Senior volunteer/ Makhampom/ actor/trainer

Mid level and new comers

16	Sonthaya Suchada (Son)	30/M	B.A./ volunteer of Makhampom/ 9 years/ actor
17	Khun Maoy	34/F	B.A./ volunteer of Makhampom/ 12years/ actress
18	Richard Barber	M	Researcher + Resident foreigner of Makhampom
19	Narissorn Srichantorn	36/F	B.A./ volunteer of Makhampom/ 2years/ actress

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e) Resource persons from Thai development field

20	Vachararutai Boontinand	F	Action aid –Thailand, PO,
21	Pasakorn Intoo-Marn	30+ M	Theatre academic, former volunteer of Makhampom

Audience Group

a) First evening of performance: September 2, 2003 at Pong Kra Chur village

22	First audience (donot tell name)	29/M	Class 4/ Farmer
23	Second audience (donot tell name)	38/F	Class 4/ Farmer
24	A former head of village: Dumrong Medong (Nakornthai municipality)	39/M	Class 12/Farmer
25	Sri-Intratit Pitayakom school driver	45/M	Class 4/Driver

b) Second Evening of Performance: September 3, 2003 at Wat Hua Rong

26	Lucksa Youked	41/F	B.A./ Shopkeeper
27	Tassapon Moungkan (Big)	19/M	Class 12/ Student
28	Somporn Medong	19/M	Class 12/ Student
29	Khun Leang	56/F	Farmer

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APPENDIX-B

Research questions

Key informants Group

a) For general Participants /Performer/ Volunteer/ Teachers and Parent

(Sample size: 2 person from each group, 2x3=6)

1. Do you know what Human Rights are?
2. Did these/this play address any Human Rights?
3. What was the play about?
4. What do you want the audience to learn?
5. What is the exact message of the play?
6. What are the social problems according to this play?
7. Does the process of developing the play inspire you?
8. Does the process of developing the play disappoint you?
9. What you learned from the play you think that change your opinion?
10. Did the play process change your mind about anything? If yes what are those? If no why?
11. If you have participated/ observed theater performance / process before? Did you observe any kind of change in community by this process?
12. What is the exact message of the play?
13. What do you think about the. ……..Character of the play? (Refer according to the content)
14. What do you think about……action of the play? (Refer according to the content)
15. How this process is different in terms of communication from TV, Radio and newspaper?
16. Comments/ Recommendation

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Some more specific question added to specific resource person

(Sample size: 1 person from each group, 1 x 5=5/ Makhapom's director, Director of the school, Researcher of Makhampom, Thai Development Theatre academic-expert, Civil Society Executive working with Makhampom)

- Objective of Makhampom's work
- How do Makhampom develop their project's and evaluate them
- Relation or link between Makhampom's process and Human Rights Education
- What process do Makhampom exactly follow for their work (TFD, TO or others)
- Impact and effectiveness of Makhampom's work: how do they evaluate

Audience Group

(Sample size: 2 person from each age group, 2x3=6)

1. Do you know what Human Rights are? A) If yes what is that / if no why:
2. Did these/this play address any Human Rights? A) If yes what are those:
3. What was the play about?
4. What is the social problem according to this play? What are the other problems?
5. What is the exact message of the play?
6. What you learned from the play you think that change your opinion?
7. Did the play change your mind about anything?
   A) If yes what is that: B) If no why it didnot change your mind?
8. If you have seen/observe theater performance / process before? Did you observe any kind of change in community by this process?
9. What do you think about the… (Evil) character of the play?
   Question related to Human Rights violation
10. What do you think about … action of the play?
    Question related to Human Rights violation
11. What Specific Human Rights they addressed in the play?
12. How this process is different in terms of communication from TV, Radio and Newspapers?
13. Comments/ Recommendation

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APPENDIX- C

Survey outcome in Ban Kaeng Wa community (done by Dao Luk Kai group):

Population	728 persons,	314 men, 414 women
No. of amphetamine addicts	122 persons	
No. of amphetamine sellers	17 persons	
No. of both addicts and sellers	6 persons	
No. of people related to amphetamine	145 persons	19,91% population in village
No. of people unrelated to amphetamine Family	583 persons	80,09% population in village
Kaeng Wa Village has	230 houses	
No. of families related to amphetamine	175 persons	76,06%
No. of families unrelated to amphetamine	55 persons	23,91%

Source:

Act Theatre Company / MAKHAMPOM THEATRE GROUP DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL: SITUATION ANALYSIS, 1997

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APPENDIX-D: Right to HRE in International Instruments

Article 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):

> Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious group, and shall further the activities of United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 13(1) of the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) contains a formulation similar to Article 26(2) of the UDHR, adding reference to human dignity, participation in a free society, and ethnic groups. Both Articles appear in the context of right to education. Article 13(1) of CESCR reads as follows:

> The State Parties of the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to full the development of human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamentally freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 7 of the 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All forms Racial Discrimination (CERD) reads as follows:

> State Parties undertake to adopt immediate and effective measures, particularly in the field of teaching, education, culture and information, with a view to combating prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial or ethnical

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> groups, as well as propagating the purposes and principles of the Character of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and this Convention.

The UNESCO Declaration is rich in provisions about human rights education. In Article 5, paragraph 2 of the 1978 UNESCO Declaration on Race Racial Prejudices reads as follows:

> States, in accordance with their constitutional principles and procedures, as well as other competent authorities and entire teaching profession, have responsibility to see that the educational resources of all countries are used to combat racism, more especially by ensuring that curricula and textbooks include scientific and ethical considerations concerning human unity and diversity and that no individual distinctions are made with regard to any people; by making the resources of the educational system available to all groups of the population without racial restriction or discrimination; and by taking appropriate steps to remade the handicaps from which certain racial or ethnic group suffer regard to their to their level of education and standard of living and in particular to prevent such handicaps from being passed on the children.

Article 5(3) on the mass media and Article 6(2) on the use of education and the culture in eliminating discriminatory practices and in encouraging the dissemination of knowledge and finding of research in the education research programs also emphasize on Human Rights Education.

In Article 10 of the 1979 Convention on he Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEWDA), as a part of an effort to ensure to women equal rights with men and in the field of education, the State parties agree to eliminate ‘any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education…by the revision of textbooks and school programs and the adaptation of

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teaching methods…' Article 5 refers to family education leading to ' a proper understating of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing of their children…'

Article 31 of ILO Convention concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in independent Countries (no. 169) provides:

> Educational measure shall be taken among all sections of the national community, and particularly among those that are in most direct contact with the peoples concerned, with the object of eliminating prejudice that they may harbour in respect of this people s. To this end, efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and culture of these peoples.

Article 30 of the Convention also address aspects of human rights education for indigenous and tribal peoples.

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Appendix-E: a) Map of Nakhronthai, Pitsanulok

b) and Photograph of Activities

Clockwise: 1.Reharsal, 2. Performance-1, sequence–child prostitution,

3. Performance -2, Sequence- getting drugs,/yaba, 4. Post performance photo

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APPENDIX-F: Glossary

CT	Community Theatre
CBO	Community Based Organization
CESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
Grips theatre	One of the best-known children's and youth community theatre movement in Germany and around the world
GMMP	Grassroots Micro Media Project
HRE	Human Rights Education
INGO	International Non-Government Organization
ITI	International Theatre Institute
ILO	International Labor Organization
MTG	Makhapom Theatre Group
TfD	Theatre for Development
TIE	Theatre in education
TO	Theatre of the Oppressed
NGO	Non Government Organization
Panchayat	Community leaders forum of village in India and Bangladesh
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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BIOGRAPHY

NAME AHMED ABIDUR RAZZAQUE KHAN

DATE OF BIRTH 2 January 1968

INSTITUTION ATTENDED University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

B.A. (Hon's in Philosophy with subsidiary

Subjects: a.Theatre b.English Language), 1994

M.A. (Philosophy), 1995

Mahidol University, Thailand, (2002-2003)

M.A. (Human Rights and Social Development)

HOME ADDRESS 1355-B/, Umno /5,

Khilgaon,Taltola

Dhaka-1219

Bangladesh

Tel: 88-02- 7211558 (res)

E-mail : aarumee@hotmail.com

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