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USING AUGUSTO BOAL-BASED THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT METHODS TO MEDIATE THE INTRODUCTION OF FUEL-EFFICIENT COOK STOVES IN CHAJUL, GUATEMALA: PROVOKING ACTION THROUGH AN ETHICAL INTERVENTION

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Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Colorado at Boulder in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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**USING AUGUSTO BOAL-BASED THEATRE FOR DEVELOPMENT METHODS TO MEDIATE THE INTRODUCTION OF FUEL-EFFICIENT COOK STOVES IN CHAJUL, GUATEMALA: PROVOKING ACTION THROUGH AN ETHICAL INTERVENTION**

written by Jason M. Bisping

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Janna Goodwin

Date: __________

The final copy of this dissertation has been examined by the signatories and we find that both the content and the form meet acceptable presentation standards of scholarly work in the above-mentioned discipline.

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Using Augusto Boal-Based Theatre for Development Methods to Mediate the Introduction of Fuel-Efficient Cook Stoves in Chajul, Guatemala: Provoking Action through an Ethical Intervention. Bisping, Jason M. (Ph.D., Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Colorado at Boulder)

Dissertation directed by Dr. Beth Osnes, PhD

Abstract

This dissertation examines how theatre for development methods, developed and influenced by Augusto Boal, were employed to provide energy-oppressed people with opportunities to reflect and take action to improve their lives. Specifically, this research study examines two theatre for development interventions conducted in Chajul, Guatemala, where I worked with indigenous citizens of Chajul and a host nongovernmental organization, Limitless Horizons Ixil, to create theatre pieces that confronted people’s home energy-use habits, focusing, specifically, on the dangers of indoor air pollution caused by the use of open fires in homes. The first intervention occurred during a seven-day trip to Chajul in July 2009, and involved devising and staging an original play, “Life with a Cookstove/Life without a Cookstove,” that was presented to more than 300 community members. The second intervention, which took place over ten days in June 2010, consisted of staging original theatre pieces in people’s homes around their open fires. In addition to using theatre as an educational tool, information was collected about people’s attitudes and behaviors related to indoor air pollution and cookstoves. Additionally, the theatre interventions gave people the opportunity to practice taking action to reduce dangers associated with indoor air pollution in their homes through the proposed use of cookstoves.
This investigation provides insight into common theatre for development practices that can be used in Latin America, a portion of the world that has been significantly understudied, and with other underrepresented populations around the world that are not accustomed to using theatre to reflect on their home energy use or other significant issues of concern in need of action. Additionally, this research assisted Limitless Horizons Ixil to achieve its development goals of reducing indoor air pollution in Chajul through the introduction of cookstoves in an ethical and sustainable way. As the only study on using theatre for development methods to introduce, investigate, and promote cookstoves as an appropriate and sustainable energy technology, this research serves as an example of employing participatory and ethical theatre for energy justice methods to provide people with opportunities to reflect on and take action to solve their energy needs.
Dedication

To Colet, Amelie, and Juliet,

and to my mother Ruth Ann.
Acknowledgments

There are many people who helped me write this dissertation. Many helped make it better and without the help of some, it would never have happened. I would like to acknowledge the best of you. Beth Osnes, thank you for including me in your research, inviting me to Guatemala and inviting me into your family. You are amazing. Larry Frey, thank you for serving as a second advisor to me during the long process of researching and writing my dissertation. The time you spent editing the text and working with me is much appreciated, and your hard work has made this dissertation better than I could have imagined it could be. I would also like to thank my other committee members, Oliver Gerland, Lorraine Bayard de Volo, and Janna Goodwin. Oliver, you have been a wonderful mentor over the past seven years, and you were one of the reasons I came to Colorado. Thank you Oliver for serving as my Master’s Thesis advisor, for serving on my committee and being a great professor. Lorraine, thank you for guiding me through feminist theory and joining us in the theatre department as a committee member and as a stage mom. Janna, I am glad we were stranded in the airport together last summer. I truly appreciate your guidance over the last year and look forward to collaborating with you for many years to come.

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Finally, to my lovely family. I cannot thank you enough for all that you have done. You were there, so you know how hard it is to finish a PhD in four years. Everything I do is for you, and this is your dissertation as much as it is mine. I love you.
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Chapter One

Introduction

It is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection: only then can it be a praxis. (Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 65)

This research study examines how theatre methods developed by Augusto Boal provide energy poor people with opportunities to reflect on and take action to improve their lives. In the quote presented above, Boal’s teacher and frequent collaborator, Paulo Freire, described how oppressed groups can take action to liberate themselves. First, oppressed people must realize how they are being oppressed and by whom before they can liberate themselves. Freire said that this process of liberation “must include serious reflection” and “must involve action” before it can be a *praxis*, which is defined as “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (51).

Boal used Freire’s view of praxis to create theatre methods that were detailed in his book *Theatre of the Oppressed*. The title paid homage to Freire’s book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, with the proposed methods based on the idea that theatre can facilitate social change if audience members, like Freire’s students, are given opportunities to be active participants, essentially becoming performers themselves. Boal called this hybrid of spectator and actor a “spect-actor” (*Aesthetics* 6), and he developed theatre methods that engaged spect-actors in reflection and action to reveal and remove oppression (*TO* 155). As Boal explained, “Perhaps theatre is not
revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action” (TO 122).

Boal and Freire were Marxists, and their emphasis on “revolution,” as Boal described it, was not necessarily my goal in using theatre of the oppressed (TO) methods to design theatrical interventions for community members in Chajul, Guatemala. However, Boal’s TO methods of creating spect-actors, and the methods established by the field of theatre for development (TfD), were well suited for working with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) and a group of people with no experience performing or taking action to improve their lives. Specifically, this research study examines two TfD interventions conducted in Chajul, Guatemala, where I worked with indigenous citizens of Chajul and a host NGO, Limitless Horizons Ixil (LHI), to create theatre pieces that confronted people’s home energy-use habits, focusing, specifically, on how fuel-efficient cookstoves can reduce dangers associated with indoor air pollution (IAP) produced by open fires\(^1\) in people’s homes.

In this introductory chapter, I detail how fuel-efficient cookstoves are widely considered to be the most appropriate and sustainable technology capable of removing IAP from homes. Annually, IAP kills millions of people around the globe, and it is the leading killer of people in Chajul. After establishing the need for cookstoves and reduced levels of IAP in Chajul, I detail how TO methods can help citizens of Chajul to reflect on their situation and to take action to reduce IAP in their homes through cookstove purchase.

**The Genesis of the Project**

This project began as an assignment in a graduate seminar on Asian Theatre at the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU-Boulder). Adam Reed, a fellow at the Center for Environmental and Energy Security (CEES) at CU-Boulder spoke to our class about the dangers

\(^1\) See photographs 16, 17, 18, and 23 for examples of open fires.
of IAP and how fuel-efficient cookstoves were seen by many as a sustainable solution. Reed explained that over half of the people in the world’s cook on open fires inside their homes and that the smoke produced is killing people. According to Reed, an inexpensive, fuel-efficient cookstove had been proven to reduce the amount of IAP and to save lives.

The theatre side of this project began when my professor and advisor, Dr. Beth Osnes, asked the class, “How could theatre help this cookstove venture?” CEES was working on a cookstove project in India, and Osnes used Reed’s presentation to give class members background information about how the majority of people in Asia live, and to challenge us to use traditional forms of Indian theatre and TfD methods to address some of those problems. Other members of the class and I researched which traditional forms of Indian theatre could be used with TfD methods and we presented this information for the final project. After the semester ended, I was the only student who continued to work on the project, attempting to get funding to go to India and, simultaneously, learning as much as possible about cookstoves, IAP, and TfD.

In early 2009, after several failed grant proposals to partner with CEES in India, I was funded through Mothers Acting Up and Philanthropiece Foundation to accompany Osnes and several Philanthropiece representatives on a trip to Guatemala. Osnes was a cofounder of Mothers Acting Up, whose organizational mission, according to its website, is to “mobilize mothers to act on behalf of the world’s children.” The Philanthropiece Foundation funded Osnes’s Mother Tour, in which she travelled the United States and the world, holding vocal empowerment workshops for women and performing a one-woman show. During the vocal empowerment workshops, Osnes educated women on how to use their full-embodied voice to identify and take action on their most passionate concerns. Osnes’s one woman show, *M-other*, explored “what it might just take for the mothers of one country to authentically care about the
mothers and children of another country” (“MOTHER tour”). The trip to Guatemala, in many ways, was the pinnacle of Osnes’s tour and her collaboration with Philanthropiece. She was set to perform M-other and hold vocal empowerment workshops in several locations in Guatemala, and she had asked to bring along several students, including me. Philanthropiece partnered with Limitless Horizons Ixil (LHI), which is based in Chajul, Guatemala. Because one of LHI’s programs was advocating and selling cookstoves, Philanthropiece funded my travel expenses and logistic expenses to partner with LHI on a theatre project that was related to cookstoves.

I travelled to Chajul in July 2009 for seven days, and in June 2010 for ten days. During both trips, I worked with indigenous citizens of Chajul and my host organization, LHI, to create theatre pieces dealing with home energy-use habits, focusing, specifically, on the dangers of IAP caused by the use of open fires in people’s homes. In 2009, I used TfD methods to stage a public performance for citizens in Chajul; in 2010, TfD was used to create theatre in people’s homes around their open fires. In addition to using theatre as an educational tool, I collected information about people’s attitudes and behaviors related to IAP and cookstoves, and gave people opportunities to practice taking action to reduce the dangers associated with IAP in their homes.

**Dangers of Indoor Air Pollution to the Energy Poor**

There are over one billion people, almost one sixth of the world’s population, that live on less than one dollar a day. They have been called the “bottom billion” (Collier), with the number of “poor” getting larger, especially considering that there are 2.5 billion people that live on less than $2.50 a day (Yumkella). As Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Director-General of the UN Industrial Development Organization, said of the poorest people on the planet, “They need something, some access to energy, basic human needs” because their lack of access, as much as their limited income, keeps them in poverty. These people, the “energy poor,” make up almost

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2 It is estimated that the world’s population will reach 7 billion in 2011 (Kunzig).
half of the world’s population and are defined as those people whose “only access to energy is fire” (Guruswamy “Energy Justice Conference 2009”).

That many people burning that much fuel, mostly inside their homes, causes many problems in their lives and in the world community. As Eva Rehfues explained:

More than three billion people still burn wood, dung, coal and other traditional fuels inside their homes. The resulting indoor air pollution is responsible for more than 1.5 million deaths a year—mostly of young children and their mothers. Millions more suffer every day with difficulty in breathing, stinging eyes and chronic respiratory disease. Moreover, indoor air pollution and inefficient household energy practices are a significant obstacle to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. (4)

These mortality numbers from IAP represent only a portion of factors that contribute to even more deaths and an unconscionable quality of life for half of the world. According to some estimates, deaths related to IAP will reach 400 per day by 2030, which would be more than deaths caused by AIDS, making it the leading killer in the world (Centurelli). As Rehfues pointed out, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG)—which guide much of the world’s development efforts by shaping policy and funding—are less achievable because of IAP and its related household practices. It stands to reason, then, that reducing IAP would contribute greatly to achieving the MDG and greatly improving the quality of life among the energy poor.

Out of the thousands of solutions proposed to meet the MDG, one that achieves all of them, mostly by greatly reducing and removing IAP, and by increasing household fuel efficiency, is using a fuel-efficient cookstove. As Guruswamy pointed out, “52% of the world’s population cooks on a three stone fire and uses some sort of biomass as fuel, such as wood,

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charcoal or dung (“Energy Justice” 5). Because of stray dogs, thieves, the need to heat their homes, and other factors, most energy poor people cook inside their homes on open fires, creating large amounts of IAP (Rehfuess 8). According to the World Health Organization, “Lowering levels of Indoor Air Pollution can help prevent 1.6 million deaths from tuberculosis annually” (Rehfuess 17). Additionally, average fuel collection times are “thirty minutes to two hours a day” per family (“Energy Justice” Guruswamy 9). Cookstoves cook more efficiently than an open fire, drastically reducing the amount of IAP. Moreover, the reduced amount of fuel used means that a reduced amount of fuel needs to be collected or purchased.

If reductions in pollutants and collection times are considered, and factoring in that some stoves perform more or less efficiently than 60%,\(^4\) it is easy to see how a $10 to $100 cookstove could drastically and immediately change a family’s life. The small amount of smoke that those family members would be breathing in would be well below harmful levels. Families could have up to fourteen hours more a week when they are not collecting biomass to start a garden, send their children to school, engage in an income-generating activity, or support their community.

One of the leading scientists studying IAP is Kirk Smith, who is based at Berkeley Air at the University of California, Berkeley. As Smith explained to an audience at the 2009 Energy Justice Conference in Boulder, CO, he set out to demonstrate that cookstoves could save lives because when he appeared before the U.S. Congress for cook-stove project funding, he was repeatedly denied and asked, “Why would we give you money for your project on cookstoves when we could spend the money on vaccinations, which are proven to save lives?” According to Smith, Congress decides which projects to fund depending on how many lives are saved per dollar spent by the United States. Smith knew that if wanted to be funded by the U.S.

\(^4\) The efficiency of cookstoves depends on many local factors—such as fuel source, humidity, and altitude—but most stoves perform consistently within a particular locale.
government, or if he wanted to secure grants from private funding organizations, he needed to show that cookstoves saved lives.

Working with several collaborators, including the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala, Smith established Proyecto RESPIRE (Project Breathe) in San Lorenzo, Guatemala. Partially due to Smith’s research, the dangers of IAP are established and cookstoves now are known to be an appropriate and sustainable solution. On September 21, 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, which is an aid initiative by the United States that pledged $50 million over five years and has set a goal of “100 by 20”—100 million households with clean cookstoves by 2020. Although how the money will be spent has not been announced, during his keynote address at the 2010 World Energy Justice conference, Dan Shine5 said that the money pledged by the United States will not be used to give cookstoves away but, instead, will be used for education.

In 2007, Envirofit International started manufacturing large amounts of durable, efficient, and affordable cookstoves. Similar to the 100 by 20 goal set by the United State, Envirofit set a goal to sell 10 million cookstoves in five years. Whereas previous cookstoves were “glorified coffee cans” with a grate on top (Reed), the founders of Envirofit asked, “What would Apple do if it designed a stove?” (Wilson). Envirofit also is learning from many previous mistakes and is listening to its customers, attempting to make cookstoves culturally appropriate and sustainable. In the early stages of my research, I focused on the cultural appropriateness and sustainability of Envirofit stoves, learning a lot about what it meant for an energy technology to be appropriate and sustainable.

The solar cell, often gifted or even sold to individuals or communities, is the classic example of a culturally inappropriate introduction of an energy technology in the developing

---

5 Senior Advisor, Office of Science and Technology, US Agency for International Development (USAID).
world. Solar cells might power a light, water pump, and, very often, a television, but there is no means to repair the cells, or even to understand how they work. If engineers come back to check on a solar cell, it often is broken or missing (Reed). The same is the case for cookstoves. The concept of efficient combustion is no more intuitive than the concept of the photoelectric effect. Without ensuring that an energy technology is culturally appropriate and sustainable, even the most basic and beneficial new energy technology will fail. On its website, CEES referred to “appropriate sustainable energy technologies” (ASETs), which, in many ways, represent the best way forward for eradicating energy poverty in an ethical way.

My research on Guatemala revealed that Envirofit stoves would not be ASETs in Chajul, or anywhere in Latin America. Women in Guatemala will not buy stoves made by Envirofit because those stoves are not large enough to cook tortillas, a staple of the Ixil and Mayan diet. Engineers Without Borders has had trouble in Rwanda selling its stoves, because people do not believe that smoke is a health risk (Barstow). For the stoves to be successful, Engineers Without Borders looked for what had “traction” or what encouraged “buy-in” with a particular group (Barstow). For instance, the organization was more successful in Rwanda when it focused on the amount of money that can be saved by using less fuel. In all of the research that I conducted, I have not heard of one recipient of a cookstove worried about greenhouse gases but, then again, recipients are not often asked what are their concerns, and even though environmental concerns have traction in the United States, I was determined to find what had traction in Chajul because the definitions of “appropriate and sustainable” changed depending on one’s values and location.

Drastically reducing IAP by giving away 3 billion cookstoves seems like an easy and cheap solution, but giving away stoves would not and has not worked. NGOs, governments, and
individuals have been subsidizing and gifting cookstoves for over 30 years. As Burkhard Bilger explained:

In 1983, the Indian government launched a national program that distributed some thirty-five million stoves across the subcontinent. The units came in various designs from local manufacturers; most were neither sturdy nor especially efficient. Several years later, when a doctoral student from Berkeley surveyed the results in Andhra Pradesh, she found a single stove still in use—as a bin for grain. (90)

Because of such failures, the new model is a capitalistic one, with stoves sold for profit, but more commonly they are sold at break-even prices. Social-entrepreneurial models, where energy poor people are trained to sell and market stoves, also are becoming popular. In both cases, selling stoves for no profit is seen as a more sustainable model than giving them away, creating community “buy-in,” literally and figuratively. Many companies make stoves now, and although some of those companies dabble in subsidizing the price of stoves to incentivize purchase, that practice also seems to have been discredited by some as a sustainable model (Karve).

In the article, “Monitoring and Evaluation of Improved Biomass Cookstove Programs for Indoor Air Quality and Stove Performance: Conclusions from the Household Energy and Health Project,” Kirk Smith et al. discussed previous top-down projects in India and China that distributed millions of stoves. As they explained:

Although there are unlikely to be repeats of such large “top-down” ICS [improved cookstove] programs of the types initiated in India and China in the 1980s, there is a growing interest to find ways to trigger more market-based approaches to foster the introduction of many tens of millions of improved stoves, perhaps combined with improved fuels in some areas. (6)
Smith et al. argued that the use of a market-based approach would “foster the introduction” of cookstoves and seemingly correct the failures of the top-down approaches used previously. This “let the market decide” mentality mirrors statements made by Envirofit’s founder, Brian Wilson, that the company is attempting to make culturally appropriate and sustainable stoves that people will buy.

In addition to the immediate health concerns connected to IAP, the black soot created by open fires is the second largest contributor to greenhouse gases after carbon dioxide (“Energy Justice” Guruswamy 11). However, unlike carbon dioxide, black soot is made up of particles that stay in the air for only a few weeks. If the number of open fires was reduced, greenhouse gases could be drastically reduced within weeks, possibly mitigating the effects of climate change. There is some debate over the science behind black soot as a greenhouse gas, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation to discuss, but Hillary Clinton mentioned greenhouse gases and climate change in her speech. With the exception of populations in low-lying areas, greenhouse gas emissions and climate change do not seem to be a concern to many people in the developing world. If it were shown that the billions of open fires around the world significantly contributed to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, Western policy makers would have an additional reason to fund cook-stove projects beyond the health concerns of people in developing countries.

Of all the scholarship dealing with IAP and cookstoves, there are two articles of note, both produced by researchers at Proyecto Respire in San Lorenzo, Guatemala, that were essential in shaping the research reported in this dissertation. The first article, from 2009, “Fuel Use and

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6 I have copies of two similar articles from Granderson et al. One is dated 2007 and looks like an unpublished early version of the version published in 2009 in *Biomass/Bioenergy*. The conclusions are the same in each, but the 2009 version was written and formatted more clearly. Even though it was published after the Dherani et al. article, the
Design Analysis of Improved Woodburning Cookstoves in the Guatemalan Highlands,” by Granderson et al., set out to show that cookstoves are more fuel efficient than are open fires, but because of a small sample size and too many extraneous variables within the households that were studied, the findings were inconclusive. However, Granderson et al.’s suggestions for future cook-stove projects include several that relate to the theatre work done in this research project. Granderson et al. noted the impact that the moisture content of wood had on fuel efficiency and emissions, but it was their last recommendation that had the largest impact on this study: “Finally, future research might survey plancha design and usage patterns across different regions of the country. This research would permit the formulation of a set of design recommendations to improve stove dissemination and/or marketing” (12). Granderson et al.’s finding that information collected about open fire and cookstove “usage” could be employed to “plan for more effective design and/or marketing of stoves” became one of the defining features of the theatre interventions (as discussed in Chapter Three). Hence, information discovered in rehearsals, workshops, performances, and discussions about local citizens’ attitudes and behaviors related to open fires and cookstoves could be used to make and market a better stove.

The second article by Proyecto RESPIRE researchers, “Indoor Air Pollution from Unprocessed Solid Fuel Use and Pneumonia Risk in Children Aged under Five Years: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis,” by Dherani et al., is from May 2008. The authors set out to show that reducing IAP reduces the risk of pneumonia in children, which was the evidence that Smith spoke of when he was unable to get funding from the U.S. Congress for cookstoves. Dherani et al. showed that cookstoves saved lives, which led Smith to say to members of

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Granderson et al. article represented the initial efforts by Proyecto RESPIRE researchers in San Lorenzo, when many of their methods and future research directions were established.
Congress that for every dollar spent on introducing cookstoves into people’s homes, a certain number of lives could be saved.

In addition to reporting on the reduction of IAP from using a cookstove, Dherani et al. reported the importance of reducing IAP by other means: “We conclude that reduction of household IAP from solid fuel use through switching to other fuels, improving combustion and ventilation, and possibly other measures, would make an important contribution to prevention of pneumonia morbidity and mortality” (395). This information took a great amount of pressure off my theatrical interventions, because cookstoves were not the only means of reducing IAP. As discussed in Chapter Three, these additional strategies for reducing IAP allowed me to use theatre to investigate how people in Chajul reduced IAP without a cookstove and to have them come to conclusions about the solutions that they could and could not afford.

**Needs and Development Programs in Chajul, Guatemala**

The work of the researchers at Proyecto RESPIRE in San Lorenzo, Guatemala contributed greatly to global awareness of IAP, and their work has definitely influenced U.S. aid policy and funding decisions. However, those studies also show that the indigenous people in San Lorenzo still live in depressed conditions, as do indigenous people throughout the rest of Guatemala. Chajul, the town in which I conducted this research study, is very similar to San Lorenzo, but Chajul is even more remote, the people adhere to a more traditional Mayan culture, it was particularly hard hit by the Guatemalan Civil War, and the team of researchers that recently visited was from CU-Boulder not UC-Berkeley. The following discussion offers a site description of Chajul and lists LHI’s programs that serve the citizens of that town.
San Gaspar de Chajul, or simply Chajul, is a traditional Mayan community in the highlands of Guatemala\(^7\) at an elevation of 7000 feet (“Background on Chajul”). Roughly 50,000 people live in the county of Chajul, with only 20,000 in the village itself. Along with the villages of Cotzal and Nebaj, Chajul is one of three communities that form the Ixil Triangle. Ixil is a Mayan language spoken only by people in this area. Nebaj is the largest of the three villages, with restaurants, hotels, numerous NGOs, and several Peace Corps volunteers. Some LHI staff members, including all of the U.S. Americans, live in Nebaj and commute 45 minutes to Chajul every day. Only since 2008, when the road was fully paved, have cars traveled all the way to Chajul safely and consistently from Nebaj; before that time, only trucks, motorcycles, and the ubiquitous public “Chicken Buses” made the trip with any consistency. Today, the most common way to get to and from Chajul and Nebaj is on microbuses (see Photograph 1), which are mini-vans that often hold up to 40 people, but only have seats for 12.

Corn is pervasive in Chajul, in the fields and in people’s diets. In the Mayan origin story, the first Mayan sprung forth from an ear of corn, and many people in Chajul believe that they are direct descendents of *maize* (corn). Unfortunately, many people in Chajul are malnourished because the majority of their nutrition comes from this one plant. Corn tortillas are eaten at every meal, along with other traditional corn-based foods and drinks. Eggs, chicken, and beef are the main sources of protein in Chajul, but many people cannot consistently afford to buy or raise the animals necessary to meet their nutritional needs.

In Chajul, learning Spanish is a luxury afforded only by those who attend school, but more men than women speak Spanish because they often work outside of the home, usually as farmers. Seventy percent of the population older than fifteen years is illiterate, but 60% of the population is under fifteen years (Musen and Percuoco). In 2002, only 1% of students graduated

\(^7\) See Appendix G for a map of Guatemala with Chajul labeled.
from high school, 5% from middle school, and 22% from elementary school (Musen and Percuoco). In Guatemala, families are required to pay for tuition for students in the upper grades (9 through 12), and the sum ($30 to $40 a year) is too much for families that make only $1 to $3 a day.

As Kirk Smith said when describing the conditions of indigenous people in Guatemala, “Truth be told, they haven’t recovered since Cortez” (Bilger 92). The effects of colonialism were further exacerbated in the highlands of Guatemala, and especially in Chajul, during the protracted civil war (1960-1996), with the U.S. government backing the Guatemalan government in fighting a guerrilla army, which was comprised mostly of indigenous people. A former

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guerrilla who gave a public speech when I was in Chajul in 2009 told of how he had witnessed massacres of entire villages and how he saw people killed in Chajul, his home village. He joined the guerrillas at the age of fourteen, and did not return to Chajul and his family until he was nearly 30 years old.

The war was the source of many deaths and disappearances, and the effects still can be seen in Chajul. Researchers, including Russell Schimmer, at Yale University’s Genocide Studies Program have designated events that happened during the Guatemalan Civil War as genocide. In addition to the human toll, Schimmer studied the effects of war activities on deforestation, using satellite images that showed “deforestation caused by forced population displacement and genocide” (see Photograph 2). As Schimmer explained, “In the image, red represents areas vegetated in 1979 but not in 1986; green represents areas vegetated in 1986 but not in 1979; and yellow represents areas of no change” (“Deforestation”). The Ixil Triangle formed by Chajul, Nebaj, and Cotzal is clearly marked, and the researchers claimed that this deforestation is additional proof that the area of the Ixil Triangle was particularly affected by the war.

LHI was cofounded by Katie Morrow in 2004 as a scholarship organization for families in Chajul that could not afford to send their children to school past the eighth grade. LHI gave scholarships to 57 students in 2010, and with the new road, there are more opportunities than ever for employment and trade. LHI also has expanded its programs to meet more needs of the people in Chajul. In addition to its scholarship program, many of the students and families that receive funding from LHI are in the Work to (L)earn program and can earn money for their families or put it towards their students’ scholarship by working with LHI and in the community. LHI also has opened a community library that is staffed by a full-time employee; offers a Spanish-intensive class and a computer class for students on Saturdays; offers teacher trainings;
and sells water filters, seeds, and compact fluorescent light bulbs. Most important for the purpose of this project, LHI sells a fuel-efficient cookstove, known as a *plancha*, or *estufa mejorada*[^9]. This “improved stove” is part of a global effort, financed by governments and corporations, and implemented by smaller organizations and by individuals.

![Satellite image of Chajul region](image.jpg)

*Photograph 2. Satellite image by Russell Schimmer.*

Chajul is changing fast, and many of the changes mentioned above, including the opening of the library and the teacher trainings, happened between my visits in 2009 and 2010. I also

[^9]: *Plancha* means “iron” or “griddle” and is so named for the flat piece of metal that tops the stoves. *Estufa Mejorada* means “improved stove.”
noticed several other changes in Chajul between 2009 and 2010 that indicate the rate of change. For instance, in 2009, there was only one “tuk-tuk” taxi in Chajul and it had arrived the week that we visited. Tuk-tuks taxis, which have three wheels and motorcycle engines, are ubiquitous in many countries in Asia, especially South East Asia and the Philippines. Riders commonly pay an inexpensive fare and load more people and goods in and on the taxi than most reasonable people would think possible. In 2009, I paid the one Chajul tuk-tuk to take me back to my hotel, and in the week that I was in Chajul, I do not recall seeing an indigenous person use one. Eleven months later, there were too many tuk-tuks in Chajul to count, and they constantly were being used by indigenous people in the town. Another indication of changes occurring in Chajul between 2009 and 2010 was that a majority of people, including families receiving LHI scholarships who could not afford to send their children to school, owned and used cellphones. According to Morrow, cellphones had become a status symbol, and poor families were purchasing them and adding as many minutes to their phone as they could afford.

Cellphones are more expensive than cookstoves, but as Dr. Priyadarshini Karve said at the 2010 Women’s Energy Justice Workshop, “the food will still get cooked without an improved cookstove.” Cookstoves are not a status symbol in Chajul, and that might explain why LHI’s cookstove program was struggling in 2009. Even people who could afford stoves were not buying them, such as the mayor of the town, who did not own one. Respiratory disease and complications related to IAP, by far, was the leading cause of death in Chajul, and many people knew the risks, but LHI had sold fewer than ten stoves in the year before my visit. Hence, the organization was willing to try using theatre to find out why people were not purchasing cookstoves and, hopefully, to change people’s minds and behaviors.
Using Theatre of the Oppressed and Theatre for Development Methods to Meet the Needs of People in Chajul Guatemala

The background of Chajul, especially its colonial past, and the fact that when I helped to introduce cookstoves to people in Chajul, I would be part of a capitalistic venture, inspired me to base my intervention on the work of Boal and TFD. As Tim Prentki said:

The effects of colonialism upon indigenous cultures have been well documented, but it is not always appreciated that alongside imperialism came capitalism, forcing many nations of the world to follow nineteenth century European notions of what constituted theatre. This necessitated a move away from fluid, participatory modes of performance to a product-consumer relationship with the performance being packaged and sold to those who wanted it and could afford it. The theatre of Boal and of progressive TFD practitioners returns theatre to pre-colonial, participatory styles more reminiscent of medieval European carnival forms. (“Must the Show” 423)

I considered myself to be one of those progressive TFD practitioners described by Prentki, and thought that Boal’s techniques were ideal for my work in Chajul because the people there had no experience reflecting or acting on oppression, of which they were mostly unaware.

As Boal says in his book Theatre of the Oppressed, his techniques are meant to be used with people who are underrepresented, and they work especially well with groups that have never expressed themselves through art or any other means. As Boal explained:

The initial contact with a group of peasants, workers, or villagers—if they are confronted with the proposal to put on a theatrical performance—can be extremely difficult. They have quite likely never heard of theater and if they have heard of it, their conception of it will probably have been distorted by television, with its emphasis on sentimentality or by
some travelling circus group. It is also very common for those people to associate theater with leisure or frivolity. Thus caution is required even when the contact takes place through an educator who belongs to the same class as the illiterates or semi-illiterates, even if he lives among them in a shack and shares their comfortless life. The very fact that the educator comes with the mission of eradicating illiteracy (which presupposes a coercive, forceful action) is in itself an alienating factor between the agent and the local people. For this reason the theatrical experience should begin not with something alien to the people (theatrical techniques that are taught or imposed) but with the bodies of those who agree to participate in the experiment. (126-127)

Boal’s experience with indigenous people reminded me to be constantly aware of my identity as an outsider, and that even though I was collaborating closely with trusted local partners, I would have to not alienate the people with whom I was working. As discussed in Chapters Two and Three, I took Boal’s advice and started with the body to create spect-actors, attempting to find theatre techniques that were compatible with the skill level of the people of Chajul.

In addition to basing my theatrical methods on Boal, I also practiced what Zakes Mda called an “‘optimum intervention.’” According to Prentki, an optimum intervention “is not achieved through a fixed formula but only through a dialectical interaction of participants and facilitators who are practicing a co-intentional approach to self-development and social change (“Introduction to Intervention” 183). Lila Abu-Lughod, a feminist who focused on the effects of interventions in women’s lives, also pointed to a more “productive approach” to conventional intervention in which researchers have a “responsibility to make these women’s voices heard” and where those researchers use a more “egalitarian language of alliances, coalitions, and solidarity, instead of salvation” (789).
In the article, “When People Play People,” where Prentki cited the use of optimum intervention, Mda said that an optimal intervention “is the ideal balance of intervention and participation that engenders the highest level of conscientisation”\(^{10}\) (197). Mda stressed the importance of the TfD practitioner being a catalyst for critical analysis:

A number of peasants have internalized oppression and domination, and live in what Freire (1972)\(^{11}\) calls a “culture of silence.” Intervention helps to extract them from that culture of silence, and unleashes in them a critical analysis that will lead them to critical awareness. (196)

I wanted to use theatre to build on that newfound critical analysis and to provoke action, for as Adrian Jackson said, “The theatre must provoke, if the target is truly to move people beyond the normative conventions which keep the spectator passive, the citizen obedient” (44).

**Summary of Chapters**

This dissertation explores the theories, methods, implementations, and results of two TfD interventions in Chajul, Guatemala that were used to educate and provoke people into action to reduce IAP in their homes through the use of an ASET. This original investigation in the field seeks to provide insight into common TfD practices to be used in Latin America, a part of the world that has not received sufficient attention from researchers and practitioners. Additionally, this research study attempts to assist a NGO (LHI) to achieve its development goals in an ethical and sustainable way.

This chapter described the need for cookstoves in Chajul and began to explore how TO and TfD techniques are compatible with introducing an ASET. Chapter Two provides an overview of the TfD field and scholarship, including its origins and current practices that shaped

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\(^{10}\) *Conscientisation* or “awareness” is discussed in Chapter Two.

\(^{11}\) From *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 
this study. Chapter Three details the methods and theatre practices used in the field as they were designed and implemented. Chapter Four reports the results of the field research, including which TfD practices were found to be the most efficacious for introducing new energy technologies, along with the data related to open fires and cookstoves that were collected by using those practices. The final chapter, Chapter Five, discusses the meaning of the results, identifies limitations of the study, and suggests future research directions for using TfD to introduce new energy technologies when working with populations not accustomed to using theatre to facilitate solutions to their problems.
Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This chapter reviews the antecedents and current study of the field of Theatre for Development (TfD). First, I discuss major theorists, including Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal, who have shaped TfD and the philosophy on which it is based. Second, I review the history of TfD and ethical concerns related to its current practices. Third, I discuss relevant best practices of TfD, citing the scholarship of several TfD scholar-practitioners, explaining the relevance of those methods to this study. Fourth, I establish the basis for this study by showing the pressing need for development projects that deal with reducing indoor air pollution (IAP) and the lack of TfD scholarship focused on new energy technologies. Finally, I conclude this chapter by establishing my research agenda.

Paulo Freire: Conscientization, Banking System of Education, and Praxis

Almost every TfD practitioner cites the pedagogical theories of Brazilian Paulo Freire as the basis of their work. There are three major features of Freire’s pedagogy that have influenced TfD: conscientization, banking system of education, and praxis (with Freire’s Marxist political beliefs having a lasting influence on the use of that latter term). A brief description of each feature of Freire’s work follows, to situate more clearly the field of TfD and the argument advanced in this research study.

As the participatory development and feminist scholar Noel Keough stated, “Paulo Freire popularized the concept of empowerment in his philosophy of education best known as conscientization” (188). According to Freire, conscientização, or conscientization, is defined as “consciousness raising” and refers to “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (35). The notion of
creating action out of awareness was highly influential across many fields—most notably, in education, participatory development, and second wave feminism.

In his seminal book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2000 [1970]), Freire “challenged the relationship between teacher and student” (Nicholson 9) by questioning the “banking concept of education,” in which knowledge is deposited into students’ minds by oppressive educational systems that treat students as passive objects (72). In contrast, Freire advocated for a problem-solving style of education that encouraged dialogue between teachers and students, and that engaged students in critical thinking to think for themselves. Freire insisted that this dialogic relationship between teachers and students is necessary for transformation: “It is necessary, that is, unless one intends to carry out transformation for the oppressed rather than with them. It is my belief that only the later form of transformation is valid” (67).

Freire’s theories of praxis, more than any other concept, deeply influenced the field of TfD. In his book, *Applied Theatre*, Philip Taylor discussed praxis, giving Freire credit for its “development”:

Praxis, a word developed by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1970), claims that an ability to help one another reflect and act on their world is at the heart of a sound education, and through that process transforms it into something more equitable and worthwhile. Praxis is powered by an agenda, a desire to push us to reflect on our practices and refine our theoretical leanings as a step toward acting on and changing our life circumstances. Put simply, as they engage with one another, those involved in praxis can help people create a just and better world. And, this is where applied theatre can play a major role. (35)

Taylor bridged the gap between Freire’s theories and the role that *applied theatre*—an umbrella term for all community-based theatre, including TfD—can play in that transformation. However,
saying that praxis was “developed” by Freire underplays the role of Marxist theory in Freire’s work and how much it still influences practices of applied theatre, in general, and TfD, specifically. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, the root of the word praxis is Latin, with Marx using it in 1844 to mean “the synthesis of theory and practice seen as a basis for or condition of political and economic change.” The *OED* also stated that “the term [praxis] has been increasingly used since the 1960s, following the translation into English of Marx's early writings.” One could argue that praxis is a Marxist project, in theory and in practice. Acknowledging that TfD, in part, is based on Marxism, is important, because, as discussed below, Freire departed from many other Marxists by arguing for a more democratic form of the traditionally socialist philosophy, principles that are most relevant to the field of TfD.

Freire’s identity as a Marxist is obvious in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. For instance, Freire cited Marx and Engels when he discussed praxis:

> One of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings' consciousness. Functionally, oppression is domesticating. To no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it. (51)

Freire claimed that praxis is a means to emerge from oppression and to achieve liberation, which is easily relatable to Marxist theories of base and superstructure—oppressive systems—and the rise of the proletariat—liberation through revolution. Freire was interested in making oppressive structures visible, but his techniques differed from other Marxists in some significant ways. Specifically, Freire disagreed with Georg Lukács’s requirement of “explaining to the masses

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12 According the OED, “Praxis” first was used by “A. von Cieszkowski in Prolegomena zur Historiosophie (1838) 129, and adopted by Karl Marx Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie, Einleitung in the Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher (1844)” (“praxis, n.”).
their own action” (53), and, instead, made an important distinction that defined his work and all of the fields based on it: “For us, however, the requirement is seen not in terms of explaining to but rather dialoguing with the people about their actions” (53). When Freire used the word praxis in the Marxian sense, he imbued it with dialogue, cooperation, and democracy. As Freire noted, “reflection and action” cannot lead to transformation if theory and practice are merely explained to the masses. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption (54).

Freire was involved in education reforms in Brazil, but was jailed and exiled for his work against the government. Freire spent the 1960s in England and had a major influence on the Drama in Education (DIE) movement, which involved students directly in problem solving. As Taylor explained:

Teams of actor-teachers create participatory issue-based theatre work and toured this work in British schools. The programs are usually structured around a dramatic actor-teacher presentation, which is then “problem solved” by the audience. Often the audience assumes roles and enacts situations. (9)

Freire’s work with the DIE movement showed that theatre methods were uniquely suited to put his theories into practice. (In fact, as discussed below, Augusto Boal’s work demonstrates that theatre techniques and Freire’s theories are compatible, and it is no coincidence that the DIE model described by Taylor is similar to Boal’s forum theatre.) All theatrical derivatives of Freire’s work have the topic of oppression in common, and participants are liberated by problem solving their “issue-based” oppression with a facilitator. In the case described by Taylor, an actor-teacher is the facilitator presenting scenes that deal with students’ issue-based concerns, but there is no limit to what can be investigated with theatre that exposes oppressive structures.
Augusto Boal’s Concepts of Spect-actor, Simultaneous Dramaturgy, Image Theatre, and Forum Theatre

Augusto Boal, another Brazilian and Marxist,\(^{13}\) was heavily influenced by Freire’s work with those who were oppressed. Boal and Freire worked together in Brazil before both were separately jailed and exiled. As explained earlier, Boal paid Freire homage by naming his first book, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, and when Freire died in 1998, Boal said, “I am very sad. I have lost my last father. Now all I have are brothers and sisters” (Paterson). Boal subsequently spent his career in Brazil, the United States, and around the world putting Freire’s dialogic theories into practice.

In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal discussed the origins of Western theatre and how, starting with the Greeks, in general, and Aristotle, in particular, theatre often had served a “coercive” and “oppressive” political system that benefited from drama that played on the emotions of passive spectators. In the chapter entitled “Aristotle’s Coercive System of Tragedy” (1-50), Boal argued that the cathartic experience of the audience contributes to maintaining the dominant patriarchal ideology by keeping the spectator passive and submissive: “If, on the contrary, we want to stimulate the spectator to transform his society, to engage in revolutionary action, in that case we will have to seek another poetics” (47). “‘Spectator’ is a bad word” (154). Instead, Boal argued for creating “spect-actors” (*TO* 155, *Aesthetics* 6) and for a new aesthetic that he called “poetics of the oppressed” (*TO* 122) Boal placed his aesthetic in opposition to Aristotle’s Tragedy and as complementary to Brecht’s Epic:

To understand this *poetics of the oppressed* one must keep in mind its main objective: to the change the people—“spectators,” passive beings in the theatrical phenomenon—into

subjects, into actors, transformers of the dramatic action. . . . 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 plans for change—in short, trains himself for real action. In this case, perhaps theatre is not revolutionary in itself, but it is surely a rehearsal for the revolution. The liberated spectator, as a whole person, launches into action. No matter that the action is fictional; what matters is that it is action.

(TO 122)

Boal’s goal of changing the spectator went beyond changing the person into an actor to educating people for action, using his aesthetic to aid people to take action on their concerns, of which they are fully aware. It is easy to see how this “consciousness-raising” type of theatre was influenced by Freire’s pedagogy of the oppressed, as both methods transfer power from the top to the bottom of the social pyramid (e.g., from teachers to students, politicians to constituents, and wealthy to poor) to create a dialogic discourse where all opinions can be represented more fairly.

Boal created a method “for transforming the spectator into actor” for the purposes of creating a discourse (TO 126). This transformation from novice to expert was “systematized in the general outline of four stages” (126): knowing the body, making the body expressive, the
theatre as language, and the theatre as discourse (a method of acting training that is discussed in Chapter Three). The creation of this discursive method illustrates an important feature of Boal’s philosophy and aesthetic: Its discursive aspects make it democratic, and Boal was well aware of the pitfalls of dogmatic theatre.

In his autobiographical book, *Hamlet and the Baker’s Son*, Boal wrote about dogmatic theatre and politics when he described what happened to Chê Guevara’s attempts at revolution in Bolivia after the successful revolution in Cuba:

There was a difference: in Cuba the people wanted their revolution, had the capability to bring it about, and did so. Not in Bolivia. Chê was betrayed by the very peasant farmers he wanted to liberate by force. I call this “the Chê Syndrome,” a condition to which so many of us at some point or another succumb. Wanting to free slaves by force: I have my truth, I know what’s best for them, therefore let us do what I want them to do, now. I know it is right. I see what they cannot see: let them come with me, I want to open their eyes. They have to see what I see, since I see the right way! The best of intentions. The most authoritarian of practices—coming from above. (186-187)

Boal then described how many theatre companies in Brazil did that same thing: “They played out, in grotesque farce, what Chê had done in tragic real life” (187). Boal called this form of theatre “evangelical theatre,” for, as he put it, “they evangelised with undisputable dogmas, the sovereign word of an organisation or a Party” (187).

Boal recognized the inertia involved in wanting to use this top-down technique and how theatre that uses it has an immense capacity for coercion. His experiences led him to create a democratic and participant-driven form of theatre, which confirmed his affinity for a Freirean Marxism that distributes power more evenly and that leads to awareness and dialogue. Hence,
together, Boal and Freire influenced participatory theatre practices to be more democratic. As explained below, TfD practices follow this philosophy, although there is a tendency for this type of theatre to lapse into less democratic uses of the form.

**Boal’s Method of Model and Dynamisation**

Throughout his book, *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, Boal referred to the “model” and the process of “dynamisation.” In the different forms of TO, the model refers to the initial theatre piece presented to spect-actors, in which a problem is displayed. Depending on the specific methods employed, this model is created by participants or suggested by the facilitator; either way, it is the first step of the process, where a problem is presented to the audience in dramatic form. During the dynamisation phase, spect-actors change the model to solve the problem. Boal said that, ideally, changing the model happens on stage: “Often a person is very revolutionary when in a public forum he envisages and advocates revolutionary and heroic acts; on the other hand, he often realizes that things are not so easy when he himself has to practice what he suggests” (*TO* 139). However, because of participants’ willingness, ability, and constraints of time, many practitioners are forced to simply discuss the model with their audiences instead of changing it on the stage. The following sections discuss Boal’s three methods for the dynamisation of a model: simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, and forum theatre.

**Simultaneous dramaturgy.** Boal described *simultaneous dramaturgy* as “the first invitation made to the spectator to intervene without necessitating his physical presence on the ‘stage’” (*TO* 132). Specifically, audience members watch a model that poses a problem and then suggest changes to that model, but unlike the other two methods for dynamizing models, audience members participating in a simultaneous dramaturgy exercise do not have to leave their
seats. According to Boal, simultaneous dramaturgy is not the ideal way to dynamize a model but, instead, the first step towards creating a spect-actor. After a participant becomes comfortable with solving problems onstage, Boal suggested using the next two steps (image theatre and forum theatre) to solve in a more participatory way the problems proposed in the models.

**Image theatre.** As described by Boal, image theatre is a form where “the spectator has to participate more directly.” Specifically,

the participant is asked to express his opinion, but without speaking, using only the bodies of the other participants and “sculpting” with them a group of statues, in such a way that his opinions and feelings become evident. The participant is to use the bodies of the others as if he were a sculptor and the others were made of clay: he must determine the position of each body down to the most minute details of their facial expressions. He is not allowed to speak under any circumstances. The most that is permitted to him is to show with his own facial expressions what he wants the statue spectator to do. After organizing this group of statues he is allowed to enter into a discussion with the other participants in order to determine if all agree with his “sculpted” opinion. Modifications can be rehearsed: the spectator has the right to modify the statues in their totality or in some detail. When finally an image is arrived at that is the most acceptable to all, then the spectator-sculptor is asked to show the way he would like the given theme to be; that is, in the first grouping the “actual image” is shown, in the second the ideal image. Finally he is asked to show a transitional image, to show how it would be possible to pass from one reality to the other. In other words, how to carry out the change, the transformation, the revolution, or whatever term one wishes to use. Thus, starting with a grouping of

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14 Boal’s emphases in this quote.
“statues” accepted by all as representative of a real situation, each one is asked to propose ways of changing it. (TO 135)

As a more direct method of participation than simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre leads participants to demonstrate the problem instead of the facilitator just describing it to actors. The model and dynamisation process described above gives participants opportunities to propose the problem (model) and come up with a solution (dynamisation), with the “actual image” created by participants being the model. The “transitional image” shows the process of dynamisation of that model, and the “ideal image” is the dynamized solution.15

In addition to its ease of use, Boal described image theatre as being particularly effective when working with two groups that do not share a language: “Image theatre is without a doubt one of the most stimulating [forms] because it is so easy to practice and because of its extraordinary capacity for making thought visible. This happens because use of the language idiom is avoided” (TO 137). In Games for Actors and Non-Actors, Boal commented on the capacity of image theatre to avoid the misinterpretation of words, which is possible even within the same language: “We must not forget that words are only vehicles which convey meanings, emotions, memories, ideas … which are not necessarily the same for everyone. The word spoken is never the word heard. Words are like trucks: they carry the loads you put on them” (174).

In his description of image theatre, Boal wrote how a model should show the behavior of an oppressor, such that when that behavior is changed during dynamisation, the changing of the oppressor’s behavior indicates a belief in “the change of conscience” (TO 137). TO techniques, thus, are designed to come up with solutions for changing oppressive behaviors and systems.

15 In Games for Actors and Non-Actors, Boal used the noun “dynamisation” only when describing the process of proposing solutions to problems presented in models. In this dissertation, I use the additional verbs of dynamize, dynamized, and dynamizing.
Forum theatre. Forum theatre is “the last degree” of model and dynamisation articulated by Boal, in which spect-actors propose solutions to the model by acting out dramatic actions that solve the problem (TO 139). Forum theatre is similar to image theatre in that participants have to intervene directly with other participants and propose actions, but in forum theatre, the model is a dramatization, not a frozen image, and participants propose the changes through dramatic action. As Boal explained:

Any participant in the audience has the right to replace any actor and lead the action in the direction that seems to him most appropriate. The displaced actor steps aside, but remains ready to resume action the moment the participant considers his own intervention to be terminated. The other actors have to face the newly created situation, responding instantly to all the possibilities that it may present. (TO 139)

Boal’s method of forum theatre gives participants opportunities to create the models and the dynamisations. Participants decide which problem to dramatize, how to dramatize them, and how to solve those problems. As Boal explained, “In the forum theater no idea is imposed: the audience, the people, have the opportunity to try out all their ideas, to rehearse all the possibilities, and to verify them in practice, that is, in theatrical practice” (TO 141). This method of full participant control ensures that problems being addressed in forum theatre are of direct concern to participants.

Theatre for Development

The techniques developed by Boal have had a major influence on the field of TfD, and, as detailed below, it is common for TfD practitioners to use forum theatre but to do so by proposing a model that was not identified by a participant. However, before discussing Boal’s influence on
the model and dynamisation methods used in TfD, this section first defines TfD and then gives a history of the field, before discussing best practices.

Kamal Salhi described TfD by saying that the fundamental objective is, through the theatrical presentations, to stimulate and provoke members of a community to talk and discuss their problems and come up with ways and means of solving them. In this way people are enabled to free themselves from what Paulo Freire describes as a “culture of silence.” (116)

Salhi’s description of TfD, in line with other definitions, is rooted in pedagogy of the oppressed philosophy and puts the power for change in the hands of community members and puts the burden to “stimulate and provoke” on the theatrical presentation. A more simple definition of TfD, offered by Tim Prentki, is “theatre used in the service of development aims” (“Must the Show” 419). As shown below, TfD can be any type of theatre used as a tool for development aims, but both fields (development and TfD) are defined (and judged) by their democratic and ethical practices.

Development and Theatre for Development

In her article, “Theatre for Development: An Overview,” Marcia Pompêo Nogueira succinctly described the rise of “development” as a Western project. As Nogueira argued:

This era of “development” saw the “first world,” under the guidance of the United States, define policies in relation to the former colonies, now generally called ‘underdeveloped’ countries. As part of the aim of “helping to raise the standards of living,” the proposal was to introduce Western models of development to these countries. (103)

Development projects, whether proposed by a government agency or a nongovernmental organization (NGO) often focus on improving people’s lives. However, there are times when
organizations are more interested in increasing a country’s gross domestic product (GDP). As D. Lawrence Kincaid and María Elena Figueroa contended, “The dominant development paradigm of the 20th century focused on modernization and wealth accumulation as keys to economic growth” (508). Nogueira gave the example of “the green revolution” and how Western technologies increased food production in the Third World, but mass-produced food flooded the global market and left local people to starve. Some experts argue that this policy of development actually took food away from people and increased their suffering, and it is just one illustration of how that initial development model failed. Many people were excluded from the benefits of the green revolution because, in part, non-sustainable, top-down, “I-know-what-is-best” methods were used.

Nogueira’s example of early development efforts that focus on GDP illustrates the need to use more ethical development practices that directly benefit people. The United Nations (UN) charter pledged to “promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development,” and the UN “sets the agenda” for much of the development world: “Many of the economic and social transformations that have taken place globally since 1945 have been significantly affected in their direction and shape by the work of the United Nations” (“About Development”). Recently, the focus of government policies and development agencies has started to change, and, in September 2008, participating nations reevaluated the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. With these eight goals,16 the UN, as a governing body, is trying to influence agencies and governments to use more

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16 1) Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) Achieve universal primary education, 3) Promote gender equality and empower women, 4) Reduce child mortality, 5) Improve maternal health, 6) Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and other diseases, 7) Ensure environmental sustainability, 8) and Develop a global partnership for development (“Millennium Development Goals.”)
sustainable and local methods to improve people’s lives. The focus no longer is on increasing GDP but on improving quality of life through sustainable partnerships.\textsuperscript{17}

Governments and NGOs are influenced by the UN, and today, \textit{participatory development} is considered the more sustainable way to improve the lives of people in “underdeveloped” areas. Noel Keough’s article, “Participatory Development Principles and Practice,” laid out “ten principles for the practice of Participatory Development”:

1) Approach each situation with humility and respect
2) Understand the potential of local knowledge
3) Adhere to democratic practice
4) Acknowledge diverse ways of knowing
5) Maintain a sustainability vision
6) Put reality before theory
7) Embrace uncertainty
8) Recognize the relativity of time and efficiency
9) Take a holistic approach
10) Exercise an option for community

This list provides a good definition for the field of participatory development, and these principles are a succinct and focused guide for TfD practitioners who practice ethical participatory practices.

Kincaid and Figueroa made a similar argument for using participatory practices in their essay, “Communication for Participatory Development: Dialogue, Action, and Change,” claiming that “research can be theory based as well as pragmatic, focusing on real problems and

\textsuperscript{17}For more on the field of development, see \textit{The Green Revolution: History, Impact & Future} by H.K. Jain; \textit{Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World} by Arturo Escobar.
practical situations across a variety of social, cultural, global, and professional areas of society” (507). Kincaid and Figueroa’s proposed methods (discussed in Chapter Three) have a direct impact on the practices and field of TfD.\(^\text{18}\)

**Additional Theoretical Influences on Theatre for Development**

In addition to the influences of Freire, Boal, and the practices of participatory development, scholars often cite other theoretical influences on TfD. Specifically, they cite the influence of postcolonialism, postmodernism, and Bertolt Brecht.

**Postcolonialism.** Postcolonial theory and movements have significantly influenced TfD practice. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s book *Decolonising the Mind*, for instance, established the need for indigenous language to replace colonial language in local schools and in art. Wa Thiong’o studied in the United Kingdom, and when he returned to Kenya, indigenous community members convinced him to use his knowledge to start the Kamirithu Educational and Cultural Center, one of the main functions of which is to perform plays with and for local communities. This model asks community members to create art based on their concerns, which is an important aspect of TfD. Although Wa Thiong’o was not the first to practice TfD, his model is one of the more “pure” examples because, from start to finish, it was designed and implemented by indigenous community members. Their art attempts to escape the oppressive system of colonialism, and Wa Thiong’o and his collaborators employed a 100% participant-driven model of creating art using indigenous artistic techniques and language.

Although this model has been used in development projects in Africa, India, and throughout Asia, it still is common for most development projects to begin outside of local communities, usually stemming from government programs (e.g., with regard to HIV and AIDS,

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\(^\text{18}\) It is outside of the scope of this dissertation to analyze the overlapping disciplines of theatre, communication, sociology, anthropology, feminism, and other fields. I include relevant material from all of those fields and, simultaneously, limit sources to those that inform further scholarship and practice of TfD.
sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and cookstove development campaigns). Participant-driven art using indigenous forms seems to be more common when groups protest against colonial systems. In fact, creating and sustaining indigenous art and language is a protest against colonialism. Specifically, Wa Thiong’o protests colonialism with language by writing novels and plays only in Bantu, his first language and the language that best preserves and represents his culture. TfD projects often use, or try to use, indigenous forms to communicate with people in their language and art forms. An example of using TfD methods with indigenous art forms is discussed below. 19

Postmodernism. In her book Applied Theatre, Helen Nicholson explained that “applied drama,” and, thus, TfD, were influenced by postmodernism because of the relationship between theory and practice, as espoused by Michel Foucault. Theory and practice stand in a complex relationship; they do not exist as binary opposites but, instead, form a discourse. As Nicholson explained:

From the point of view of applied drama, I find this way of thinking extremely helpful.

Without theory, I have found that even the most reflexive of practice gets stuck and becomes repetitive. Just as theory can become bafflingly abstract without practice. Rather than rooting the debate in a modernist polarity between theory and practice, there can be a more fluid continuum between the two. Deleuze 20 describes this continuum as

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“theoretical action” and “practical action” and this gives theory a performative function.

From this perspective of theory as an abstraction and practice as action, Freire’s use of praxis also can be viewed as a postmodernist concept that turns abstraction into action and action into abstraction, and Boal’s work can be seen as the “practical action” of Freire’s “theoretical action.”

TfD also exemplifies Roland Barthes’s postmodernist concept of the “Death of the Author,” which strips authority from solo artists. In the forward to Taylor’s *Applied Theatre*, Tom Barone described applied theatre as a form of art that poses problems rather than closing down interpretive options, one that “seeks incompleteness [and] . . . demonstrates possible narratives.” [Taylor’s] notion of an applied theatre thus strikes an affirmative postmodernist note as it moves to challenge the (however right minded) playwright over the meanings to be extracted from his or her script. In this democratic approach to theatre, authorial/authoritative monologue is replaced by an intersubjective conversation in which interpretive power is shared. (xii)

This postmodernist argument against a single author described by Barone also reiterates Freire’s theories and Boal’s practice of generating democratic dialogue instead of creating theatre that merely explains things to the masses. Postmodernist theory, thus has influenced TfD practitioners to become wary of methods that maintain “the dominant cultural position” (McCammon 950) and, instead, to include those methods that provide opportunities for to voice people’s concerns.

**Bertolt Brecht.** As one of the most highly influential theatre artists of the 20th century, the theories and practices of Bertolt Brecht have affected TfD in more ways that can be
accounted for in this dissertation. In *Theatre of the Oppressed*, Boal described Brecht’s techniques:

Brecht clarifies concepts, reveals truths, exposes contradictions, and proposes transformations. . . . Brecht wants the theatrical spectacle to be the beginning of action: the equilibrium should be sought by transforming society, and not by purging the individual of his just demands and needs.

Brechtian technique, especially alienation, forces spectators to question basic assumptions about their social arrangements, as based on gender, race, class, sexual preference, and other identity markers. Through that proposed shift in perspective, theatre, in the Brechtian mode, is a call for action against dominant ideologies. TfD practitioners, following Brecht and Boal’s techniques, thus, create plays that question the status quo, presenting problems that, ideally, are identified and solved by participants.

**The History of Theatre for Development**

Most scholars agree that the history of TfD starts in Africa. Nogueira cited Ross Kidd’s 1984 article “From People’s Theatre for Revolution for Popular Theatre for Reconstruction: Diary of a Zimbabwean Workshop,” which, arguably, is the first published scholarly work on TfD. As Nogueira explained:

[Kidd] identifies a historical evolution of theatre for development in Africa where different decades could see different approaches. Starting in the 1950s, Kidd gives us examples of “theatre for development” used as propaganda for colonial government development policies. Theatre was made by development workers to disseminate ideas such as immunisation, sanitation, and cash crop production. Kidd’s example of “theatre for development” in the 1960s is related to travelling theatre groups. University student
groups took plays to rural villages and urban squatter areas as a form of “cultural democratization,” making theatre accessible to the masses. Instead of touring ready-made performances, the new approach of “theatre for development” in the 1970s opted for a more participatory form. Development cadres and theatre workers “(a) researched villagers’ issues and concerns before making the drama, and (b) organised discussions at the end of the performance in order to facilitate a process of community and mobilization” (Kidd, 1984, p. 5). (105)

Nogueira’s description suggests that TfD has been evolving into a democratic field that includes people in a participatory, bottom-up approach. In fact, the rise of TfD coincided with development organizations adopting more participatory approaches. As Eckhard Breitinger argued:

> The rise of Theatre for Development also marked a change in international relations. It was both the symptom and the result of the failures of 20 years of development policies that had insisted on the implantation of the materialists and technological culture of the North as the only possible road to the development, irrespective of the cultural and social environment. (In Odhiambo 190)

The change in the top-down methods is the result of a symbiotic relationship that exists between NGO leaders and TfD practitioners, both of whom honor democratic principles and value participation of the people being served.

Today, TfD often is defined as a subfield of applied theatre. Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston, in the introduction to their book The Applied Theatre Reader, used the term to describe “a broad set of theatrical practices and creative processes that take participants and audiences beyond the scope of conventional mainstream theatre that is responsive to ordinary people and
their stories, local settings and priorities” (9). TfD is one subfield of applied theatre that Prentki and Preston and others (e.g., Taylor and Nicholson) included under the applied theatre “umbrella” (9). The use of applied theatre as an umbrella term, however, is by no means established, and arguments over which subfields should be included or excluded from the umbrella are illuminating. TfD sometimes is excluded from applied theatre because the issues dealt with are decided in ways that some would argue is a top-down approach. The next section further explores literature that addresses the ethics of TfD.\(^2\)

**The Ethics of Theatre for Development**

According to Christopher Odhiambo Joseph, the ethical implications of using TfD methods have not been fully explored in the literature, especially when the message or issue being addressed could be considered top-down. In his article “Theatre for Development in Kenya: Interrogating the Ethics of Practice,” Odhiambo Joseph claimed that research and documentation on procedures, approaches and methodologies of Theatre for Development (TfD) are seemingly abundant (see Kidd, 1982; Eyoh, 1991; Desai, 1991; Mumma & Levert, 1995; Chamberlain, 1995a, 1995b; Eckhard, 1994; Abah, 1997; Byam, 1999; van Erven, 2001; Mlama, 1991; Epskamp, 1993; Nyoni, 2002).

Interestingly though, most of these works make, if any, very remote comments on the ethics of practice in TfD. (189)

Odhiambo Joseph questioned the ethics of many TfD projects, focusing on whether practitioners are engaged in theatre activities for “personal selfishness or community good” (192).

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Kincaid and Figueroa addressed the ethical dilemma of top-down messages and the role of “external change agents” and the involvement of the people from the community:

Scholars and practitioners agree that community members should determine the goals of development themselves, but the problem-specific nature of funding often means that external change agents impose development goals on communities. External change agents can play the valuable role of catalyst and facilitate the process, but motivation and leadership needs to come from within a community itself. (507)

In his book *Applied Theatre*, Philip Taylor argued that all TfD practices are too easily corruptible and, therefore, that TfD does not belong as part of the applied theatre field. As Taylor explained:

> While in TfD there can be a top-down message, which can be shaped by political and funding expediencies, applied theatre does not aim to be doctrinaire or condescending. Ahmed (2002)\(^{22}\) alerts us to some of the traps of the TfD movement: “These plays are in effect a simplified version of pseudo-Marxist “agit-prop” plays built on conflict between good (the “down trodden people”) and evil (the “village elite”), projecting a clear message of what needs to be done. (212)

Taylor, thus, used Ahmed’s argument to establish the field of applied theatre as taking the moral high ground, by always using bottom-up approaches.

Taylor, along with Ahmed and others, argue that TfD is susceptible to the pressures of outside influence and is prone to using top-down approaches because of the money and power involved when dealing with development agencies. Ahmed argued that TfD practitioners are more interested in “counting their money” than in raising “people’s critical consciousness.

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concerning social and economic reality” (in Taylor 29). Taylor rightly acknowledged the
cynicism of this point of view, but he pointed out that government agencies have an agenda to
spend money to stop social problems; consequently, if they pay a theatre troupe and minds are
changed, it will be “money well spent.” As Taylor noted:

This immediately places applied theatre artists in an unenviable position in that they now
share the responsibility to curb vandalism, racism, and teenage pregnancy. Applied
theatre artists need to be careful that they don’t merely become mouthpieces for a
government or bureaucratic agenda. The aim of the applied theatre artist should be to
open a conversation around a particular issue and challenge community members to use
this theatre form as a way to further the conversation. (37)

Hence, Taylor excluded TfD from the field of applied theatre because TfD is more susceptible to
becoming a top-down mouthpiece than is applied theatre, in general. Taylor did not explicitly
state that applied theatre practitioners should not work with agencies with a preordained agenda
but it is hard to imagine a situation where one could work with an organization under those
circumstances and still adhere to Taylor’s proscribed moral code.

Taylor’s attempt to establish the field of “applied theatre,” which also is the name of his
book, unfairly laid the burden of all unethical theatre practices at the feet of TfD, and he only
briefly considered possible situations when being a mouthpiece for a larger agenda would be
considered ethical, mentioning that it would be acceptable to use theatre to prevent suicides (9).
However, what about using TfD for HIV and AIDS education, or to prevent genital mutilation or
indoor air pollution? Taylor correctly noted the detailed political and financial pressures that TfD
practitioners have to keep in mind when working with development agencies, but these exist in
all community-based theatre work. As Prentki pointed out, TfD “is an instrument in the struggle
to help such people become the subjects, and cease to be the objects, of their own histories” (“Must the Show” 419). If TfD practitioners work with people and encourage their input, following participatory development ideals, the influence of outside pressures should take care of themselves.

If the evolution of TfD, as described by Kidd, Nogueira, and Breitinger above, is accurate, these top-down, agit-prop theatre practices described by Ahmed were used widely in the 1960s. David Kerr framed this top-down approach as “neo-colonial” when he said:

Since it first sprang into popularity in the 1970s, social theatre in Africa has met numerous challenges, mostly arising from neo-colonial, top-down attitudes and practices, either bequeathed directly from the colonial period or indirectly from a neo-colonial political economy of donor funding. (100)

TfD practitioners, more often than not, work in former colonies and often are judged by how closely they adhere to democratic principles. Admittedly, the level of participation promoted by TfD practitioners sometimes is decided by development agencies because of outside agendas or funding concerns. Instead of asking people to identify an issue, or even accepting input about a specific issue, those decisions, technically, are made from the top down, but it is only unethical or of concern if the issue being addressed is not in the people’s best interest or has the appearance of being so (Mda 197).

The following statement by Augusto Boal argues for a brand of TfD that encourages the inclusion of oppressed people in the production of performances: “I believe that all the truly revolutionary theatrical groups should transfer to the people the means of production in the theatre so that the people themselves may utilize them. The theatre is a weapon, and it is the people who should wield it” (TO 122). Nogueira agreed with Boal, writing that TfD has
“evolved to a more dialogical approach, where theatre is practised by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and encouraging them to voice and solve their problems” (105).

Although Taylor was skeptical and cynical about the ethics of TfD, when he described an ideal applied theatre project, he also described an ideal TfD project:

I am at my most confident when I see an applied theatre project in which participants are permitted to dialogue, to argue, to press a point, to interrogate the logic of any given action. Divergence should be welcomed in the applied theatre because the solutions teaching artists may be inclined to make might have no greater currency or accuracy than those of the participants. (57)

There is no reason why this same standard should not be applied to TfD projects, and by Taylor’s admission, no matter where the influences come from, “it is dangerous for applied theatre to emphasize a moral platitude or to insist on a course of action. Simple solutions to life’s problems rarely address the complex and challenging dilemmas in which people find themselves” (29).

The “trap” of unethical TfD practices that Ahmed described still exists, and it is the case that of all the applied theatre subfields, TfD is uniquely susceptible to falling into a top-down practice. When I planned and implemented the TfD interventions examined in this project, I was hyper aware of the ethical traps to which TfD is heir. More important, I was aware that no matter the level of participation—whether it was “theatre for the people, theatre with the people, or theatre by the people” (Prentki and Preston 10)—there are ethical ways to use theatre to intervene in people’s lives. If there are people still concerned with the ethics of using TfD to intervene in people’s lives, they should consider the following advice offered by Tim Prentki:
Those who are squeamish about the right of applied theatre workers to make exogenous cultural interventions might spare a thought for the multi-national corporations, government agencies and global media organizations that intervene thousands of times per day to interfere with our actions, beliefs and desires without incurring moral outrage. (“Introduction to Intervention”182)

The small-scale interventions proposed by me and most TfD practitioners have little hope of reaching as many people as do radio commercials or even billboards, and I am not selling soft-drinks or cellphones, but, as explained below, a cookstove that saves and improves the quality of people’s life.

**Theatre for Development Best Practices**

In addition to illuminating how TfD fits into the larger field of applied theatre and to acknowledge possible ethical pitfalls, there are several scholarly studies that detail exemplary TfD practice in the field. This section examines several trends in TfD that relate, specifically, to the work that I did in Chajul, giving examples of each trend, including the use of Boal’s TO methods, the use of indigenous art forms, working with local experts, and working with groups without using indigenous performance traditions.

**Theatre of the oppressed techniques and theatre for development.** Boal’s TO techniques frequently are used as a basis of TfD work, with both Boal and Freire commonly cited as the basis for TfD work. Boal’s technique of simultaneous dramaturgy sometimes is mentioned in TfD scholarship (e.g., Warritay 118), as is image theatre (e.g., Scott-Danter), but both often are used as Boal intended: as a means to train spect-actors to participate in forum theatre. Sheila Preston said that forum theatre is a “well-used strategy” (“Introduction to

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Participation‖ 129), and Ananda Breed described it “as a problem solving device so that citizens can critically assess the conflict situation” (2).

Although forum theatre is Boal’s TO technique that is used most often, there are numerous other TO and TfD games and exercises that were developed after writing Theatre of the Oppressed. Of the three books that I used in this research project as a resource, one was written by Boal and two were directly influenced by that book. Boal’s book Games for Actors and Non-Actors is a compilation of exercises and games that Boal used throughout his career to work with oppressed groups. Games originally was published in Portuguese, but has since been printed in many languages, including English and Spanish. I used the Spanish version of Games for Actors and Non-Actors—Juegos Para Actores Y No Actores—along with Manual de Teatro Escolar, a book of theatre exercises for teachers to learn theatre terminology in Spanish. Julie McCarthy’s book Enacting Participatory Development: Theatre-Based Techniques provides games and exercises similar to Boal’s Games for Actors and Non-Actors, but with an emphasis on TfD. There are many other theatre game books and articles that focus specifically on TO and TfD techniques.

Laura Myers used TO-based exercises in her field work, but like many practitioners that based their work on Boal, including me, she used exercises to develop participants’ skills to conduct forum theatre. Myers cited Boal and Freire as the basis for her handbook, Act, Learn and Teach: Theatre, HIV and AIDS; Toolkit for Youth in Africa, saying that “Theatre for Development is now widely respected as a creative, participatory and effective way to raise awareness and promote problem solving” (7). Myers, with the support of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and other international organizations, assembled in the handbook knowledge about best practices associated with theatre and HIV and
AIDS prevention. In this “how-to” guide, Myers detailed how to stage a forum theatre piece about HIV and/or AIDS that is oriented toward youth theatre groups, and that operates in a spirit of discourse, for as Myers explained, “the purpose of forum theatre is to create a space where all people have the possibility and the right to be heard” (6).

Myers’s scholarship reveals two important aspects of current TfD practice: (a) starting a conversation using theatre to discuss pressing health concerns is not a top-down message and (b) it often is effective to use students to create theatre and to have one of them serve as an entrée into a community. My work in Chajul closely paralleled Myers work because I used forum theatre with student actors to construct a public health message concerning IAP.

The use of indigenous art forms in theatre for development projects. To create works of theatre that are expressed in a way that is understood by performers and audience members alike, TfD practitioners often incorporate indigenous art forms into the performance. The form of TfD used by Wa Thiong’o at the Kamirithu Educational and Cultural Center in Kenya, previously described, is considered to be “pure” because the project, from start to finish, was designed and implemented by indigenous community members. However, because the participation of indigenous community members in every aspect of TfD project is not always possible, great care must be taken when using indigenous art forms to ensure that they are being used appropriately. As Zakes Mda said:

The practitioner of [TfD] must take great care to ensure that, if and when traditional and popular modes of performance are used, they are used proficiently. It must be remembered that among the villagers, there are people who have attained a high artistic standard of the practice of these performance modes. People know a mediocre product when they see one, and they will only be attracted to watch and participate in an event
that evinces a high level of artistic merit. It is therefore important to pay particular
attention to the aesthetics of the performance modes for them to have any effect. (196)
Mda was concerned with holding the audience’s attention and using indigenous art forms in an
impactful way. However, many indigenous art forms are considered sacred and, consequently,
misusing them might produce a very powerful, but undesirable impact.

In his article “Health Theatre in a Hmong Refugee Camp: Performance, Communication,
and Culture,” Dwight Conquergood, a performance studies scholar and ethnographer, described
how he avoided offending anyone as he used traditional Hmong performance traditions to
educate refugees on health issues in Bin Vinai, which, at the time, was the largest refugee camp
Thailand (188). He “legitimized” his presence in the Ban Vinai refugee camp by being hired as a
health worker, although he lived in the refugee camp, unlike the other health-care workers, and
was tasked with developing a health education program; consequently, along with the help of
refugees and another health worker of Thai descent, Conquergood “started a refugee
performance company that produced skits and scenarios drawing on Hmong folklore and
traditional communicative forms, such as proverbs, storytelling, and folk singing, to develop
critical awareness about the health problems in Ban Vinai” (176).

The indigenous health performance troupe at Ban Vinai used a drum that belonged to a
shaman, and “some of the older people objected to its use” (184), presumably on religious
grounds. When another young performer brought in a shaman’s gong, claiming that it was
acceptable to use because a shaman donated it, Conquergood did not allow it, and said that they
“never again used a shaman’s instrument in our performance” (184). Conquergood’s efforts to be
culturally appropriate or even nonoffensive are important because there is an effort, especially
when outsiders are involved, to not offend anyone and not co-opt the local culture. As an
outsider in Chajul, I limited myself in a similar way. When religion is involved, an object that might seem innocuous to an outsider (e.g., a drum or a shirt) could hold deep religious significance, and the presence of such an object could undermine the entire enterprise.

Harter et al. also documented the benefits of using indigenous performance traditions in TfD projects. In “Catalyzing Social Reform through Participatory Folk Performances in Rural India,” Harter et al. detailed how the use of indigenous performance traditions gave participants control: “The ‘means of production’ of the theatre workshops and subsequent performances rested primarily with the participants. All aspects of performance—from role development to preparation of the stage—were co-created by participants” (295). Harter et al.’s decision to include participants in “all aspects of performance” was possible only because the TfD team included team members of indigenous descent who worked with participants for several months leading up to the performance. Participants having the ability and resources to independently create theatre, thus, is an ideal situation, similar to the complete control assumed by community members at the Kamirithu Educational and Cultural Center in Kenya, as mentioned above.

**Working with local experts.** Many scholars stress the importance of working with local experts. Because Mda ran the Kamirithu program after it was established by Wa Thiong’o, Mda’s scholarship on theatre in Kamirithu almost always included details about using indigenous performance traditions and TfD in cooperation with local experts. Moreover, because Mda and his collaborators are from Kamirithu, they are local experts. Similarly, several of the authors of Harter et al. (Pant, Sharma, and Sharma) were of Indian descent and were familiar with indigenous performance traditions and TO techniques. In Conquergood’s field research, he partnered with public health workers and performers of Hmong descent who could coordinate the performance efforts in culturally specific ways. Doing so is important, because it is common
for the TfD practitioners to be seen as an outsiders and, hence, developing trust and “establish[ing] rapport” with participants is needed (Conquergood 182).

In the article “Tied Up in a Rope of Sand: TFD: Cultural Action or Development Utility?” Alex Mavrocordatos discussed the fine line that TfD practitioners walk when implementing a program in a culture other than theirs: “Theatre for Development should exist, as a lubricant, at the interface between social circumstances and technical (project) activity” (96). Mavrocordatos detailed his project working with indigenous people in Mali, stressing the importance of partnering with a development nongovernmental organization (NGO) or community-based organization (CBO). Although NGO partnerships are essential to TfD projects, they often are not discussed in the literature. NGO partnerships are discussed in Chapter Five of this study.

Working with groups without using indigenous performance traditions. There is little scholarship about working with indigenous groups that do not have performance traditions compatible with TfD. However, Mavrocordatos encountered this issue working with the Bobo people in Mali, who have no “traditional theatre as we know it”; consequently, when Mavrocordatos mentioned theatre performances to the tribe’s chief, the chief replied with the Bobo proverb, “If someone asks you to make a rope out of sand, you had better ask to see the old one first” (99). Mavrocordatos claimed that through his work, the Bobo village “had invented theatre, just like that. Now it was a question of shaping that invention into a form appropriate both to themselves and to the notion of a Theatre for Development” (99).

I dealt with a similar issue in Chajul, and used storytelling and narrative games/exercises to explain what theatre is and to build participating students’ necessary skills (see Chapter Three). Unlike Mavrocordatos, however, I do not claim to have invented theatre in Chajul, but
the lack of performance tradition in Bobo and Chajul illustrates that certain indigenous performance traditions (existent and nonexistent) are not compatible with TfD methods. Additionally, given that Mavrocordatos used nonindigenous forms in the Bobo village, it became obvious that they were “bringing in an outside idea” (100), whereas in other villages where they used compatible indigenous forms, the message was more palatable and seemed to be culturally sanctioned. One of the program evaluators, a Bobo himself, said that Mavrocordatos should never have mentioned the word “theatre” (99). I used the word “teatro” in Chajul, but I agree with Mavrocordatos when he said of his evaluator’s opinion about mentioning theatre, “I think he is right, although I am not sure how we could have done without it” (99). Some concepts, such as representing human behavior in performance, are not universal across cultures, and Mavrocordatos’s work illustrates the problematic nature of using TfD methods with certain groups.

Scholarship on Chajul

The previous section detailed several TfD best practices applicable to this study, including a history of using indigenous performance traditions to have participants control the “means of production” of a theatrical intervention. There are only three examples of scholarship about Chajul, and two of them are about providing community members in Chajul with opportunities to create art. The third essay, Schimmer’s “Environmental Impact of Genocide in Guatemala,” which does not apply to creating art, was mentioned in Chapter One.

Dennis Tedlock’s in-depth study of the play Rabinal Achi: A Mayan Drama of War and Sacrifice is the first of the remaining two pieces of scholarship that dealt with art making. Rabinal Achi is a pre-Columbian Mayan play that tells the story of Popol Vuh, or the origin story of the Mayan people. The extant version of the play that Tedlock analyzed and included in his
book is from Rabinal, a village in the highlands of the Quiché district of Guatemala. Chajul also is in Quiché and Tedlock mentioned evidence that there was a Chajul version of the play.

The third piece of scholarship that dealt with Chajul is *Voices and Images: Mayan Ixil Women of Chajul*, by Brinton Lykes and the women of PhotoVoice, which was an organization in Chajul that Lykes helped to establish for a participatory action research project. Lykes travelled to Chajul and gave 35mm cameras to women to document effects of the Guatemalan civil war on citizens of Chajul. Lykes held workshops with the women on how to use the cameras and how to interview people after they had taken their picture. *Voices and Images* is a compilation of their photographs and stories, and is a detailed account of how the war has affected many members of the community. Several of the images and stories demonstrate disturbing aftereffects caused by the war that otherwise would have gone untold and unseen. In relation to this research project, the book and project show that some people in Chajul are able and willing to create art for the purpose of reflection, even when dealing with the most troubling of topics.

**Need for This Study: Theatre for Energy Justice**

Lykes’s work with the women of PhotoVoice shows that conditions in Chajul are compatible with using art to contemplate social conditions and that people in Chajul are capable of participating in that change. As Lykes said in the introduction to *Voices and Images*, “The fixed image serves as a catalyst for an ever-widening discussion of the differing realities that are present within these Mayan communities” (4). This section builds on the work conducted by Lykes, Conquergood, Harter et al., Mavrocordatos, Myers, and others who established ethical TfD practices that could be used to offer community members in Chajul opportunities to reflect on, and take action to improve, their lives. Specifically, I argue for a brand of TfD called *theatre*
for energy justice (TEJ) that was established by Beth Osnes and me, which, in this case, is used to help community members in Chajul to reflect and take action to reduce the negative effects of IAP in their homes.

The only available scholarship on TEJ was written by Osnes and me, and our publications and conference presentations are the only instances of using TfD techniques to support new energy technology development projects. Osnes’s publication, “Engaging Women’s Voices for Energy Justice,” was the first to employ the TEJ term, which, to borrow the definition of “social justice” from Frey et al., could be defined as “engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who lack access are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally underresourced” in relation to their energy needs (110). In a further effort to establish TEJ, Osnes and I then coauthored the chapter “Theatre for Energy Justice,” which will appear in Communication Activism Pedagogy (in press), and which details the pedagogical methods we used in Guatemala in 2009. Osnes and I presented on TEJ together and separately at the Association for Theater in Higher Education conference in 2010 and at the World Energy Justice Conference in 2009 and 2010. Most recently, on September 25, 2010, Osnes presented a talk about TEJ and women’s empowerment at the World Renewable Energy Congress XI in Abu Dhabi. Our scholarship attempts to establish TEJ as a subfield of TfD that can be used to directly address issues associated with the needs of the energy poor. In this dissertation, I use the term TfD exclusively to avoid confusion and because the methods and practices of TEJ belong to the larger TfD field.

This dissertation fulfills the need for a more complete study of how TfD techniques are suited to energy development projects than has been conducted previously. 24 Although there is a

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24 There are videos and other forms of media used to advertise new energy technologies that I do not consider to be TfD or TEJ. Envirofit and Shell Corporation, for instance, have made videos that are similar to the theatre that we
need to further establish TfD methods as ethical and compatible with participatory development, this study argues, specifically, for using home visits when introducing new energy technologies. In the TfD literature, there is no evidence of scholarship on practicing TfD in people’s homes.

For a theoretical background on the home visits, I relied on Richard Schechner’s theory of “make-belief.” Jan Cohen-Cruz’s seminal work on community-based theatre, Local Acts, explained Schechner’s concept:

“Make believe” performances rely on suspension of disbelief and take place in a realm apart from the rest of the world. “Make belief” performances try to influence audiences about real-world events. They build on a porousness between the real and imaginary by occurring in spaces identified as real (such as churches) rather than symbolic (such as theater buildings) and engaging people enacting their real beliefs with real consequences.

(38)

For a practical background when using TfD in people’s homes in 2010, I relied on the experience of the students that I had worked with in 2009. Those students were my entrée into their homes, and I achieved what I did in 2010 only because of the work that I conducted in 2009. Their skills, among other things, are proof that they remembered the theatre techniques that I taught them, and the connections between the two visits make this a multiyear study of TfD methods, which also is rare in the literature.

There appears to be no scholarship, beyond Mavrocordatos’s briefly described experience in the Bobo village in Mali, detailing how to practice TfD with people who have no knowledge of representational theatre techniques that are compatible with TfD methods. To “train” actors in

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performed in Chajul, 2009. There also is a full Bollywood film used by the Tata Corporation to promote its water filters (Nandy).
Chajul, I relied on Boal’s process for creating spect-actors, which was discussed briefly above and is examined in more detail in Chapter Three.

Finally, to my knowledge, there is no scholarship on TfD in Central or South America. Obviously, Boal and other TO practitioners worked in Brazil, and throughout the world, and Osnes worked in Panama in 2009, but there is no other scholarship about TfD methods, specifically, although that is not to say that it has not happened. In 2009, I witnessed a performance by two NGO workers from Safe Passage in Guatemala City (www.safepassage.org). These two women, one U.S. American and one Guatemalan, performed two monologues for an audience of parents, and then they held a discussion. The U.S. American played a father of a student, wearing a straw hat as a costume, and even drawing on a mustache with a marker (see Photograph 3). An argument could be made that this performance was a form of TO, and the U.S. American woman admitted to studying Boal techniques at her undergraduate university in the United States, but the performance and conversation were designed to identify ways for parents to help students succeed in school, focusing on the relationship between the mother and the father. Safe Passage runs the school, and the NGO has a program that teaches parents skills with the purpose of increasing students’ achievement and improving family relationships. It is a participatory approach that includes the whole family and community as the topic. Hence, there may be TfD projects happening in Central and South America, but no scholarship details these efforts.  

Even if there were such examples of TfD in Central America, there still is a large gap in the scholarship because of the dearth of scholarship from Africa and India.

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25 Art Corp (www.artcorp.org) is an organization based in Central America that “fosters innovation and creativity in order to mobilize communities to improve their environmental, health and social conditions” by using art for social change. The organization does not focus, specifically, on using theatre, and its work has not been documented through scholarship. I could not find any other organizations that use theatre, or even art, to promote social change.
Photograph 3. A U.S. worker in Guatemala City performing as the father of a student for a group of parents at the school run by the organization Safe Passage. Photograph by Jason Bisping.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, besides the works of Boal, the scholarship of Conquergood, Myers, Harter et al. and Mavrocordatos were highly influential in establishing the methods used in the present research study, because they represent some of the best practical efforts on the ground to use theatre for development ethically and effectively. Those scholars practiced what some people called a “bottom-up” perspective, or “development from within” (Nogueira 107). When it is ethical and effective, TfD is “practiced by the people as a way of empowering communities, listening to their concerns, and encouraging them to voice and solve their problems” (105).

I made every effort to practice TfD in this way, but, at the same time, trying to help my partner nongovernmental organization to achieve its goals. This dissertation details those efforts
and argues that in the community of Chajul, Guatemala, using theatre for development tools to create interactive community performances and in home visits is an effective method for introducing new energy technologies to the energy poor. In the next chapter, I explain the methods employed to implement my plan to use theatre for development in Chajul to mitigate the introduction of cookstoves to community members.
Chapter Three

Methods

Community-based performance relies on artists guiding the creation of original work or material adapted to, and with, people with a primary relationship to the content, not necessarily to the craft. (Cohen-Cruz 2-3)

As Adrian Jackson said in her essay “Provoking Intervention,” “an audience may be coaxed or challenged into moving beyond the role of passive spectator into active critic or subversive participant” (41). The people of Chajul, Guatemala definitely are on the passive end of the participation spectrum and need a fair amount of coaxing and challenging before they will participate in theatre activities. This chapter details the theater for development (TfD) methods used to coax and challenge members of the Chajul community to perform a devised piece of theatre about cookstoves in July 2009. I first discuss the methods that originally were planned, followed by how those methods were implemented and adjusted as needed. The difference between the design and implementation of the methods not only illuminates the struggle of putting theory into practice but also shows how adjusting methods is a method itself, which should be illuminating to TfD practitioners, who know all too well that flexibility is essential to successful interventions. All of the methods, both those planned and unplanned, used in 2009 served the final product promised: a public performance that provoked a discussion among community members about cookstoves.

From India to Guatemala

As stated in Chapter One, this project originally was designed to be conducted in India, where there are many cookstove development projects. I researched traditional Indian theatre—including Kathakali, Sanskrit Drama, The Mahabharata, Ramayana, and Natya Sastra—with the
hope of working with a group of people to create a drama about cookstoves using such theatre. India has a rich arts tradition, and there is a 30-year history of development work that encourages people to use cookstoves. When I received funding to conduct development work in Chajul, Guatemala, there were obvious shifts needed in the theatre methods to use because there is very little history of cookstove development work in that remote village, and it was difficult to discover traditional art forms of the area. Communication with people in Chajul was limited to e-mailing Limitless Horizons Ixil (LHI) staff members who spoke English, and their knowledge of local art forms was limited. According to Molly Robbins, LHI’s International Coordinator, there was a tradition of dance in Chajul, but there was no tradition of theatre, and I would have to wait until I arrived in Chajul to assess the accuracy of Robbins’s claims.

Considering the challenges of working in rural Guatemala, I designed the methods to accomplish several goals: (a) to create a theatre piece that was derived from local concerns about the use and lack of use of cookstoves; (b) to employ traditional art forms of Chajul, Guatemala; (c) to present the work to as many people in Chajul as possible; (d) to give citizens of Chajul a chance to discuss the presented drama and to find possible solutions and alternatives to using an open fire; (e) to make no judgments about whether purchasing cookstoves is the correct solution for that population; and (f) to involve undergraduate students in this research project, both in the classroom and in the field. With those goals in place, I chose methods to create the final product, starting in a university classroom.

**University of Colorado at Boulder Classroom**

In fall 2008, just after discovering that I was funded to go to Chajul, my advisor, Dr. Beth Osnes, was teaching an upper division course on world theatre at the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU-Boulder) in which I was enrolled. She used several class periods to investigate TfD
with her students, and asked them to create a theatre piece about cookstove use in Guatemala (see Photograph 4). Osnes gave students several requirements: (a) there had to be as little dialogue as possible to bypass the language barrier, (b) the devised theatre piece had to address major concerns and benefits of introducing cookstoves into families, and (c) the piece had to be entertaining. There was no explicit goal to sell cookstoves so as to provide participants with opportunities to criticize them freely. The sixteen students researched cookstoves, open fires, firewood collection, Mayan customs, and how to use Forum Theatre to create discussion. The CU-Boulder students found culturally specific details about Guatemala and incorporated them into “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” (LWCS).

*Photograph 4.* Students presenting their devised drama “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” created at the University of Colorado at Boulder, November 13, 2008. Photograph by Jason Bisping.
At that point, I knew that I would be working with teenage students in Chajul and presenting a devised work of theatre to members of the community. I would have three two-hour rehearsals (six hours) with the Chajul students, and the final performance would be held in the community center salon on a Saturday. As detailed below, the plan for those three rehearsals was to devise a piece based on students’ experiences with open fires and cookstoves, using indigenous art forms, if possible. Osnes and the CU-Boulder students were aware that their efforts were a practice run, designed to answer the question, “Can a group of students quickly devise a theatre piece about cookstoves that will generate community discussion?”

As the title of the piece makes clear, “LWCS” is divided into two scenarios. The first scenario focuses on a family that does not own a cookstove and the second on a family that owns and uses a cookstove. The CU-Boulder students’ research on Guatemala and cookstoves shaped the content of these scenarios. With Osnes serving as the facilitator, the CU-Boulder students created a loose structure for the scenes and wrote the “script” on the chalkboard (see Photograph 5). The chalkboard script allowed the performance to continue without any cues or dialogue because the performers could glance at the board if they were unsure what came next. Each of the two scenes had four corresponding parts: (a) collecting biomass/banditos, (b) starting a fire, (c) smoke coming from the fire, and (d) results of the various cooking styles.

In the first part of “LWCS,” during the scene “Life without a Cookstove,” the mother collects sticks and barely escapes when two banditos attack her. She then returns home and starts a fire with the sticks. Her children are cleaning and taking care of the baby. When smoke comes out of the fire, it cannot escape the house and the children cough; one of the daughters collapses and dies. The father returns home, ending the scene.
In the second part of “LWCS,” during the scene “Life with a Cookstove,” the mother collects biomass, and because she needs so much less fuel to operate a stove than if she was using an open fire, she has collected the wood and left the stage before the banditos enter, with them looking confused and frustrated. The mother returns home and starts a fire in her cookstove. Very little smoke escapes and one of the daughters sweeps it out the door. The daughters leave for school and the mother starts working on a craft, which she supposedly will sell at the market. The daughters return home from school and the father returns from work, ending the scene.

At the end of each of those scenes, Osnes yelled “freeze” and a brief Forum Theatre discussion was held. Each scene lasted less than five minutes. The discussion portion is designed to last much longer, but in the classroom, the CU-Boulder students answered the questions briefly. The goal of the questions was twofold: to check comprehension and to generate discussion about the issues surrounding the use, and lack thereof, of cookstoves. The list of questions from the original script was:

What happened to the daughter who collapsed?

Where did the smoke demons come from? Why are they harmful?

What was happening in the first scene where Mother was being bothered by those banditos?

Did the daughters get to go to school? If not, why?

Why is there so little food for the family to eat?

How did the father feel at the end when he came home to this situation?

During the discussion, the facilitator would use cues from the audience to generate other questions.
Photograph 5. Part of the structured script on the chalkboard at the University of Colorado at Boulder, November 13, 2008. Photograph by Jason Bisping.

I joined the class briefly as students created and presented “LWCS,” and documented the process with photographs and video. Osnes and her students not only established the structure and content of what would become the theatre piece in Chajul but during that process, they established three integral practices. First, they engaged in discussions that questioned whether they were treating the material in culturally appropriate ways. Osnes and several students asked questions such as, “Does this actually happen in Guatemala?” and “Would the audience understand the stage action and the issues being discussed?” Second, the contrasting structure of the two scenes was designed to be provocative. When deciding what to include, the following questions were asked: “Will this get people talking?” and “Will this get people thinking?” Third, they found ways for everyone to participate, with students playing the mother, father, and the children, and personifying the smoke in the scene with “smoke demon” characters. Any students
who were left without a part to play linked arms and created the walls of the house. As detailed below, the work done on “LWCS” with the CU-Boulder undergraduate students became the foundation of the structure and content used with students in Chajul, but these three practices had as much impact on the intervention as they did on the script.

**Staging Dying, Banditos, and Fathers**

Three pieces of content in “LWCS” bear explanation because of their future implications: dying, banditos, and the father. The CU-Boulder students and the students in Chajul had to deal with these three pieces of content, each in their unique way, and how they decided to stage dying, banditos, and the father is telling of what each considered to be appropriate for the intended audience.

**Dying.** The CU-Boulder students’ research revealed that the biggest health risk associated with open fires is respiratory disease\(^26\); hence, they thought that it was necessary to show the health risks of indoor air pollution (IAP) in a way that would generate discussion. They were unsure whether it would be appropriate to have the character of the daughter die at the end, or just simply collapse and continue coughing. After Osnes and I discussed it with course members, we decided that it was better to have the character “die,” which is how it was written on the board, with quotation marks around the word. The daughter would have a coughing fit, collapse, and not move. Dying ambiguously in this way would allow the facilitator to ask the question, “What happened to the daughter who collapsed?” The audience then could decide if she had died or simply passed out. Leaving it open ended was intended to encourage audience members to discuss the risks of IAP in ways that were appropriate to their locale. If a spectator stated that the daughter did not die and that smoke is not harmful, that knowledge gap would be revealed to the facilitator and to the other spectators. The facilitator then had the option to ask

\(^{26}\) See Rehfuess, Dherani et al., and Smith-Silversten et al.
other audience members if they agreed or disagreed with that conclusion, and why. If an audience member stated that smoke was killing the town’s children, that information also would be shared with the other spectators and would shape the discussion. Both the CU-Boulder students and the students in Chajul discussed the audience’s reaction to dealing with death on stage, and more than anything else, these discussions on staging death helped us to decide how to treat the audience and what to expect from members in return.

**Banditos.** Through their research, the CU-Boulder students also discovered that young women were at risk for attack when they collected firewood alone. This danger to young women is supported by a report by the NGO Practical Action (“Smoke’s Increasing” 12) and represented in the film *Sita, a Girl from Jambu*, which is an adaptation of a street theatre piece created by young women in Nepal. In that film, Sita, the main character, is sexually assaulted as she collects firewood, an event that leads to her losing her fiancée, being tricked into becoming a sex worker, and contracting AIDS before returning home. The CU-Boulder students used the events in *Sita* and other reports that detailed the potential for violence towards women collecting firewood to write a scene in “LWCS” where banditos attack the mother as she collects firewood. Interestingly, the CU-Boulder students playing the banditos were young men, and they played them as laughing clowns who posed no real threat. Even though the laughter can be partially attributed to the humor infused into the word “bandito” and the comic stereotypes surrounding that word and concept, the lighthearted nature in which the students played this scene probably can also be attributed to the serious nature of the subject matter. The CU-Boulder students also used the Spanish word “*molestar*” when discussing how the banditos would bother the mother,

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27 Frito Bandito was a comic mascot for Fritos corn chips in the late 1960s, and it has become the classic example of comically racial stereotypes in popular culture (Dirks and Mueller 120). The Frito mascot could be one contributing factor to the comic nature of this word, and although the connection cannot be demonstrated per se it is hard to deny the laughter that the word somehow elicits.
which, in Spanish, means “to bother or disturb,” but has connotations associated with the word “molest” and “molestation” to English speakers. This play on words added to the comedy that was masking the serious subject matter. However, this joking about serious topics by the CU-Boulder students was not a behavior demonstrated by students in Chajul, perhaps because Chajul was such a small community that there was a possibility that former assailants might be at the performance and be part of the discussion. However, as discussed below, this concern about how to stage the banditos turned out to be a moot point.

**Father.** Lastly, Osnes and her students made an effort to include a father character, because Osnes always tries to get “male buy-in” when she creates a theatre piece. IAP and the dangers of collecting firewood alone might adversely affect women and children, but without male buy-in, it is difficult for change to occur when men have the majority of the decision-making power. A father character, thus, was added who went to work and came home in each scene. As explained below, the students in Chajul made the father a more prominent character.

**2009 Methods Design**

Keeping in mind that I would have only six hours with the students in Chajul, I designed a rehearsal and devising period with four goals in mind: (a) to give students opportunities to develop skills they needed to devise and perform a show about cookstoves for their community, (b) to use their knowledge about using open fires and cookstoves to make the piece unique to their community, (c) to create the piece using or incorporating local art forms, and (d) to keep the process fun. As mentioned in Chapter Two, I used Boal’s books *Theatre of the Oppressed* and *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, and I consulted Julie McCarthy’s book *Enacting Participatory Development: Theatre-Based Techniques*, which is a book of games and exercises that is similar to Boal’s *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, but with an emphasis on TfD.
Drawing from these works and my experience devising theatre, I came up with the following design for the six hours of rehearsal, starting with the first two.

**First Rehearsal Plan**

My plan was to recreate a play with students in Chajul that was very similar to “LWCS.” I planned for the play to feature a family that did not have a cookstove that could possibly be compared to a family that did have a cookstove. Lack of cookstove use was the problem identified by LHI, but I was determined to give participants opportunities to identify the problem and to help them present a play featuring cookstoves as one possible solution. Students would be tasked with identifying difficulties that had occurred in their lives from not having a stove, and I would help them to put those stories onstage in a format that could be presented to other members of their town and framed with a discussion and Forum theatre interventions.

Almost all theatre rehearsals start with a warm-up. I was, of course, following Boal’s guidelines, and planned to start by helping the students to “know their body.” Osnes starts all of her workshops with an effective breathing exercise that teaches people to use their full breath when speaking. I adapted her warm-up to include stretches and a name game that involved students standing in a circle. One person would start, by making genuine eye contact with another participant, and then say his or her name, effectively passing it to the other person. Students would continue the pattern until everyone had said their name and shared eye contact at least once. This simple game takes concentration and focus, but if it is successful, it creates camaraderie. The exercise has the added benefit of helping outsiders to learn everyone’s name.

After participants mastered that task, and a nice rhythm was established with names being called out at a steady pace, and with good volume and energy, I planned to move to the next step that would have participants not say their name but, instead, say the name of the person with
whom they were making eye contact. This task requires more concentration than the previous
task, and it is quite difficult for novices, who, typically, have been spending their mental energies
focusing on their names. During this next step, people often say their name by mistake,
effectively calling someone else by their name as they look that person in the eyes. Doing so
never fails to elicit laughter and it, too, is great for building camaraderie.

The next planned exercise, from *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*, was intended to
continue the warm-up, but also to start students thinking about and creating content for the play
to be devised. I was hoping to create at least a few scenes in that first two-hour rehearsal, which
was necessary for meeting the time-line. Boal describes the game “Characters in Movement”
(*Games* 143) as “one or more actors come on stage and do various actions to show where they
come from, what they do and where they are going. The others must try to understand them by
these few actions” (143). Because this game can be very complicated, especially for novices,
Boal described some possible actions for characters, such as “they have come in from the street”
or “they are in a waiting room” (143). The plan was to ease the Chajul students into the more
complicated roles they probably would have to play onstage during the devised play (e.g.,
mother, father, daughter, and grandmother). In this exercise, students would start by walking
around the room, move on to shaking out their limbs for relaxation and for fun, and then move
on to representing animals and then people. This process helps them to practice expressing
themselves in space, starting with moving around like an animal and then vocalizing animal
sounds, using their bodies and voices to represent something other than themselves. The plan to
have them represent people in their family was the first step in devising content for the play, as
how they moved, things they said, and actions they performed all can all be for content in the
play.
The second exercise planned for the first rehearsal was another method for creating content for the play, and is called “Collective Storytelling,” which is a well-known theatre game (McCarthy 75–76). The plan was to have students stand in a circle, contribute one sentence each, and tell a story collectively. McCarthy advises that the facilitator start a sentence similar to the following when using this game to create content for issue-based work: “This is a story about a family with a cookstove and they are happy with it.” The students then continue the story, contributing content that can be used in the play.

The plan then included more exercises that built skills needed for the performance (e.g., using full voice, focus, and representing people other than themselves) and, simultaneously, collected content specific to people’s lives. Those exercises included “Image of the Word” (Boal, *Games* 176–180, McCarthy 82–83), “Image of a Phrase” (Boal, *Games* 184, McCarthy 49), “Throwing the Stone” (McCarthy 67), “The Game of Family Power” (Boal, *Games* 163, McCarthy 74), “Mapping your City” (McCarthy 85), and “What Does the Scene Need?” (McCarthy 93). The last 60 minutes of the rehearsal were left open for devising, to start putting the play together. I would reassess what needed to be done for the next two rehearsals, but that time was needed to further devise and stage the play. I will not detail the plan further because I had left it as open ended as possible. I was relying on my theatre knowledge, along with the books in my bag: *Games or Actors and Non-Actors* and *Enacting Participatory Development*. There also is not a need to elaborate further because everything changed within a few minutes of the first rehearsal.

There were supposed to be two groups of students, one group that met in the mornings and one group that met in the afternoons. The group in the morning would meet three times and the group in the afternoon would meet only twice. The morning group, which was identified as
the more reliable group by the LHI staff, would devise and perform the main play about
cookstoves under my direction, whereas the afternoon group would devise a piece about
nutrition—a topic chosen by the LHI staff—under the direction of Kelly Gibson and Chelsea
Hackett, the two CU-Boulder undergraduate students accompanying us on the trip. Gibson’s and
Hackett’s participation would meet the goal of incorporating undergraduates into this research
project, and it would allow me to use one of the afternoons to meet with staff from Community
Enterprise Solutions (CES), the local cookstove manufacturer. I had been researching and
interviewing key informants about cookstove design and practice for some time, but this would
be the first time that I would have access to the only cookstove manufacturer in the Ixil region.
During that meeting, I planned to gather information from the manufacturer about cookstoves
and about Chajul that could be incorporated into the play.

2009 Methods Implementation

The LHI staff had arranged for us to meet the students who would be participating in the
play at an event on our first day in Chajul. The students made us a traditional drink comprised of
corn and milk; we talked about family and school; and five students, three young women and
two young men, performed a traditional dance for us (see Photograph 6). The dance was
beautifully done, and it was the only time I saw male students, or any male, wearing the
traditional clothes of Chajul. Although it is not common to see men in traditional clothes
throughout most of Guatemala, it is even rarer in Chajul, where the traditional white pants are
impractical because the majority of men work in the field and the pants would not stay white.
The dances were short, and the students finished each one before the music on their CD had
reached the end of the track. They danced to three traditional songs, and the dances were
choreographed in such a way that students moved together in a repetitive way. At the time, I
thought that it would be coopting their culture to use such a formal and traditional dance in a play about cookstoves. According to the students and LHI’s director, Veronica, this type of dance is the only form of traditional performance art in Chajul. In hindsight, I gave up too easily on that idea and should have encouraged the students incorporate their traditional dance in an appropriate way. It was the first day and I had failed in my goal of incorporating Chajul performance traditions into the piece.

*Photograph 6.* Students performed a traditional Ixil dance for us July 6, 2009. Photograph by Jason Bisping.

**First Rehearsal**

After meeting the students, I better understood why the LHI staff described them as shy, but I also saw the students interacting with each other and with the staff in a very gregarious
way. They joked and laughed openly, spoke loudly, and touched each other, all without too much embarrassment. It was difficult to judge if these were normal interactions because my presence and that of others in the room was having an obvious effect on their behavior, as some students hammed it up for the visitors.

Joining me at the first rehearsal were Beth Osnes; two of her teenage children, Peter and Melisande; and two of her undergraduate students, Kelly Gibson and Chelsea Hackett. Everyone participated and helped with the video cameras when needed. Gibson and Hackett had met with Osnes and me several times, and they were going to lead some of the exercises. There were six of us, all U.S. Americans, in the tiny room, waiting for the students to arrive. A few students from Chajul were milling around outside, but ten minutes after the rehearsal was supposed to begin, the six of us still were sitting alone. Eventually, students started to arrive, and once a few joined us, we convinced the others to join us too.

Other than starting almost twenty minutes late, the plan I designed was beginning to work wonderfully. The students participated in the full-breath exercise, and joined the circle to start the name game, but they were not making eye contact with each other and they were not speaking loudly enough. The person having the name passed to him or her often did not realize that was being done because that person was looking at the ground and it was not clear at who the speaker was looking. After some demonstrations by me, Gibson, and Hackett, each student passed his or her name to another participant. I realized that the next step, of passing someone else’s name to that person, would be difficult and time consuming. Because the students were speaking so softly, it was more important to work on volume and full breath. I asked the students, one at a time, to step out of the room and into the courtyard, which was around the corner, roughly 30 feet away. The remainder of the people in the room would listen, and if we
could hear the student say his or her name, we would clap for the person, which was very effective for encouraging quiet students and promoting teamwork. The students remaining in the room seemed to agree to clap only when the person in the courtyard was really loud. They immediately realized the importance of supporting each other but, at the same time, holding each other accountable. Some of the students went to the courtyard and said their names clearly and loudly on the first try. Others needed a few tries, and when we could faintly hear them, no one yelled for them to be louder. Instead, we waited silently, allowing the student in the courtyard time to find his or her full breath and loud voice. By changing the exercise, I lost the benefit of practicing genuine connection through eye contact, but it seemed much more important to help the students find a full breath voice, and the students found a way to build camaraderie through the adapted exercise.

At that point, nearly half of the two-hour rehearsal time had passed. The option of keeping the students late was not possible because they had school in the afternoons, which explains why they met in the mornings. Because we would have very little time for devising the play, I moved onto the second planned exercise, “Characters in Movement.” I started by asking the students to walk around.28 The plan was to move onto representing animals, and then representing family members, with the idea that their representations could be used to devise characters in the play. However, the Chajul students were having trouble walking around without giggling or stopping. Hackett, Gibson, and I demonstrated the actions and encouraged them to follow our lead, but many students were not moving and some tried hiding in the corner. When I asked them to move around like a chicken, everyone froze, and, for some reason, most moved and stood in the circle configuration, as if they expected this exercise to follow the same format.

28 I knew that I would have an interpreter with me at all times. I omit here the step of me saying something in English and the interpreter saying it again in Spanish, but I made every attempt to speak in Spanish as often as I could. I learned the most commonly used words, such as “walk,” “stop,” and “all together.”
as the last one. When I asked them to use the whole room and to move like a duck, a few of the young men squatted for a few second, but the young women were wearing traditional skirts and the thought of squatting like a duck forced them to leave the circle. It seemed to take quite a bit of courage and concentration for the students to even squat for a few seconds, and no one quacked or flapped wings. Hackett and Gibson, both trained actors, were waddling and quacking around the room, much to the students’ amusement. When a few of the students slowly started to express themselves, I knew they were not ready to represent the family members with enough detail for devising content. To facilitate progression towards the goal of devising content, I changed the plan slightly by asking them to walk around like each other, picking a person to mimic. This procedure forced the students still standing against the wall to move, because many of the more active students challenged other students’ passive behavior by approaching those who were not participating and standing in front of them. Stationary participants knew that as soon as they moved, they were going to be mimicked. Many tried to run away, but they were followed by others who ran beside them. Although this exercise was not prepared, Boal described it as “Imitating Others” (74). Everyone in the room suddenly was moving, and people who were not participating before were trying to imitate others, possibly to shed the person imitating them.

In terms of energy, and accurate representation, this was the most successful exercise thus far, but we still had not generated any content for the play. Before the energy generated by the Imitating Others exercise faded, I asked students to start moving as someone in their family, offering examples, such as their father, mother, grandmother, brother, or sister. Again, this request brought everyone to a stop. Hackett demonstrated a grandmother in a very amusing way, and a young male student, fresh from following others around and copying the way that they
walked, started imitating Hackett’s representation of the grandmother. I asked everyone to
imitate Hackett, and suddenly everyone was moving again. Some were more accurate than
others, and when I gave them variations (e.g., to hunch their back or to use a cane), most
attempted them. I asked them to walk like their other family members, mostly with Hackett or
Gibson demonstrating, and the Chajul students imitating the original representation. Some of the
Chajul students were beginning to take the initiative, some more accurately that others, but there
were not enough original details. I was hoping, for example, that Chajul students would walk and
speak like their grandmother, such that they could be asked to pretend to be their grandmother in
a scenario about cookstoves, with their actions answering the questions, “How does the
grandmother act around the fire?” and “What does she think about cookstoves?” Material
generated in this way could be quickly put into a scene, or a scene could be built around it. The
Chajul students then could claim to have written the scene from their experiences. Unfortunately,
they did not have the ability to represent a family member in enough detail to generate such
content.

The next planned exercise, “Collective Storytelling,” provided another opportunity to
generate content for the play. We reformed a circle—a configuration that seemed comforting to
many of the shy students—and I explained the process of telling a story one sentence at a time. I
started the story as planned: “This is a story about a family with a cookstove and they are happy
with it.” I then said, “and,” and turned to the young woman to my left to complete the sentence.
She stood there frozen for fifteen seconds, not looking at anyone. I was unsure whether the
student understood what to do. The interpreter, Molly Robbins, who worked for LHI, had said
previously that many of the students did not have cookstoves and that it would be difficult for
them to tell that story. Hence, I changed the first sentence to “This is a story about a family
without a cookstove and . . .” However, the young woman to my left still did not respond. I noticed that the next person in the circle was a young man who had been participating energetically. I attempted to pass the sentence to him to continue the story, but he, too, stood frozen, not knowing what to say. After many attempts, a few people around the circle added a few words or a sentence to the story, but I could think of no way to generate a scene, much less a play, out of the information that they were (not) providing.

Osnes and I had discussed the possibility of needing to use the “LWCS” script as it was written by the CU-Boulder students, but I was opposed to doing so because I thought it was more ethical and sustainable if participants generated the content of the play. However, at that point in the rehearsal, it was obvious that the students did not have the ability to generate content, even when given the topic and situation, but they did have the ability to represent characters if we showed them how to do so first. Because there was only 45 minutes left in the rehearsal, I spent the rest of the time staging “LWCS.” Although the Chajul students had not enjoyed the process of creating stories and there was a sour mood in the room, when we started staging the play and I asked for their input, the mood immediately changed.

At that point, I abandoned the planned exercises and devising, and, instead, started the process of putting on a play, which is a process I had not planned on paper but one I had a lot of experience doing. However, I had major ethical reservations about using the students in Chajul to stage a play that was written in the United States by CU-Boulder undergraduates about an issue identified by U.S. NGO workers at LHI. For the rest of that rehearsal and the next two rehearsals, we staged a version of the play “LWCS,” making changes when appropriate and even devising new scenes and creating new characters. To ensure that the cookstove situation in Chajul was being represented accurately, we constantly checked with the Chajul students and
LHI staff about whether the material was culturally appropriate and whether it would be understood by the intended audience. The next section details the process of staging “LWCS” in Chajul, including staging it in an ethical manner.

“Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” in Chajul

As explained above, for the remaining 45 minutes of the first rehearsal in Chajul, I started staging “LWCS.” From what I had seen thus far, I knew which students had the ability to play a major character in the play, but I wanted them to choose a certain character because, then, the students would have more ownership about what was created and how they represented that character.

I put the students in groups and told them to pick a character to play in the family as they walked around. I watched to see who was creating a character and how they were interacting with each other. There were so many people in the room that the groups had to stay together, and members of the group had to decide if they were going to move around as themselves or to follow the cues of students who were pretending to be a grandmother or son. Students were pretending to use a cane as they walked, and there were students crawling on the floor, pretending to be babies. Students were glancing around to see how other families were being represented. For the first time, they seemed to be aware that they had a responsibility to each other and to their audience to create characters that were recognizable.

As the Chajul students were walking around as family groups, I told them that we needed someone to play a mother, a father, and at least two daughters. When a young male student, Herman, came forward almost immediately and said that he would play the father, other

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29 I use U.S. pseudonyms for the students to protect their identities. Doing so also is necessary for clarity because in Chajul, whose full name is San Gaspar de Chajul, a large portion of the boys are named Gaspar and a large percentage of the girls are named Maria. Surprisingly, the lack of naming variety posed no problems when I was on site but on paper, many people sharing a name would be very confusing.
students nodded and agreed. Herman was one of the more outgoing students, and he played a major role in the success of the play, in addition to being instrumental in the success of my 2010 site visit (as explained later). Students continued to come forward, one at a time to play a role. The LHI staff had told us that another student, Abby, was one of the leaders in the group. She had been helping all morning, explaining instructions to students who did not understand and encouraging students who were not participating. Much to my surprise, she did not step forward to take a role but, instead, encouraged others to do so. Abby continued to be helpful, and she became a type of chorus leader, keeping students on task and arranging logistics on and off stage. The responsibility taken on by Abby, Herman, and several others gave the play credibility, and other students started to participate with more enthusiasm than before.

I grabbed a pair of scissors and a piece of brown cloth that Osnes had brought along to represent smoke, and asked Hackett and Gibson to gather some firewood from outside and to “build a fire” in the middle of the room. As I cut up the piece of cloth in strips, I asked the students what I was holding. Most said cloth. I said, “No! It is smoke.” I walked around the room with the cloth by my face, coughing, which elicited laughter. I asked if anyone wanted to play the character of smoke monsters. One of the more puckish young men, Edward, stepped forward immediately and took the cloth around the room, prompting people to cough playfully. Edward was joined by two more students playing smoke monsters.

The stage was set and the play was cast, but before beginning, we discussed the translation of “smoke monsters.” Students were asked if it was appropriate to call them smoke monsters or smoke demons. They said that it did not matter, which I was pretty sure was the case, but doing so established early on that they would be asked for advice to see if content was culturally appropriate. Additionally, they were asked whether the audience would understand
that they were playing smoke. After some discussion, it was decided that if they came out of the
fire and danced around people who started coughing when they arrived, everyone in the audience
would understand. I had many similar conversations with the students, which served a double
purpose. Most of the time, I genuinely was checking to see if the content was appropriate, but at
other times, I was checking to see whether the actors thought that the audience would understand
the story. This last point was mostly gentle encouragement to the actors to be clear in their
actions.

I also asked students a series of questions about their personal experiences with
cookstoves, asking them to raise their hands if the statement was true for them. I wanted to
gather more information and to get them into the frame of mind for creating a play about their
lives, and not a play that was my vision. At first, no one raised their hands, even to questions that
we knew were true for most families. This nonparticipation was just another instance of people
in Chajul not being accustomed to being asked their opinion. I then used a technique taught to
me by Osnes and Dr. David Silver, who has done extensive TdD work in the public health field,
asking everyone to raise their hands and to put their hands down if the statement applied to them.
Silver pointed out that this procedure requires everyone to be engaged, and it is easy to see who
is participating. It almost is impossible to know if students did not lower their hands because
they did not understand what was happening or what we were asking, but it was clear that after a
few questions, all of the students wanted to lower their hands from fatigue.

Student input improved as I began staging “LWCS.” The first scene, the bandito scene, as
devised by the CU-Boulder undergraduates, was comical and involved banditos attacking a
mother as she collected firewood. Students in Chajul said that such attacks did not happen in
Chajul, and that girls and women only collected firewood if there were no able boys or men in
their family. Others said that they collected firewood as a family, and still others said that they bought firewood. Because dangers associated with collecting firewood were not an issue in Chajul and would be confusing and culturally inappropriate, the bandito scene was deleted. Cutting that scene could be seen as a step back in the play development process, but, ultimately, it was very helpful to the process, because students’ input ensured that their actions made sense. Chajul students seemed to understand why the scene was cut, and they definitely understood that we were taking their advice. It was a fortunate way to start the process, and it was the first step towards getting unsolicited input from the students.

As I staged the next scene, I asked the newly cast family to enter around the prop fire. Removing the bandito scene, and now watching the family enter, I realized that we had already started to create a very different play from the one devised at CU-Boulder. One of the children was being played by a young man of about 16, John, and he insisted on playing a toddler who was crawling around on the floor. We wanted a baby in the scene, but John was too large for the family members to carry; consequently, as he crawled onto the rehearsal stage, the mother carried a doll on her back. They were followed by students playing a school-age daughter, a grandmother, and the father. As the mother started the fire, the remaining students surrounded them as the walls of the house.

These remaining students generally were the shiest ones who did not volunteer to be cast in a role. These students played the walls of the house, just as the CU-Boulder undergraduates had done with the remaining actors when developing the original script. Because I wanted the Chajul students to do more than just stand, I asked them to say, “We are a house without a cookstove,” as they entered. At the time, these were the only words spoken in the play, as we wanted to keep the play in its original nonverbal form. However, we quickly realized that there
was no language barrier to avoid because the actors and the audience spoke Ixil; consequently, over the next two rehearsals, we made several decisions about how much speaking should be in the play, eventually deciding that more was better because clarity was more important than creating an aesthetically pleasing work of art.

The house became a major character, and the actors playing the house served as a chorus throughout the play. In the first house scene, chorus members entered the stage through the audience, chanting “oatz, oatz,” which is “house” in Ixil. As the chorus settled in place as the house, the student at the front of the line and closest to the audience held her hands in the air and said, “We are a house without a cookstove.” The other chorus members answered her in unison, holding their hands in the air. This technique of chanting and entering in unison was used again in the play, and it was an effective way to include all participants. Additionally, by having actors play the house and other set pieces, those personified set pieces became imbued with a personality. In “LWCS,” the house made of people could be seen as representing watchful members of the town. A chorus in a Greek tragedy serves a similar function, representing some aspect of a population or place. Hence, to involve all of the actors, we essentially created a chorus, which drastically changed the play from its original form. The chorus/house also stopped the smoke from escaping, taking an active role.

As the chorus took its place on stage as the house, the family entered and it became obvious that the Chajul version of “LWCS” was going to be a very different play than the CU-Boulder version. Watching Herman enter as the father, leading his family, was a very different scene than watching undergraduates at CU-Boulder perform a scene where the father was an afterthought. I did not give Herman direction on how to be a father; he simply acted how a father

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30 There is an Ixil alphabet, but it is not widely known. Because the spelling of Ixil words in the English alphabet is not consistent, Ixil words are spelled phonetically for clarity.
acts in Chajul—as the head of the household. The other characters also took on characteristics that were specific to how they saw people acting in Chajul, making this a play specific to the culture and customs of the people living there. In this way, the Chajul students were giving input into what the play should be about. After seeing Herman change the scene so drastically with his presence, I paid closer attention to how the students were representing their characters.

With only a few minutes left in rehearsal, we ran into the same problem about how to represent death and violence on stage as encountered in the CU-Boulder classroom. We asked the students if it was appropriate for the daughter to collapse when the smoke attacked her. They decided that it was unlikely that a child would die of smoke inhalation, and they could not recall an instance of that ever happening. Instead, they thought it was more appropriate for the grandmother to collapse from the smoke. When asked whether a grandmother dying on stage would be traumatic for the audience to witness, they said, “No. It happens all of the time.” They gave us a similar answer when asked if it was appropriate for John, who was playing the baby, to fall into the fire and get burned, as they said that children are burned by fires all of the time. I later met John’s younger brother who, years previously, had been badly burned, with scars on his neck and all along one side of his body, when he fell into a fire. At the time of our first rehearsal in 2009, John did not mention his brother, and it seems that burns are so common in Chajul that it would have been odd if he had said anything about it. However, even though they had been asked about problems associated with open fires in the home, and they had given answers that included burns, smoke, eye irritation, when we spent so much time staging John falling into the fire and the grandmother collapsing from the smoke monster attack, the students realized what it meant to put those problems on the stage.
Although the rehearsal started late and my devising plan was not successful, I considered it to be a success, as we had staged the first half of “LWCS.” More important, we started to get students’ input, both verbal and nonverbal, about how to tailor the play to a Chajul audience. Students seemed to understand that we were making this play for them and according to their desires; they, thus, knew that we would listen to them and act on what they said.

During the first rehearsal, there were a few suggestions that we were not able to incorporate into the play. Notably, students identified deforestation as a problem in Chajul, but during the rehearsal, the interpreter, Molly Robbins, had warned us to be careful with environmental topics. According to Robbins, many citizens of Chajul, especially ones who identify as indigenous, are suspicious of environmental messages because government environmental policies adversely affect the indigenous population. She cited an incident where a recent hydroelectric dam was built on land occupied by indigenous people, with flooding forcing many indigenous people to relocate their homes and farmland. The dam also drastically changed the water table, affecting farms miles away, with none of the indigenous people compensated. However, according to Robbins, most people were mad because the power generated by the dam went to the city and not to them. With that story in mind, Robbins warned that if our play’s message was “Don’t cut down trees,” it would be seen as another environmental message that was passed down from on high that would adversely affect the indigenous population.

With Robbins’s warning in mind, and with one rehearsal complete, I met with Osnes, Gibson, and Hackett to plan the next rehearsal. First, we added two scenes, effectively replacing the bandito scenes with two contrasting firewood-collecting scenes. To avoid an overtly environmental message, we focused not on deforestation but, instead, wrote the scenes to emphasize the difference between the amounts of wood needed when using an open fire
compared to using a cookstove. In the first scene, the chorus would enter as trees—chanting “eetz, eetz,” Ixil for forest—and the father and son would cut them all down and collect the wood for the open fire. In the second scene, the father and son would enter and cut down only one tree, collecting much less wood because they owned a cookstove. We, thus, avoided the environmental message altogether. We also decided that a bird would be in both scenes: In the first scene, the bird would cry and fly away when all the trees were cut down; in the second scene, the bird and remaining trees would dance.

It was decided that the bird would be a white bird (*parratto*) and not the green quetzal bird, which is a very common motif in Mayan culture. The quetzal is the national bird, and the Guatemalan currency, the *quetzale*, is named for this endangered bird. The bird is featured on almost every tapestry and piece of women’s clothing in Chajul and throughout the country. In some ways, it was a missed opportunity to not have the bird affected by the deforestation be represented as the pervasive quetzal, but I was not part of the conversation in rehearsal when the students decided how the bird would be dressed. However, students were starting to take the ideas I proposed and make choices, which was an important step in the process of educating them as spect-actors.

During that meeting with Gibson, Hackett, Osnes and me, in addition to rewriting the wood-collecting scene, we wrote down the script in bullet-point form in the same way as the CU-Boulder undergraduates had done on the classroom blackboard (see Appendix A, “LWCS” script as performed in Chajul). Writing the script in bullet-point form prompted a conversation about how involved we would be in the production. The script was long and detailed, leading to the question of whether we would have to prompt students at different points in the script to make their entrances, as well as other stage actions. Hackett volunteered to sit on the side of the stage
and to prompt students, but I vehemently opposed this suggestion. After all of the work done to create a play that was generated from local concerns, and after the effort put into ensuring students that their opinions were valuable, I believed that if one of us sat in full view of the audience and told the students what to do and say, we would negate all of that goodwill and undermine our intention of creating a locally devised play. Osnes agreed, but she was concerned that because of their inexperience, students would forget their cues. I proposed the compromise that we would not prompt them at rehearsals; consequently, they would not expect it during the performance. If they needed it on the day of the performance, we would do it as surreptitiously as possible.

The discussion of whether to prompt the actors led to a conversation about narrating the events as they were happening on stage. Osnes suggested having Veronica, who was facilitating the performance, narrate the action throughout the play. I opposed doing so, wanting audience members to look at the mostly silent scenes and to decide what was happening. I wanted audience members to see their lives on the stage as the action unfolded. However, for audience members to see themselves onstage, we had a lot of work to do to get the scenes to the point of clear comprehension by everyone in the audience. At the meeting, we were unable to decide if the scenes would be ready and if it would be beneficial to use narration. We agreed to disagree, waiting to see how the rest of the rehearsals went.

The second rehearsal started 30 minutes late. Unlike the first rehearsal, there were no students milling around outside. Somehow, all of the students arrived around same time, as if almost everyone agreed to arrive then. We started with some warm-up exercises, but this time, there was no need for exercises that created content for devising; consequently, we played two fun games to help the Chajul students learn to work and relate together. Gibson and Hackett led a
popular theatre game called “Zip, Zap, Zop,” where students stand in a circle and take turns passing each of the eponymous sounds to each other with a clap. This high-energy game encourages a loud speaking voice and concentration. The students reacted positively to the game, laughing and being silly, showing signs that they would be outgoing at this rehearsal.

I chose the second exercise, “Mr. Pereira,” because, as McCarthy pointed out, it helps “participants relate to each other and to understand how others see them, by seeing their actions reflected in others” (45). The exercise starts with the group leaving the room. As McCarthy explained:

Ask 1 person to come back in. When they enter, the facilitator copies everything they do or say. Once the participant has understood that the facilitator is copying her, invite another person into the room. Now 2 people imitate what that person is doing. Continue until the last person has come into the room. (45)

The students reacted as McCarthy predicted, becoming aware that people were looking at them. This exercise proved important because, as McCarthy said of her experience using Mr. Pereira in the field, “After the game finished, the group still kept playing” (45). This mimicry continued throughout the afternoon, which kept the students aware that people were watching them. If a student did something particularly well during the rehearsal, others copied him or her, which seemed to encourage the other actors to perform in a way such that they were copied. The students became much more expressive than they had been previously because they realized that they were being watched and evaluated by their peers.

The newfound energy from playing Mr. Pereira was needed because time was running out. We were able to teach the complete play to the students and to run through it twice. In that

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31 This exercise does not appear in Boal or McCarthy. It is so widely known that I did not originally have a source for it. A full description of the game can be found at www.improvencyclopedia.com.
second rehearsal, two issues arose that drastically affected the staging of the play. First, we had to decide if the same actors would play the characters in the family in both scenes. We questioned whether changing the characters would be confusing for the audience and if there was sufficient time to show another group of actors how to chop down the trees and when and how to enter the house. In the end, it was more important to involve as many students as possible in active roles; hence, actors were asked to volunteer. Compared to the hesitancy that students displayed on the first day when asked to volunteer, many more students were willing to take on a bigger role.

The second issue we often discussed was the aesthetics of the play. Several times, as a group, we discussed how realistic the play should be, which included a discussion about using narration. After seeing the Chajul students in their best rehearsal yet, I finally realized that narrating the play would be necessary. I was sure that most people in the audience would understand the play, but I had overstated the necessity of the play being without dialogue. The purpose of the play, however, was to start a conversation. I must have forgotten Brecht’s lessons because it took that second rehearsal and many protestations from colleagues to convince me that narration would help the audience to watch the play with a critical eye and with some aesthetic distance. According to Conquergood, the aesthetic distance, or critical distance, that performers and audience members have from the play is a crucial “rhetorical process of “identification” that enables them to identify and think about the issues being dealt with in a TfD intervention and, at the same time, to participate in it (181). Cohen-Cruz said that “aesthetic distance’ is compatible with one of Boal’s seminal ideas—the human being’s ability to see him- or herself acting, at once subject and object.” The narration would only make the play clearer to the audience and the
performers, and give everyone the opportunity to understand the play, think about the action, and watch it and themselves at the same time.

The Chajul students were not a part of this discussion about narration but they were very vocal about another aesthetic issue: using realistic props. They eventually convinced me to have them light a real match onstage and to chop the trees down (i.e., chorus members’ legs) with a real machete. At that point, I was so used to accepting ideas from the students that I acquiesced to their requests. As Osnes said at the time, “We might as well; we couldn’t get away with it in the States.”

After the second rehearsal, many students lingered, making plans about what props and costumes they could bring. As a group, they seemed to see bringing something from home as an important contribution. The young woman playing the bird agreed to wear her formal huipil, which is a white version of the traditional shirt and only worn on very special, usually religious, occasions. I am not sure if she just wanted to portray a white bird and that was the only piece of white clothing she owned or if she associated being a bird with something sacred. Either way, the Chajul students seemed to be invested in the successful outcome of the process and were finding new ways to contribute.

I asked the young woman playing the bird if it was appropriate for her to wear her white formal huipil in the play, given that the shirt usually was reserved for religious events. She said it was fine to wear, and I confirmed with Veronica that no one would be offended by the use of the shirt in the play. This was the only time I had to deal with a potential cultural faux pas concerning religion, and, thankfully, it was not an issue. As discussed in Chapter Two, Dwight Conquergood’s work in the Hmong refugee camp inspired my decision making in the situation with the white huipil. Conquergood had refused to use the sacred shaman’s drum to avoid
religious controversy, and I, too, wanted to ensure that I avoided such a controversy. Thankfully, unlike Conquergood, the religious object I was hoping to use would not offend but it was important that I checked with multiple sources to ensure its appropriateness.

Before the final rehearsal, I met, again, with Osnes, Hackett, and Gibson to discuss plans. We decided that the most pressing issue was the pace of the show, as the students were not paying attention to what each other were doing when they were onstage. During the second rehearsal, the play looked rushed, and it was unclear where the audience should be looking. Events such as the grandmother collapsing and the son falling in the fire were happening at the same time, which would make the play difficult for the audience to follow, and Veronica would be hard pressed to deliver detailed narration. To correct the pacing problem, we began the third rehearsal with another well-known exercise called “The Honey Walk” (www.improvencyclopedia.org), in which participants walk around the room and the facilitator alternately tells them what substances they are walking through (e.g., honey, Jell-O, or water). Participants then adjust the pace and balance of their walk, possibly leaning forward to force themselves through a thicker substance. The Chajul students, however, did not do well with this exercise; when I yelled out the new substance, they simply stopped walking, which was another instance of them not having the experience of pretending with their bodies in space. Consequently, I adjusted the substances to liquids with which they were familiar (water, milk, soup, and atoll, which is a traditional rice or corn drink). I quickly realized, however, that their inability to master The Honey Walk was not the issue, as the students were not performing the play too fast; they were simply starting their cues too early.

To correct the problem of actors jumping on other people’s cues, I tried a variation on a popular Viewpoints movement exercise, with students walking around the room together and me
explaining that when one person stopped, they should all stop; when they were ready to walk again, they should start as a group, and they should continue until someone stopped. They should continue to walk together, alternately stopping and starting, without talking about it or indicating in any way. When we started, quite a long time passed before anyone stopped. There were some students who were not paying attention or did not understand the exercise, which elicited some giggles. After a few tries, everyone understood and they were moving together so smoothly that an observer could not tell who was initiating the stopping and starting. This exercise, thus, showed students the importance of watching each other. However, although it was helpful, and the pace of the play improved, they needed reminders from time to time.

During the last rehearsal, the students ran the show without any prompting. In fact, during the last hour of rehearsal, there was more Ixil spoken than Spanish or English. Students were correcting themselves and making decisions without consulting Osnes, Gibson, Hackett, or me. The proudest moment, when I realized that the Chajul students were taking initiative and making decisions about staging, was when some students asked if chorus members playing trees could bring in leafy branches to hold during the forest scene. I wanted to say yes because they had come up with the idea by themselves, but I had reservations about cutting down 15 to 20 branches for a scene that, in part, was about deforestation. We compromised by having them bring in branches that they found lying on the ground.

Veronica watched the last run through to become familiar with the play, as she was narrating it. Because it would be too time consuming to translate the script into Spanish and then into Ixil, I gave her a few bullet points of events in the play that should be emphasized (e.g., the amount of wood being collected and used, the boy falling in the fire, and the smoke not being
able to escape the house), all of which corresponded to major problems with the use of open fires in the home, as identified by the students.

**The Performance of “Life with a Cookstove/Life without a Cookstove”**

On the day of the performance, we were scheduled to start at 1:00 pm, but in typical Chajul fashion, the audience came in slowly and we did not start until after 2:00 pm. LHI rented a sound system with wireless microphones and giant speakers. As we waited for the audience to arrive, the technician played loud music, which seemed to be attracting people off the street. LHI had paid the same company to drive around town and advertise the show from speakers in the back of a pickup truck. When the performance started, there were over 300 people in attendance. I sat in the audience with Osnes, her children, Gibson, and Hackett. The Chajul students performed the play as perfectly as they ever had, and many parents were in attendance (See Photograph 7).

Much of what happened during the performance is discussed in Chapter Four, but there are several methods we used or should have used that need to be discussed here. The play “LWCS” was less than 15 minutes long, but the total performance was over an hour because of the discussion. Unfortunately, we did not practice that very important aspect of the intervention. I supplied Veronica with a possible list of questions to ask, and she could ask other questions depending on what was brought up during the discussion. I did not believe that other instructions were necessary for her to lead a discussion with her peers, as I was relying on her authority as a community leader and her desire to change people’s minds about using open fires to guide her performance. Veronica, consequently, made several decisions that drastically shaped the nature of the discussion.

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Before attributing the successes and failures of the discussion on Veronica, I need to detail several decisions that I made regarding the discussion methods. First, Osnes and I decided to hold only two discussion periods, one after the scene featuring the family without a cookstove and one after the scene featuring the family with the cookstove. The alternative to two discussion periods would have been four discussion periods, one between each scene, but we decided that the wood-collecting scenes did not have enough substance to warrant a discussion period. Additionally, by performing the wood-collecting scene immediately before the house scene, the audience would recognize the causation between events—that the reason the father was cutting down the forest was to supply his family with wood for the open fire.

I also decided that audience members would not be asked to come on stage and change the scene to solve the problem with action. As discussed in Chapter Two, Forum Theatre as
described by Boal, requires audience members’ suggestions to be put into action on the stage, either by the spectators or by the actors. Veronica and the other staff at LHI thought that the people would be too shy to come on the stage. I also did not think that the Chajul students could act out suggestions given by the audience, which was confirmed during the rehearsal period when students were unable to make changes to their performance without having those suggestions demonstrated first.

To promote good nutrition\(^{33}\) and incentivize participation in the discussion, Veronica and the staff of LHI brought a basket full of vegetables to hand out to people who spoke into the microphone. This incentive was effective, as people chose a carrot or a tomato before they spoke. It is hard to know how, if at all, handing out vegetables as an incentive affected the discussion, as I did not know about this decision until it happened. Incentivizing participation with vegetables was the first decision that Veronica made that affected the discussion. She also spoke to the audience for over 5 minutes before the discussion. Because she spoke in Ixil, I am not sure what she said, and she did not mention the reason that she spoke for so long or what was said during the follow-up interview that I conducted with her (discussed below and in Chapter Four). Robbins assured me that long-winded explanations are typical in Ixil and that they almost are built into the language. However, Veronica showed her inexperience leading a discussion, as she did not ask follow-up questions and often asked the questions only of one person. For most of the questions, she had the person with the microphone answer, and then she asked the whole crowd if it agreed with the speaker. Regardless of whether the crowd agreed, Veronica did not engage in follow-up conversation. After checking audience members’ comprehension of the play, she allowed everyone to remain consistent in their beliefs that they held before they arrived. On

\(^{33}\) The nutrition skit devised by Gibson, Hackett, and the afternoon students was performed before “LWCS” and did not include a discussion period, and, to my knowledge, it was not mentioned during the other two discussion periods.
reflection, it was extremely unrealistic and unfair to expect Veronica, an indigenous woman with no theatre training, to lead a discussion that facilitated change when “LWCS” was designed to only “generate a discussion.” However, at the time, I expected “LWCS” to generate discussion, and I expected Veronica to facilitate the change.

2009 Key Informant Interviews

As mentioned above, I interviewed Yat Tiu immediately following the performance of “LWCS.” I asked Yat Tiu what happened during the performance and discussion, and what was said by audience members. I also asked her opinion, as someone who was born and raised in Chajul and now was an NGO staff member, about using theatre to accomplish LHI’s development goals. Later that evening, I interviewed the rest of the LHI staff members and asked them similar questions about their impressions of “LWCS,” student participation, and the efficacy of using theatre to accomplish development goals. The results of these interviews are discussed in Chapter Four.

2009 Student Questionnaires

The final method employed in Chajul in 2009 was a questionnaire given to the students who participated in or saw the play. All LHI students were given the option to participate and 21 completed the open-ended questions posed (see Appendix B). Besides demographic questions, the questionnaire asked about the process of being in the play and about the play’s message and its importance. The questionnaires yielded some interesting results (discussed in Chapter Four), with students’ opinions shaping the design and implementation of the 2010 theatre intervention.

Conclusion to “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” in Chajul

The methods used to stage “LWCS” in Chajul ensured that problems associated with the use of open fires, as presented in the play, were specific to Chajul and were identified by citizens
and advocates of that community. Additionally, the play was performed, facilitated, and discussed solely by citizens of Chajul, all of whom identified as a member of the indigenous population. All efforts were made to remove an imposing agenda from the process and product created. The performance, discussion, and facilitation were conducted in the Ixil language, which led people to express themselves in their native language. Lastly, the rehearsal, performance, and discussion revealed people’s attitudes and behaviors associated with open fire use and cookstove use, which are discussed in Chapter Four.

2010 Methods

My 2009 experience in Chajul—adapting “LWCS” for community members in Chajul and working with students from Chajul to create a culturally appropriate theatre piece—constitute the methods I used in 2010. I had made many friends in Chajul and there was a group of 30+ students who loved theatre and knew how to perform and discuss an issue using Boal-based theatre techniques. However, LHI had several new staff members, and the organization’s financial situation had changed such that it could not consistently supply me with an interpreter, and, for several reasons, including time and money, a large public performance for the community members was not an option, limitations that shaped the methods I used in 2010. This section details the TfD methods used when visiting Chajul, Guatemala in June 2010. I first describe the methods plan and then its implementation.

In 2010, LHI was much more involved in the planning of my trip, the establishment of my goals, and how I would use theatre with community members to accomplish those goals. Unlike the intervention in 2009, when the only goal was to engage community members in a discussion about cookstoves, in 2010, I arrived in Chajul with four goals, which, because of my 2009 experience and a more thorough collaboration with LHI staff, were practical and well
suited to the needs of the citizens of Chajul. The four goals listed below were established in collaboration with Katie Morrow, LHI’s cofounder and executive director, and her staff:

1. Engage families in conversations about home energy use to assess their energy needs.

2. Raise awareness of health and lifestyle concerns, fears, and obstacles associated with using open fires in homes.

3. Increase interest and awareness in the purchasing of stoves.

4. Collect information to help Community Enterprise Solutions (CES; manufacturers and marketers) and LHI (marketers) market a better selling, more sustainable stove.

These goals were the result of many phone conversations and e-mails, a meeting in the United States, and a meeting in Chajul before I met with potential participants.

In collaboration with LHI staff, I decided, for several reasons, that the theatrical interventions would take place in people’s homes near their open fire. First, I wanted to work with individual families, adults and children included. Not only was it difficult to assemble a group of people in Chajul at a specific time but meeting with families alone would supply LHI with the most specific information about how people were using fire in their homes. Having individual conversations would mean that people would not be swayed to agree with other members of any group but, instead, would supply their opinions. I wanted to get beyond the same answers that always were given for people not owning a cookstove (e.g., not having enough money to purchase one or not owning the house). Second, I could build on the previous year’s experiences by using students who participated in the rehearsals and performance of “LWCS” as interpreters and cultural guides. Third, and most important, there was no scholarly evidence that TfD methods had been used in people’s homes, and doing so could create a unique situation where the people could be engaged in solving a problem on the site where that problem
occurred. Staging theatre in family homes and around open fires had the potential to alienate participants, in the Brechtian sense, from the everyday practices that were damaging to their health and welfare. I also would be asking adults, who had no practical theatre experience, to perform as themselves, which might be easier for them to do in a familiar setting with no audience.

One way of looking at my purpose for going to Chajul as a TfD practitioner would be that I was aiding my partner NGOs to accomplish its development goal of selling more stoves. Similarly, in 2009, my work on “LWCS” helped LHI to accomplish its development goal of getting people in Chajul thinking and talking about cookstoves. In 2010, I planned to assist LHI and CES, in part, by collecting information from the families that they served and by feeding that information back to LHI and CES. Second, I was using theatre to investigate participants’ attitudes and behaviors, and, simultaneously, nudging them towards purchasing stoves. I had hoped to work with CES, the stove manufacturer,\(^ {34} \) and with LHI, the stove distributor and my host for a second year. However, CES was unwilling and unable to work with me because it did not believe that this project would help the organization to accomplish its development goals of selling more stoves. CES questioned how using theatre would benefit its organization, given the numerous needs assessments that the company had conducted with families in the town. This disagreement started almost exclusively with the wording of the fourth goal. Originally, I had written the goal to include the phrase “to make and market a better selling, more sustainable stove,” which differs from the final goal because of the word “make.” I assumed that CES was attempting to improve its stove’s efficiency and cultural appropriateness, but the organization

\(^ {34} \) CES purchases the metal parts of the plancha stoves—the griddle and chimney—from a factory in China. The only remaining parts are made from concrete, for which CES uses local quarries and labor.
was not interested in changing its cookstoves. This failed collaboration with CES is discussed in Chapter Five.

**Interpreter Methods, Volcano Pacaya, and Hurricane Agatha**

Before detailing the TfD methods that I used in 2010, there is one important method that I employed that potentially is informative to TfD scholars and practitioners: my interpreter. In 2009, I mostly spoke English and Spanish to participating students through an interpreter who was fluent in English and Spanish. The students, who spoke Spanish and Ixil, often spoke Ixil to each other, and, at the performance, all of the dialogue, narration, and discussion was conducted in Ixil. As detailed in Chapter One, most adults, especially the women, do not speak Spanish, only Ixil. During home visits, I knew I would need an Ixil interpreter to work with adult participants. Although I rarely needed an Ixil-to-Spanish-to-English interpreter in 2009, I would almost exclusively need one in 2010. What follows is a short description of my original plan for using interpreters in 2010 and how that plan changed. The adjustment of methods serves as another example of the flexible methods required to practice TfD and how adjusted methods often are fortuitously better than those planned originally.

My Spanish-language skills improved between my two trips to Chajul, but it still was necessary to use a Spanish interpreter for the detailed work being done. I also still was dedicated to using undergraduates in my research, and because I was funded by the student group Performers Without Borders, several undergraduates were scheduled to accompany me on the trip. Because I was working exclusively in Chajul and because Performers Without Borders wanted to work in several places, we broke into two groups. My group consisted of Jennifer Popple, a recent theatre PhD, and Kallie Green, an undergraduate who just finished her first year of college. Popple would serve as another theatre practitioner and Green would serve as the
English-to-Spanish interpreter. As detailed below, LHI students would serve as the Spanish-to-Ixil interpreters, and most conversations during the interventions would require the two-step process of translating English into Spanish and then into Ixil.

Green spoke Spanish fluently, having lived and studied in Spain, but had she had no interpreter experience. Green, Popple, and I met several times to plan the trip. However, just a few days before our trip was scheduled to begin, the volcano Pacaya erupted near Guatemala City, killing several people and leaving a layer of ash deep enough to close the airport. The eruption of Pacaya was followed shortly by the first named storm of the hurricane season, Hurricane Agatha, which was downgraded to a tropical storm as it made landfall. The torrential rains mixed with the volcanic ash clogged waterways, caused landslides, killed many people, and displaced many more. The second disaster also led the airport to stay closed longer than it would have been if only a volcano erupted instead of a volcano and a hurricane. Unfortunately, because of the delay, Popple and Green were forced to drop out of the trip. Not only did they have serious reservations about their safety but because the trip had been delayed over a week, they both had scheduling conflicts.

I also had reservations about continuing with the trip, but for several reasons, I felt obligated to go. I was supposed to meet Morrow, LHI’s executive director, near the airport and we were going to travel to Chajul together, and I did not want her to travel by herself simply because it was not safe for me to go. Chajul largely was unaffected by the storm, and even though the president of Guatemala declared a state of emergency, closing down all nonessential services and schools, the schools in Chajul remained open. There also were people in Chajul, students and staff, who were expecting me. Lastly, the trip was part of my dissertation research, and if I did not go to Chajul, it was not clear what I would write for my dissertation. TfD
practitioners rarely have to deal with such extreme situations, but each intervention requires practitioners to ponder whether their presence is more of a distraction than a benefit. I am able to say, with a clear conscience and the benefit of hindsight, that I was justified in continuing with the trip, and that at no time did I feel that I was being insensitive to the recent tragedies where so many people died. LHI’s staff and the families served by them worked hard to collaborate with me, and it would have been a problem if I had not gone on the trip as planned.

However, I now was faced with the dilemma that because Green had dropped out of the trip, I did not have a Spanish-to-English interpreter. I embarked on an international search for a translator, posting requests to organizations and various websites, and within a few days, a staff member at LHI put me in contact with another organization, Mayan Hope (www.mayanhope.org), which was based where I would be staying in Nebaj. Don, the founder of Mayan Hope, in turn, introduced me to Maria Velasco Raymundo, an indigenous woman from Nebaj who had lived in the United States for several years and spoke English, as well as Ixil and Spanish. She had served as an interpreter many times before for medical workers and agricultural researchers who worked on projects in Nebaj. Her English-language skills were not fluent but they were sufficient enough for my work. As explicated below, Velasco Raymundo was instrumental in implementing my methods plan, and her mere presence allowed me to accomplish things that would not have been possible without her.

To close this section on interpreters, my original plan with Green as the Spanish-to-English interpreter included using LHI students as Spanish-to-Ixil interpreters. LHI was very excited about its scholarship students practicing their interpreter skills and, simultaneously, contributing to my research. I was set to meet with the students for an interpreter’s workshop on the day I arrived in Chajul, with almost all of the students attending having participated in
“LWCS.” I planned to use theatre games and interactive situations to practice interpreting in this two-hour session. Morrow and I decided that even though Velasco Raymundo could serve as an interpreter and, thereby, skip a step when interpreting, going from Ixil to English, the potential benefits that students would gain from the experience and the local knowledge that they possessed made their participation indispensable. The Nebaj and Chajul dialects of Ixil differ enough that there is not an insignificant language barrier, such that students would serve as Ixil (Chajul)-to-Ixil (Nebaj) interpreters as needed.

Additionally, and possibly most important, participating families could opt out of the home visits, which actually was required for human research committee approval. To make opting out something that participants could do passively, I required student interpreters to serve as my guides to the homes. If a family did not want to participate, the student interpreter, who usually was a son or daughter in the family, did not come to the LHI office to guide me to the house. Another reason that using students as guides was essential is because houses are very difficult to find in Chajul. The roads often are steep and circuitous, the houses are similarly constructed with mud bricks and wood, many people are named Maria or Gaspar, and neighbors sometimes do not know or will not tell an outsider who lives where.

2010 Methods Design

In the same way that I designed the 2009 theatre methods and then adjusted them during the implementation, in 2010, I designed a plan to accomplish my goals during the home visits, but I ensured that it was flexible, in case changes needed to be made. This section details my plan to use Boal’s techniques of image theatre, forum theatre, and simultaneous dramaturgy during the home visits to accomplish the four goals articulated previously. Similar to the section

35 Maria still is the only person I have met who speaks Ixil of any dialect, in addition to English. Her ex-husband, who lived in the United States with her, also lives in Nebaj, but Maria said that his English never was very good and that his personality is not suited to be an interpreter.
above on the 2009 method design and implementation, I first explain the design of the 2010 theatre methods, followed by changes that were made during its implementation. Not surprisingly, differences in the design and implementation are illuminating, and, as stated above, adjusting to changes in the field is a method itself.

As detailed in Chapter Two, Augusto Boal’s system for creating spect-actors includes four stages, and because I was attempting to create actors out of non-actors, as explained earlier, I used Boal’s system to guide the design of the methods. The three theatre of the oppressed (TO) methods I planned to use in Chajul during the home visits were simultaneous dramaturgy, image theatre, and forum theatre, which Boal described as the three “degrees” of the Theatre as Language stage, “each one representing a different degree of direct participation of the spectator in the performance” (TO 131-132). The next three sections explain why I changed the order of the three degrees and how I planned to use each of them—image theatre, forum theatre, and simultaneous dramaturgy—when intervening in people’s homes. In all three degrees, Boal proposed creating a “model”—the initial theatre piece that represents the problem being investigated—which is presented to spect-actors, who then, through a process that Boal called “dynamisation,” adjust the actions and content of the initial model to propose possible solutions to the problem. The models that I planned to create, hopefully with participants’ help, would all deal with problems associated with using an open fire in the home.

**Image Theatre**

As discussed in Chapter Two, Boal said that “image theatre is without a doubt one of the most stimulating [forms] because it is so easy to practice and because of its extraordinary capacity for making thought visible. This happens because use of the language idiom is avoided” (137). I used image theatre as the first theatre method in the home visits precisely because of the
qualities that Boal described: it is easy to practice and there is no language required. Additionally, image theatre supplies content that then can be used to devise more pieces that might contain dialogue. Image theatre also is an effective warm-up of the body and mind. Because I knew from experience that devising content with participants in Chajul would be difficult, I planned to ease them into it in ways that they could be successful. I did not prepare images to provide if they could not devise them, as that would be counterproductive. If I could not help people to create an image through discussion and demonstration, I would have to consider image theatre an ineffective method for engaging people in Chajul in conversations about home energy use.

To begin the image theatre exercise, I planned to ask participants a set of questions surrounding their home energy use, such as how they collected and stored wood, and where their fire was placed. The information that they divulged about their use of an open fire could be used to segue into creating an image about that content. I would start by asking them their likes and dislikes about using an open fire, gathering information for possible scenes, and then ask them questions such as, “Can you show us how you start a fire?” and “Can you show us how you maintain a fire?” If they answered the previous two questions in the affirmative, they would be compelled to take some action and, consequently, they would have started to act. After answering questions about problems they had with the open fire, and as they were performing an action demonstrating common open fire use, I would help them to create a silent image with their bodies, hopefully concerning problems that they had identified. I was confident that by asking people to create the image while they were on their feet, already taking an action related to use of an open fire would increase the chances that they would participate in the exercise. I was slightly concerned that they might feel that I tricked them into participating, but I was more concerned
that if I asked them while they were sitting or otherwise engaged in an unrelated activity, it would be too easy for them to say no.

The image that participants created would be the model and would represent a problem with open fire use that could be discussed and further investigated through dynamisation. The dynamized changes could include adjusting the image or even recreating it later when forum theatre or simultaneous dramaturgy was employed.

I would document the created image on my digital camera, and I could show the photographs to people on the camera’s viewing screen. Doing so would allow us to view and discuss the image, either immediately afterwards or at any time in the future. I also would ask participants if I could share their photographs with others and possibly use the photographs in advertisements for LHI’s stove program. In this way, the knowledge gained from creating the model and the dynamisations could benefit other community members who had not participated. Participating families, thus, would not be the only community members benefitting from the intervention.

**Forum Theatre**

After I used image theatre as a warm-up and to create a model for dynamisation, I would use forum theatre to further adjust the model and to explore the content that was created. Forum theatre, unlike image theatre, allows dialogue and movement. If participants simply spoke about it, or created an image dealing with their concerns, that would not be as impactful if they acted out their concerns. As Boal said:

> In the forum theater no idea is imposed: the audience, the people, have the opportunity to try out all their ideas, to rehearse all the possibilities, and to verify them in practice, that is, in theatrical practice. . . . Maybe the theater in itself is not revolutionary, but these
theatrical forms are without a doubt a *rehearsal for the revolution*. The truth of the matter is that the spectator-actor practices a real act even though he does it in a fictional manner.

. . . Within its fictitious limits, the experience is a concrete one. (*Oppressed* 141)

The “revolution” that I was attempting would give participants an opportunity to perform actions “on stage” that they perform every day. These actions potentially are harmful to the health of their family, and by performing them in a fictitious way, participants, hopefully, would realize how harmful their habits were and implement some of the solutions proposed during the dynamisation of the model, which could include buying a cookstove. Getting participants to take action in their homes would be the most beneficial and memorable part of the intervention.

I knew from my experience in 2009 that it would be difficult and time consuming for participants to create models and dynamisations; hence, I arrived in Chajul with several models that could be performed during the forum theatre exercise. Several of the models came from situations that occurred in “LWCS.” If families were unable to create models, I planned to start with the situations from “LWCS”; because the student-participants were familiar with them and in the process of staging them in 2009, the situations had been adjusted and confirmed to be culturally appropriate to conditions in Chajul. The models with which I came prepared that did not derive from “LWCS” came from my research on the dangers of using an open fire in the home. I also adjusted a model that is mentioned in the TfD scholarship, and I created another using methods established by Osnes. The following discussion briefly explains the models I planned to use with forum theatre if families were unable to create ones.

The first model was the scenario of a child falling in the fire. In “LWCS,” the student John assumed the role of a child who was playing with a ball and clumsily fell into the fire. It was the only scene that dealt with children getting burned, and I planned to use it, if necessary,
as a model to address that issue. Another scene to be used from “LWCS” was the student
coughing around the fire and not being able to study. In the original scene, the student left the
home when the smoke overwhelmed her, but in the proposed model to be performed in the
homes, I wanted the student to not exit, to encourage the adults participating to propose an action
as a potential solution to the problem of their children inhaling smoke near the fire.

The third model with which I came prepared emphasized the health risks of inhaling
smoke and featured a character that was a doctor from Chajul. I referred to it as “the doctor
scene,” and it was the only time that I planned to ask the student or the adult participants to play
someone other than themselves. The student participant would enter as a doctor from Chajul and
ask the parent participants questions about the health risks of using an open fire. Parents would
be asked to compare the cobweb type residue that is in the rafters and on the walls above all open
fires with what a person’s lungs must look like from breathing in the smoke, a comparison that
had been suggested by the LHI staff.

The character of the doctor comes from previous TfD scholarship on health issues. David
Kerr, in his essay, “You Just Made the Blueprint to Suit Yourselves,” described the “Mr. Wise
and Mr. Foolish” formula, which was a common structure of TfD scenes, where a wise person,
usually a white physician, lectured a foolish person, usually a black villager, and told that person
all the things that he or she was doing wrong (100). By casting an indigenous child as the doctor
and asking that person to ask only questions, I hoped to avoid pitfalls of the previous practice
and to preserve the doctor as authority figure. I also sought to establish a new method for
incorporating doctors into TfD scenes because in the United States and elsewhere, doctors often

36 I used the Spanish phrase doctor de Chajul to describe this scene to the subjects. The Spanish word doctor is used
in Chajul almost exclusively to describe a medical doctor. Médico is a Spanish word with a meaning that is more
equivalent to physician, but because médico was not used in Chajul and because doctor and doctor are so similar, I
used the English word “doctor” throughout.
are the most authoritative figures in the public health field, but in many parts of the world, doctors are mistrusted and TfD practitioners still portray them as Mr. Wise (Bastien 1359). By using what I call the “questioning doctor,” the character could retain authority and help the scene participants to identify public health issues.

Lastly, I planned to introduce a model that I had designed that had families practice going to the LHI office and asking about purchasing a cookstove. Unless the family had self-identified cookstove purchase as a solution during the previous dynamisations, this scene would be the first mention of a cookstove. Because the previous dynamisations would be suggested by participants, I not only had to ensure that cookstoves were mentioned but I wanted to finish with a model about purchasing cookstoves to accomplish the third goal mentioned above (to increase interest and awareness in stove purchase). I developed this method of practicing an action with theatre from a similar one used by Osnes in her vocal empowerment workshops, in which she asks participants to identify a goal, often one associated with positive social change dealing with advocating for the world’s children. Osnes then asks participants who they would need to talk with to accomplish their goal. Although not all goals require talking to someone, Osnes advocates practicing using full voice when confronting someone who is an obstacle to a goal. I created this final scene to encourage participants to practice taking the action that LHI and I were hoping they would take: purchasing a cookstove. I supposed that many participants did not know what was involved with purchasing a cookstove, and even if they were unable to purchase one, by pretending to purchase one, they would have the knowledge to take that action when they could afford it. Additionally, by practicing going to the LHI staff to ask to purchase a cookstove, any obstacles preventing cookstove purchase would be revealed and, hopefully, addressed with solutions.
Simultaneous Dramaturgy

The third degree I planned to use in the home interventions is, as Boal described, “the first invitation made to the spectator to intervene without necessitating his physical presence on the ‘stage.’” (*Oppressed* 132). Because I did not know if the adult participants would be willing or able to participate, using simultaneous dramaturgy, in effect, was my back-up plan. If the adult participants were unwilling to create an image or to participate in the acting out and dynamisation of the model, I first would ask the student participants and other indigenous people present to participate, and, as a last resort, I would do the acting. I knew from my experience in 2009 that student participants often needed examples demonstrated before they were able to act them out on the stage. I was prepared to have participants who were unwilling and unable to play themselves in a model and in the dynamisations give suggestions to other participants taking their parts on stage.

2010 Methods Implementation

This section details the implementation of theatre methods in people’s homes in June 2010. Additionally, I discuss aspects of the interpreter’s workshop and theatre workshops conducted with the students in relation to the implementation of the home visits.

Interpreter Workshop

I arrived in Chajul on a Saturday afternoon, on the same day that we had planned to hold the interpreter workshop for the students. After waiting for students so often during the work conducted in summer 2009, I was excited to see about ten students waiting for me at the office, on time and happy to see me, with five or more students arriving shortly thereafter. Most of the students present worked with me the year before on “LWCS,” and those who had not, warmed up to me immediately. All students working as interpreters were in LHI’s Work to (L)earn
in which they and members of their family work for LHI, earning money that goes towards their scholarships and to their family. Mothers in the Work to (L)earn program weave crafts as fund-raisers and cook snacks for gatherings, and fathers and children often perform odd jobs around the LHI office. All participants are paid by the hour and LHI saw interpreting for the home visits as an opportunity to involve students in the Work to (L)earn program in a way that was educational and career focused.

As mentioned above, I planned to use theatre games to teach interpreter skills to the students, with the students and Velasco Raymundo participating in the games, and me teaching each of the skills agreed upon by me and Morrow (see Appendix C: Tips for Consecutive Interpreters in English and Spanish). It was a great opportunity for the students to get to know me again, but they were particularly interested in Velasco Raymundo and how she learned to speak English. During the workshop, several students said common English phrases and they seemed to understand, or pretended to understand, when I spoke English to them. In 2009, students rarely spoke English unless they were copying something that was said by me or my U.S. colleagues, which was frequent because the students were extremely interested in speaking English. Between my two visits, some of the students had been studying English, and although I expected to hear the English words “yes,” “no,” “thank you,” “hello,” and “goodbye,” I was more surprised to hear “see you later,” and when Morrow asked, in Spanish, who was responsible for starting the fire in one student’s home, the student responded with “my mother” in English. The students were confident, seekers of knowledge, and of the approximately fifteen people who

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37 Work to (L)earn was described in Chapter One. The Work to (L)earn program is called a Ganar in Spanish, which, according to Katie Morrow, alternatively can mean “win” or “earn.” LHI likes to use word play in their program, and Morrow says that doing so helps to spark interest and to show that programs often have dual purposes.
attended the workshop, all of them were going to participate in the home visits, and they were instrumental in the implementation of my methods.

**Mayan Ritual Site**

The next day was a Sunday and I had the privilege of hiking to an ancient Mayan ritual site that very few non-indigenous people have ever seen (see Photograph 8). When we arrived by truck at the end of the road, where we would have to start hiking, our guide disappeared for a few minutes to ask permission from some local elders to visit the site. I mention the trip because it allowed me to meet many indigenous people and be introduced into their culture. Additionally, two of my fellow hikers would be present at my first home visit the next day. They were the father and brother of an LHI student, Sarah, who had been in “LWCS,” and I spent several hours with them, travelling to and from the ritual site. Our guide told us many stories of the Mayan people, and the experience and knowledge I gained allowed me to more fully understand the people of Chajul. On our way out of town, we stopped at our guide’s sister’s house and were treated to conversation and traditional drinks made from corn.

**First Meeting in Chajul**

On Monday morning, with my plan in place to use image theatre, forum theatre, and simultaneous dramaturgy in the home interventions, and with a group of students and Velasco Raymundo set to be my interpreters and cultural guides, I met with the LHI staff. My new interpreter, Maria Velasco Raymundo, was there, and it was the first time I had sat down face to face with the three U.S. members of the LHI staff: Courtney Wong, Bridget Barry, and Katie Morrow.³⁸ Edilma Magdalena Hernandez Ijom, a young woman from Chajul who was recently hired as LHI’s local coordinator, was in the adjacent office and was available for the several

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³⁸ Veronica, who was so instrumental to the success of the 2009 intervention, was on maternity leave during my visit. We visited her several times and Morrow called her almost every day, asking her for advice about the home visits when needed.
questions we asked. In the hour-long meeting, several decisions were made that affected who would be involved in the home visits, which are detailed in the following section.

Photograph 8. An indigenous man lights candles at the ancient Mayan ritual site, which, in recent years, has had a building built around it and crosses added due to Christian influences.

Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 6, 2010.

**Fighting a culture of not-stoves.** Our conversation began by talking about how difficult it has been for LHI to sell its cookstoves. Morrow explained rather eloquently that LHI’s development goal was to sell stoves, but that the company was trying to create a “culture of stoves” to replace the culture of open fires. Wong said that LHI, more accurately, was fighting against a “culture of not-stoves” than a culture of open fires, and Morrow, Barry, and Wong all agreed with this statement. A culture of open fires would be one where people enjoy qualities of having an open fire in their home: the smoky flavor to their food, the heat of the fire, and the smoky smell of their clothes. However, this was not the case. Some people, especially older
women, like the warmth of a fire, and I have never heard of smoky food being important to people, but there is a stigma about smelling like smoke. One Chajul student who lived in Xela for a few months said that people would make fun of him for smelling like smoke because he was from a rural area. According to Morrow, respiratory illnesses are the leading killer in Chajul, which is consistent with data from the rest of the world where IAP is a problem (Rehfuess). These details about the stigmas and health risks of IAP, by no means, support a culture of open fires.

The culture of not-stoves stems from a mentality where many citizens of Chajul perceived themselves as having no control over when they live or die. In general, those who live in Chajul do not believe that the decisions they make have cause-and-effect consequences. Hence, why would a family buy a cookstove when anyone could die at any time? Morrow explained that this mentality is related to the impact of the civil war and religion on Chajul. The civil war in the 1980s and 1990s was particularly bloody, and people did not know whether they would live another day or be randomly killed. These terrible events still linger in Chajul. Morrow told me of a parent who did not hand in the paperwork for her children’s scholarship, and when Morrow threatened consequences, the parent said, “So what? It’s not like you will kill them.” Religion also is related to this mentality, and when bad things happen to people, it is common to hear the phrase, “It is God’s will.” Morrow, Wong, Barry, and I discussed how the home visits could address this mentality, but we came up with no solutions. It was agreed that the culture of not-stoves, based on the common disbelief in cause and effect, was the biggest obstacle to selling more stoves.

Xela, or Quetzaltenango, is the second largest city in Guatemala and it is not uncommon for students from Chajul to move there for jobs or even to attend a specialty high school.
LHI requires land deeds as collateral for cookstove purchase if a family uses a payment plan. This requirement is a sticking point with many families because if they have a land deed, it is a big commitment to use it as collateral. In contrast, if a family does not have a land deed, it potentially is an embarrassment. After seeking Edilma’s advice, we decided it would be okay for me to ask about land deeds. Notably, we did not discuss what options were available to a family that did not have a land deed.

Wong, who did most of the coordinating of the houses I visited, told me I would be visiting an even mix of houses, some with cookstoves and some without. I had requested this variety, hoping to collect information from both cookstove users and open fire users. I was influenced by the narrative created in “LWCS,” and I felt drawn to investigating that binary argument again. I was hoping to find evidence that the binary—LWCS—was false and that an infinite variety of conditions were present, even in this small community. I also was influenced by the comparisons made by Granderson et al. and by Dherani et al., both of whom compared homes with cookstoves and homes with open fires. Their research was conducted in the Guatemalan highlands in San Lorenzo, which is very similar to Chajul. The studies examined how efficient wood burned and the presence of harmful emissions in the homes with cookstoves and open fires. The testing conditions were strictly regulated, with the researchers providing the stoves and the wood, and all of the families being monitored with equipment and personnel. I was hoping, by visiting homes with cookstoves and open fires, to investigate differences between the two practices under more realistic conditions. By visiting both types of homes, I hoped to discover many ways that families reduced the risks of IAP and burns.40

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40 Dherani et al. concluded that reducing exposure to IAP by any means would decrease rates of pneumonia and other deadly respiratory diseases (395).
Each home intervention would end with people playing the “LHI Office” scene, in which they would practice coming into the LHI office to ask a staff member what it would take to purchase a stove. When I explained that this scene was designed to give them the practice needed to buy a stove, and was designed to nudge them towards that behavior, Morrow agreed that one of the LHI staff members should to be in the scene. Having the LHI staff members play themselves would drastically improve the intervention, for they not only had detailed knowledge of how a cookstove is sold but they would bring decision-making authority with them. The scene would not be the same if the LHI staff member was played by the student-interpreter or even by Velasco Raymundo.

**Creative Marketing and Home Reports**

When I asked Morrow and her staff members what they were hoping to achieve with the home visits, they said that they would like to discover some ways for “creative marketing,” As they needed new approaches to advertising and new content that would sell stoves in creative ways. Although the LHI staff doubted that I would discover new details about how people use stoves in Chajul, it was agreed that beyond my normal report to the company, I would submit detailed reports on each home, focusing on the family’s energy use. I would include in my report whether homes had a light bulb and other forms of electricity, such as outlets. I would ask about electronic devices, such as cellphones and radios. For LHI, this information would give the company an updated picture of each family’s situation; for me, it would provide more analyzable data to compare to the results from the theatre interventions. For example, I would be able to state what percentage of families with cellphones said that they did not have enough money for a cookstove.
Just after the decision to use LHI staff members at every home visit—a decision that was surprising given how short staffed LHI was—I described what a typical home visit would look like using image theatre, forum theatre, and, if necessary, simultaneous dramaturgy. Morrow expressed doubt that the adults would participate. She had lived in Guatemala for over ten years and knew Chajul and the people there better than anyone. According to her, I would be doing a lot of acting and would need to use simultaneous dramaturgy in every home. We joked that in addition to the culture of not-stoves, there also was a “culture of not-theatre.” This lack of experience with theatre was not necessarily because people did not believe that theatre could make a difference but because they had no experience with this type of performance. I was hoping to prove Morrow wrong, but I left the meeting fully aware of the challenges ahead. When Morrow explained to Edilma that I still was in school, trying to earn my doctorate through this research, Edilma joked that I was a doctor who was going to heal them with theatre. We all laughed, and hoped that this would be the case.

Student Workshops

Before describing the home visits, it is important to mention two theatre workshops that I held for LHI students. Many of the participating students were in “LWCS,” and I wanted to build on the skills that they had learned through that process and to encourage their enthusiasm for theatre. Each session lasted two hours and there was no pressure to create content or stage a performance. The students’ favorite game was “Boom Chicka Boom” which is a “repeat-after-me” type of song,\(^{41}\) in which participants take turns leading the song, putting variations on the lyrics and how they are sung, with the group then repeating and mimicking the leader’s

\(^{41}\) Boom Chicka Boom does not appear in Boal, McCarthy, improvencyclopedia.com, or any other theatre book I searched. However, although it is absent from the TFD literature, it is very commonly used as a warm-up and to build teams in theatre, and as a group activity for children. I found variations of it described on various websites, including http://www.campcarefreekids.org/everyone/song_archive/words/boom_chicka_boom.asp, and http://www.boyscouttrail.com/content/song/song-27.asp
performance. Because both groups of students met on separate days and both asked to play the game, I realized that students had been discussing the workshops, which indicated at least a passing interest. However, in the second session, when I said we would play Boom Chicka Boom a second time, the students cheered and literally jumped up and down. This behavior indicated a level of enthusiasm unanticipated by me or the LHI staff.

The students’ enthusiasm and dedication to theatre also was on display in the more serious exercises that we practiced during the workshop. In most of those exercises, I left the topic open to the students, but I did modify one exercise to investigate what they thought about open fires and cookstoves. I called it the “Family Game of Power,” and it involved participants rearranging the furniture put on the stage, making one chair the most powerful. Boal described the game as requiring six chairs, a table and a bottle (Games 163), although McCarthy advised using whatever furniture was available. I decided to use only plastic stools, because that is what we had. I designated a grey stool as a stool, a red stool as the stool of power, and a stack of stools as the cookstove. Participants took turns rearranging the two stools and the cookstove into configurations that gave the red stool the most power (see Photograph 9). I documented each student’s configuration with my digital camera and we discussed what choices were made and what they meant as we viewed the photographs. This exercise proved to be a breakthrough for many of the students, and although the results of this exercise are discussed in Chapter Four, this exercise led to discussions about which configuration was better, with students arguing over

42 In other exercises, the students identified domestic abuse, alcoholism among men, and littering as problems in Chajul. When the students identified the problem, it was much easier, and they seemed much more willing, to investigate solutions. These results are discussed in Chapter 4.

43 Derived from “The Game of Family Power” (McCarthy 74) and “The Great Game of Power” (Boal, Games 163).
what “power” meant and who should be sitting in the seat of power. Of the eleven students who participated, seven would serve as interpreters for me when I visited their homes.

Photograph 9. A student stands next to his configuration of a stool, a stool of power, and a cookstove after playing The Family Game of Power. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 9, 2010.

Home Visits

Because it is not practical to give a narrative for each of the seventeen home visits conducted, I give an overview of the implementation of the theatre devices. When necessary, I detail the events of some home visits to establish common practices.

As mentioned above, the first home visit was at Sarah’s home. I had gone hiking to the Mayan ritual site with her brother the day before, and had visited their house in 2009. Sarah made a bracelet for my daughter, and I sent them a thank-you note with hard copies of photographs I had taken in Chajul. Needless to say, this is the family in Chajul with which I was
most familiar. Along with my familiarity with this family, Wong and I started with this family because the members had purchased an LHI/CES plancha cookstove since I was last there. Sarah and her family were receptive and participated in the image theatre exercise, focusing on creating images about their new stove, but it was immediately clear that the scenarios I had planned to use with forum theatre did not apply to families that already owned cookstoves, and that very little information could be gained by having these families devise scenarios about cookstove use. Morrow, Wong, and I, thus, decided that I would not visit families who already had cookstoves.

Each day, Wong and I discussed the known features of a certain house (e.g., whether the house had a stove and whether there was a child in the house available to interpret), and we would decide which houses to visit. After Sarah’s home, there were two times when we visited homes that had cookstoves, but neither were LHI/CES plancha stoves. The second family that we visited had an old stove of which Wong was unaware. It was a plancha style stove, but it was small and the family was unhappy with it; consequently, I continued with the intervention as usual. Later in the week, another family had an old stove but did not use it. At that home, the intervention continued as normal and we investigated why the family did not use the current stove, which was given to the family as part of a government program many years ago.

The visits took anywhere from 45 minutes to 2 hours, and it took 10 to 45 minutes to walk to the homes; hence, it usually was practical to visit only two or three homes in a day. The time spent on the theatre activities consistently lasted 25 to 45 minutes, but each home visit started with a Work to (L)earn activity, which varied greatly in the amount of time spent. LHI described these as tourist activities, and in addition to giving me access to the homes, the program helped participants to practice the activities. LHI was using the program to educate families on how to earn money with the skills that they already possessed. As mentioned in
Chapter One, there are very few tourists in Chajul, and during the home visits, many Work to (L)earn participants were practicing their tourist activity for the first time.

The tourist activities fell into three categories: food preparation, weaving, and chopping wood. During the food activities, I helped to prepare the traditional foods boxbol (“bushboll”), tortillas, and tamalitos, and then had the chance to eat them. During the weaving activities, I watched a woman or young girl weave, and asked questions about weaving. During that time, I built rapport with the families, but I also collected information about how many people lived in the home and where they slept. I only chopped wood at one house visit, and during that activity, which was outside in the field where I also used a machete to clear brush and a hoe to clear weeds, I was unable to build rapport, ask any questions, or observe anything about the configuration of the home. In fact, only the student-interpreter was with me outside, and it was the last time I planned an activity that separated me from the adults and the houses.

At each home, I did not ask direct questions about the open fire until after the tourist activity. As described above, the theatre activities started with questions about the open fire and moved on to questions that required the adults to stand and take action to answer the questions (e.g., “Can you show me how to start a fire?”), which worked well. No one refused to answer these questions or to demonstrate the actions, and contrary to Morrow’s beliefs, not one person in all of the home interventions refused to participate in the image theatre or forum theatre exercises. The questions about the families’ home energy use that were designed to segue into the image theatre exercise worked well, and in each home, I only had to ask “Can you show us that?” after people mentioned a problem with the open fires.

Using image theatre in homes. The content generated during the image theatre exercises is discussed in Chapter Four; this section details successes and failures of using image theatre to
create models of problems identified by the people, and providing them with the opportunity to adjust those models through dynamisation.

In the first few home visits, I learned that the questions, “What do you like least about your open fire?” and “What would you like most about a cookstove?” produced answers that consistently were posed as problems. Even so, it often was difficult for participants to state their answer in the form of a problem. Once the problem was established, and I asked the people, “Can you show us that?” I often had to help them to create the image. For example, if a person said that he or she did not like the smoke getting in his or her eyes but that he or she did not know how to show that, I would ask the person to stand by the fire and pretend smoke was in his or her eyes. I then asked, “What do you do when you are standing there next to the fire and smoke is in your eyes?” In the problem of smoke getting in people’s eyes, which was a common image created, most people pretended to rub their eyes or a similar action, which showed that they were able to create a basic image without me demonstrating one. In some cases, I was forced to demonstrate some basic actions to show people that they needed to physically move, but that was rare; in most cases, they created an image based only on questions posed to them.

Interestingly, during the early home visits, Velasco Raymundo saw me occasionally demonstrate actions when people were struggling with the exercise, and to make the home visits run more smoothly, she began telling people what actions to take. Unfortunately, she began doing this on a day when she was my only interpreter. Because she was speaking to the participants in Ixil, I did not realize what she was doing until she actually started to demonstrate actions. I thanked her for her help and asked her to stop, but she did not understand why I did not want her to help people. With Morrow’s help, I talked to Velasco Raymundo in English and Spanish to be clearer. I explained that it was okay for people to struggle, and that it was very
important for them to come up with their ideas. In fact, collecting original content from people was the main point of our visits. We spent several days where Velasco Raymundo interpreted what I said word for word, and eventually, she explained and facilitated the exercises by herself without my help.

In the first few interventions, I attempted dynamisation after the model image was created, but was not successful. Creating the image was difficult enough, and I could not get people to change the image and relate it to the original image. One person, after a 5-minute conversation about how the image could be changed to solve the problem she identified, created the original image again. When I asked her to create a new image that represented a solution to the problem, she did not know what to do. Even after I gave her examples of solutions she had identified, she was unable to create an image. Hence, after the first few homes, I used the image model to start a conversation about ways to solve the problem. I also asked if the solution was something that worked for everyone in their family and if it was a long-term solution. After the image was created and solutions were discussed, I segued into using forum theatre as a way to continue the conversation.

**Using forum theatre in homes.** The image theatre exercises served as a good warm-up and introduction for what I would ask people to do next. After the time it took in most houses to create the image, and considering people’s inability to create dynamisations for the image model, I often did not attempt to devise new forum theatre models.

In each household, I began with the two scenes from “LWCS”: “the child falling in the fire” and “the student trying to study near the fire.” To begin the “Child Falling into the Fire” scene, I asked if student-participants remembered when John fell into the fire. If they remembered, I asked them to enter and do what he did. If they did not remember or were not
there, I asked them to pretend to fall into the fire and to see what their mother or father would do when it happened. Similarly, to begin the “student studying by the fire” scene, I asked student-participants to pretend to study near the fire and to cough to see how their parents reacted. These scenes worked as designed because the students were familiar with the scenarios and only needed to mimic what was done the year before or perform simple actions that were easily described. Moreover, parents only needed to stand there and react to what their sons or daughters were doing. If at all possible, we gave very few instructions to participants to see what they created. If adults did not react when their sons or daughters pretended to fall into the fire, or sat coughing by the fire, I prompted them by saying, “Can you show us what you would do if this was happening?”

After each of the scenes, I discussed with participants what had happened and attempted to convert these discussions into dynamisations of the model created by them, but I was not successful. Just as I had done with the image theatre model, I used the forum theatre model to start a discussion, focusing on adults’ reaction and asking about the effectiveness and long-term viability of their solution.

For the doctor scene, which always followed the two initial scenes, I used the same method of staging the model and then having a discussion. When I started to describe it to the student-participants, they often said that they did not remember it from the play last year. Some said that they could not perform it because they did not know it. If they did express doubt, I assured them it was a new scene and that they would be able to do it, and all were able to do so.

In each home, I staged the LHI Office Scene as planned. Oftentimes, Edilma played herself or she or Velasco Raymundo played Veronica. Morrow, Wong, and Barry each played

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44 There was only one home where a student-participant was not present, and I played the student that fell into the fire, the results of which are discussed in Chapter 4.
themselves once. In each case, before we started the scene, I asked participants if they would like to purchase a cookstove. They all said yes, although some protested that they could not. I assured them that it was just practice, and by practicing it, we might find a way to help them. All agreed that cookstove purchase was desirable. I wanted to ensure that participants desired having a cookstove in their homes before engaging in the “LHI Office” Scene intervention because I did not want them to feel coerced or tricked into saying they would buy a stove in front of an LHI staff member.

For the “LHI Office” Scene, if possible, I set up a few chairs and a table away from the fire. Some of the homes I visited were only one room with the fire in the middle, but I made every effort to set the stage as an office. I asked the person playing the LHI staff member to sit at his or her desk, and I asked the family participants to enter the office and ask the LHI staff member about purchasing a cookstove. I instructed participants that the goal was to come up with a solution that would work in real life. Fifteen houses performed this intervention and the results of the interactions, which are discussed in Chapter Four, were some of the most illuminating of my trip. I rarely interrupted this scene, and did not have it interpreted for me unless something unusual happened. When the scene was over, I asked for a recap from the LHI staff member or Velasco Raymundo. I was primarily interested in participants playing the scene out as realistically as possible, and because all parties essentially played themselves in a real-life situation, my involvement would have been an unnecessary intrusion.

Conclusion

The level of participation in the 2010 home visits exceeded everyone’s expectations. Working with a group of people with no theatre experience, and dealing with an issue that most of the participants probably would not identify as a priority in their lives were significant
challenges. The success of the interventions are discussed more fully in Chapter Four, where I analyze the information gathered with respect to what it says about attitudes and behaviors associated with open fires and cookstoves, and how this information can help LHI to better serve the people of Chajul. However, the successful implementation of Boal’s image theatre and forum theatre methods, as described in this chapter, demonstrated that it is possible to use theatre to engage people in a conversation in their homes. Although creating an original model and dynamisation of a provided model still was outside participants’ abilities, the methods that were implemented produced content in an ethical way.

**Human Research Committee Approval**

This research project was given exempt status 2(b) by the Human Research Committee (HRC) of the University of Colorado at Boulder, and was assigned the protocol number 0510.2-01 (Appendix F). HRC defines exempt status 2(b) as

Research involving the use of educational tests, survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. Research involving minors (those under 18 years of age) does not qualify for exemption in this category, except where research involves only the observation of public behavior when the investigator does not participate in the activities being observed.

This study followed the exempt protocol and no further action is required.
Chapter Four

Results

This chapter discusses the results from the 2009 and 2010 interventions, including data collected from the performances—“Life without Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” (“LWCS”) in 2009 and the home visits in 2010—interviews conducted with key informants, a survey questionnaire, and observations. First, I discuss the results of the 2009 visit, focusing, specifically, on “LWCS.” Second, I discuss the results of the seventeen home visits that were conducted in 2010, and analyze the performances, detail the success of the theatre methods used, and report on information collected about people’s attitudes and behaviors associated with the use of open fires and cookstove purchase.

2009 Results of “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove”

As discussed below, the performance and discussion of “LWCS” was the first time anything like it had been presented in Chajul, but the audience’s attendance and participation indicated that there is room for future public events that include interactive theatre performances. However, it is not clear whether people attended the event for the theatre performance or participated in the discussion because they felt a sense of civic responsibility or because there were other incentives offered, such as food. As mentioned in Chapter Three, LHI gave vegetables to people who asked questions, and after the event, LHI gave everyone an atoll (a traditional corn drink) and chicken tamales. LHI gives away food at all of its events to entice more people to attend. However, although the food might have incentivized attendance and participation in the discussion, the practice is so common that statements made during the discussion still can be viewed as representative of participants’ attitudes and behaviors, or of those that they believe are held and practiced in the community.
The results of “LWCS” can be assessed in several ways, including analysis of the performance and follow-up discussion with audience members, interview data, and observations conducted. As mentioned in Chapter Three, over 300 people attended the performance, which started over an hour late. Audience members who arrived early were in the community center for over three hours. Once the event started around 2:00 pm, very few people left or arrived. Although I was worried that people would get upset about waiting, Veronica Yat Tiu, Limitless Horizons Ixil’s (LHI’s) Program Director and facilitator of the performance and discussion, assured me that people in Chajul expected to wait and that everyone, even the people who had arrived early or on time, would be surprised if the event started at the advertised time. The attendance of 300+ people indicates a high level of interest in attending public events in Chajul.

**2009 Performance Analysis of “Life without Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove”**

A performance analysis of “LWCS” must be limited to what I observed, given that the performance was conducted in the Ixil language. This section analyzes students’ execution of the rehearsal plan and audience members’ reaction to the performance. Students performed “LWCS” as it had been rehearsed, and they did not need prompting from Gibson, Hackett, or me to know what parts came next. As mentioned in Chapter Three, we did not want to prompt the events of the play, to avoid the impression that the students were puppets performing our agenda. After all the work done to ensure that “LWCS” included local concerns, it would have been counterproductive if the audience got the impression that U.S. Americans were orchestrating everything and that the students were merely mouthpieces for our agenda. Students, who just six days earlier were unable to perform the simplest exercises, proved capable of performing without assistance, which was one of the more promising results of the performance in that students gained abilities.
The audience of more than 300 people who watched “LWCS” seemed attentive. Adults and children sat or stood without moving, with their gaze fixed on the stage. There were very few side conversations as the action was happening on stage. This attentive behavior indicated that the performance held the audience’s attention. Interestingly, the audience near the stage was comprised mostly of women and children. A group of 20 to 30 men and teenage boys stood in the doorway of the community center (see Photograph 10). Some of the men came and went, and their attention was not always on the stage but focused more on the event as a whole and on the other members of the audience.

Photograph 10 A group of men stand in the back of the Chajul Community Center during the performance of “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove.” Photograph by Jason Bisping, July 11, 2009.

Only women participated in the two discussions (see Photograph 11). LHI students who participated in “LWCS” carried a basket of vegetables and a cordless microphone into the
audience and approached women who raised their hands to answer questions posed by Yat Tiu. There were no long pauses, and a few women spoke at length. One woman spoke forcefully and with passion, but most spoke briefly and in a conversational tone. Yat Tiu usually posed the same question twice; as she explained in an interview conducted immediately following the performance and discussion, discussed in the section below, she then would ask the audience to agree with one of the opinions if the two answers were in opposition.

Photograph 11 An Ixil woman answers a question during the first discussion period of “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove.” Photograph by Jason Bisping, July 11, 2009.

**Key informant: Veronica Yat Tiu**

An interview with Yat Tiu was essential not only because the play and discussion were held in Ixil but also because she was a community leader and the program director of LHI, and, therefore, her standpoint would be invaluable. I started the interview by asking Yat Tiu what audience members had said during the discussion and what she thought of the whole process. As
mentioned in Chapter Three, before the performance, I provided Yat Tiu with questions to ask audience members and directed her to press them for solutions to the problems posed. During the interview conducted with her, Yat Tiu had the list of questions in front of her and she used them as a guide to remember what happened. Yat Tiu said that she asked the questions exactly as they were written on the sheet. For example, during the interview she said:

The fifth question I asked was, “Do you think the family is going to miss the open fire if they have a cookstove?” Many, many people answered to this one and many people said, “Most people aren’t going to miss the open fire if they had a stove, except the older people, the elders. The older people would be the ones who would miss a fire if they had a stove. They like being comfortable around the open fire.”

Interviewing Yat Tiu in Spanish afterwards provided specific information about how audience members participated in the discussion, and the information that they provided about individuals’ and the community’s attitudes and behaviors surrounding cookstoves is discussed below.

The benefits of presenting the play in Ixil—the language in which participants felt most comfortable communicating with a facilitator from their community—greatly outweighed me and my colleagues’ need to understand what was happening. It would have been time consuming for Yat Tiu or another Ixil or Spanish speaker to watch the video of the performance and discussion, and to translate it into Spanish. The Spanish translation could have been videotaped as well and then translated and transcribed into English, which would be the preferred method, but Yat Tiu or anyone else probably would not have had the time to assist me in such a lengthy process.

According to Yat Tiu’s reporting, audience members’ responses revealed several important attitudes and behaviors surrounding cookstove use. As mentioned in Chapter Three, I
asked Yat Tiu to guide the audience into coming up with solutions, but she was unable to accomplish that goal. Instead, before she moved onto a new discussion question, she asked audience members if they agreed with a statement made by the previous audience member or by her. For example, Yat Tiu asked the audience, “What are the reasons that a person wouldn’t want a stove?” One audience member said, “Yeah, everyone wants a cookstove, but only if they give them to us as a gift.” However, another person countered, “It’s not a good idea to have them gifted because people won’t use them.” Yat Tiu told me during the interview, “So I think, in reality, that stoves shouldn’t be gifted but this is what some people were saying.” During this point in the performance discussion, when she could have asked the audience to further discuss the advantages and disadvantages of stove purchase versus gifting, Yat Tiu, instead, let only two people pose opinions related to that question. She then said, “Who would agree that it is better to purchase a stove?” About three quarters of the people present raised their hands and made some affirmative noise. Yat Tiu then moved onto the next question on the list.

Yat Tiu’s method of moving onto the next question after asking for consensus from the audience is problematic in several ways. For instance, Yat Tiu asked, “What are the reasons that a person wouldn’t want a stove?” but audience members were allowed to discuss only one reason—price—before the discussion moved to another question. Price might be the most common obstacle preventing stove purchase, but the discussion was limited by focusing solely on that topic. Thus, audience members discussed only the dichotomy of either buying or gifting a stove. Discussions could have focused on subsidies of stove prices or creating programs where people could contribute work hours toward stove purchase. In fact, subsidies and contributing work towards the price of a stove were considered by LHI as possible solutions and were used by LHI in 2010. Hence, ideally, alternatives for stove purchase would have been included as part of
the conversation. Additionally, when Yat Tiu asked for consensus from audience members, hoping that the majority of people would agree with what she thought was the best solution, the people who disagreed with that solution were excluded from the conversation. Admittedly, without a verbatim translation of the discussion from Ixil into English, it is unfair to condemn Yat Tiu’s facilitation methods. From her retelling, she asked the audience for consensus when at least one audience member had expressed an opinion that promoted stove purchase, and the few times that she did ask the audience for affirmation, about three quarters of the people indicated that they agreed. Yat Tiu did not acknowledge that people agreed with her statement and no one verbally disagreed with a statement from Yat Tiu that was intended for consensus.

During the debriefing interview conducted with Yat Tiu, she identified several issues that were discussed by the audience that she initially did not reveal when progressing question by question. In her initial retelling, she focused on what was said that allowed her to move onto the next questions, but upon further questioning during the interview, it seems that other, more nuanced opinions were expressed. For example, when discussing reasons not to purchase a stove, Yat Tiu said that a point was brought up by an audience member that she had not considered. As she explained:

So the majority of the people said it’s the question of economics because they don’t have enough money, but then there was this other reason that I actually hadn’t thought of before: that people don’t live in their own home. As well, if they do have their house, their space is often very small, so they can’t have a cookstove. Because they can’t. Where would they put it?

This was an important statement, because Yat Tiu and LHI had not considered people who live in homes that they do not own or those who live in homes too small to fit a cookstove. Hence,

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45 Translation by Katie Doyle Myers
the discussion revealed this new information about an ignored demographic within Chajul, but unfortunately, Yat Tiu did not incorporate that information into the discussion, which would have led community members to propose solutions for people in those situations.

In addition to the two obstacles of ownership and space—which would go unsolved in 2009 and be reoccurring issues in 2010 and beyond—the discussion revealed general attitudes and behaviors among some community members in Chajul that could be considered either obstacles to or factors facilitating the purchasing of stoves. Yat Tiu said that the two most common obstacles to stove purchase that were mentioned were money and space. When asked, many audience members agreed that only older people in the community cared about the reduced warmth given off by a cookstove and, consequently, that this was not a reason that prevented stove purchase. In fact, Yat Tiu said that an audience member proposed the solution of bringing hot coals from the cookstove to the older people to stay warm. According to Yat Tiu, the already attentive audience members were most interested in how indoor air pollution (IAP) affected their children:

I saw that people were paying a lot of attention, especially during the part that smoke affects the children. This was another good result of the skit. People were saying, “We need to pay attention to this because of the children, because our children are there in the house with us.” I really felt that this was a very good promotion on the part of promoting health for the children. I think it was very nice.46

Yat Tiu, thus, recognized children’s health as potential “buy-in” that could persuade people to purchase stoves, and she agreed that having the children in the play contributed to the message of children’s health in relation to IAP.

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46 Translation by Katie Doyle Myers
LHI students’ involvement in the play also was a positive result identified by Yat Tiu. As she said:

I believe that the children took a very important role in what they want to promote. They came with a lot of will. I could tell that they wanted to learn and they wanted to act. I was observing them and wondering if they wanted to continue, and all the kids kept saying, “Yes, I want to continue. I want to keep doing this.” They were very interested. Before the performance, I asked some of them, “How do you feel?” and some of them said, “Oh, I feel a little bit nervous.” Some of them were nervous, but I feel it was a really good experience for them, and for the people as well.47

It was important to Yat Tiu that the students were engaged in promoting positive community change. She saw participation in “LWCS” as an opportunity for the students to not only learn about theatre but to learn how to engage their communities. She said not only had there never been theatre in Chajul but never before had visiting groups asked community members to participate. Dancing troupes had presented their works to the community, but “LWCS” provided an opportunity for the students and audience members to participate.

**Key Informants: LHI Staff Reactions**

In the following section, I report on interviews conducted with LHI staff and volunteers. Robbins and Morning Glory Farr were paid staff of LHI at the time and worked closely with me to organize the rehearsals and performance of “LWCS.” Robbins often served as an interpreter during the rehearsals and met with me at night to debrief and plan for the next day. Lindsey Musen and Kate Percuoco, as discussed below, were volunteers in Chajul doing an assessment of

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47 Translation by Katie Doyle Myers
the local schools for LHI. I interviewed all four of them the evening after the “LWCS”
performance.

**Molly Robbins.** Molly Robbins, LHI’s International Coordinator, served as a translator
during the rehearsals and spoke to the audience during the “LWCS” event. When asked about her
impressions of the rehearsal period and the process, Robbins said that, initially, she was unsure
about the method of running simple exercises with the students and showing them how to “act,”
but she was surprised at how much the “kids” had to learn. As she explained:

I think, for me, it was way newer for the kids than I realized it would be. I know that they
spend a lot of time, like we talked about doing dance and other kinds of performing, so I
really didn’t think it [performing theatre] would be that out there. There were definitely
uncomfortable moments and there were people who were. . . . It was almost physically
painful for some kids to be doing some things, especially on that first day, so I just
thought that it was really important that you had spent that time preparing and had put
those exercises together to bring them around to a place where we could finally start
making creative decisions.

Robbins’s statement reinforces the need for theatre for development (TfD) practitioners
to include vocal and body exercises that let participants, as Boal said, know their bodies and
learn to make them expressive (126). Robbins continued by saying:

Once kids were given roles, they felt a lot more comfortable. I think the things that were
most challenging were those activities where everyone had to be creative and do their
own thing and no one was telling them what to do. Once you guys started to give them a
little guidance, you could feel them kind of relax. They had some idea of what was
expected of them and they welcomed that.
Robbins observed, just as I had, that the students were not accustomed to, or comfortable with, self-guided performance; instead, they were much more comfortable and able to perform roles that came with specific instructions. Robbins also pointed out students’ reluctance to perform actions that they deemed “not true.” Students’ dedication to the truth contributed to the cultural appropriateness of the play’s content, as they were unable to perform actions that were not possible in their lives. Therefore, according to Robbins, everything in the play must have been culturally specific to Chajul.

The rigor of the rehearsals, according to Robbins, was appropriate for the students’ ability. As she explained, “In general, I thought the rehearsals were a good combination of being really challenging and really uncomfortable sometimes, and then also giving them something to work with so that they could feel a more familiar structural vocabulary and breathe a little bit.” However, Robbins somewhat disagreed with Yat Tiu’s view about how aware the students were of their role in community involvement. As she said, “It was hard to impress upon them, and I am not sure we succeeded in really emphasizing to them that they were teaching something to their community. I don’t know how much they had absorbed that.”

Robbins’s and Yat Tiu’s comments demonstrate that they were aware that my U.S. concept of “community engagement” differed from that of people in Chajul. According to Robbins, the students were not used to being involved in discussions about community issues, and they saw me and my colleagues as willing to do almost anything to engage a community in a discussion. As she claimed:

One dynamic that was happening besides being unused to having to show up for something, more than once, much less a few days in a row, Veronica [Yat Tiu] and I heard some grumblings about, really just from one student in particular, about gringos
coming in and they just do things differently. “They’ll do anything. They’re crazy. I don’t even know what they would make you do. I don’t even know what they are in to.” I don’t think that really added to the discomfort but that was there. I guess it always is and always will be, maybe, but that was something that was just going on. I also just saw, in terms of kids in and out of rehearsal, I felt like it was tough for them to show up and it was tough for them to commit to it, and not all of them were brimming with excitement when they walked in the door, and then they get into the activities and have a really, really good time, and by the end of it, be having a great time. Then things would be done and they walk out into the street and forget. I feel like they were more comfortable, especially that group in the afternoon, thinking they were going to do these crazy new things they had never done before behind closed doors. When they heard about the performance aspect, that’s when all those dynamics of being awkward around their peers and embarrassing themselves came into things, and all of that came around full circle again at the very end and everyone was really excited and really proud, and the kids who had missed a couple rehearsals who were no longer had any roles were actually jealous and disappointed.

Robbins’s description of what the students got out of the experience was more than I had realized. Specifically, although students had learned how to use theatre to engage their community in a discussion, just as important, they had enjoyed doing it, and their peers looked up to them for doing so.

After Robbins and I discussed the students’ experience, I asked Robbins for her general thoughts about energy justice and what that looked like in Chajul now and will look like in the future. She pointed out that the actors and audience members were the poorest people in Chajul,
with the actors all on scholarship through LHI and the audience members comprised mostly of the actors’ families and friends in similar economic situations. LHI spent most of its resources giving scholarships to students to attend school, and the organization worked with the poorest people in the community. Robbins was aware that LHI spends a lot of time promoting stoves to people who cannot afford them, and that the play did the same thing. Getting people who are poor to buy stoves actually is one of LHI’s strategies, because a cookstove is a status symbol, and if people who are poor purchase them, people with more money also will buy them. However, although this strategy might prove effective in the future, the presentation of “LWCS” and the discussion afterward made Robbins realize how difficult it is to implement that strategy.

Before the performance, Robbins and Yat Tiu were unsure of how informed people were about the dangers of IAP, but people in the audience seemed to be aware of the dangers of open fires in their homes. There were teachers and other people in the audience who would be considered “middle class” in Chajul, and Robbins realized that “there are a lot of educated people without cookstoves.” Robbins realized that the play was served not just as an educational tool about the dangers of IAP but more important, as a reminder of how crucial those dangers are right now for every family in Chajul that uses an open fire to heat its homes and cook food. As Robbins said:

I know there were people who were worried about heating their homes, but I saw a much more positive response to cookstoves, in general. Like Veronica was saying, people do know what the benefits are, at least basically, or they have heard about them, and that doesn’t mean what we did today wasn’t really important, because I think it impressed itself on people. That hasn’t been done before, and that is really crucial, but people had a general idea that an open fire lifestyle is not a good thing.
Robbins also mentioned that there were a lot of people out there that our message could reach by using theatre:

This is the first time this has happened in Chajul, anything like this. It is only going to get easier for whoever wants to be involved. People in Chajul, they like to see things that are new. They like to be entertained. They like to laugh. I think theatre could be really successful. They like to group together and they like to go to events. Clearly, it’s not as structured and formal as a lot of places but it’s something that they do and they enjoy doing. Especially moms and people who don’t get out a lot. I think theatre, in general, would be very successful in getting messages out.

Robbins’s and Yat Tiu’s positive assessments of how effective theatre could be in Chajul, and the Chajul students’ enthusiasm, encouraged me to continue my work there in 2010.

**Lindsey Musen, Kate Percuoco, Morning Glory Farr.** At the time of my 2009 visit to Chajul, there were three other U.S. Americans in Chajul who witnessed the performance and rehearsals: Lindsey Musen, Kate Percuoco, and Morning Glory Farr. Musen was encouraged by the number of people in attendance and how attentive they were during the performance. She mentioned that future collaborations might include using theatre in working with the schools and in the classroom, but she admitted how difficult it would be to work with the schools because of government funding mandates and scheduling. As she claimed, “It is easier to work with NGOs [nongovernmental organizations].”

Percuoco and Musen had a unique perspective on the Chajul students and the education system because they had been in Chajul studying local schools and doing an assessment for LHI (Percuoco and Musen). Percuoco agreed with Musen and Robbins that theatre had a lot of potential in Chajul. As she said:
I think it [theatre] is a great way to put this out to the community, better than most other ways, any other way I can think of. I think theatre is a great way to communicate and educate, and to involve the kids in the process. It’s a deeper level of understanding of an issue rather than just talking about it.

In addition to the untapped potential of theatre recognized by the other LHI staff members, Percuoco also noted that students realized the possibilities and opportunities of theatre:

All the kids I talked to said, “We’ve never done anything like this before and now thanks to you guys we are learning about this whole thing about doing theatre and obras [art].”

Then I asked if they would continue doing this on their own and they were like, “Now we know the process.”

Percuoco and Musen were particularly interested in including theatre and civic engagement into local school curricula. Along with my future conversations with Morning Glory Farr, I was inspired by them to start discussing collaborations with the schools and to help LHI scholarship students start a theater club.

I was unable to formally interview Morning Glory Farr, LHI’s Outreach Coordinator in 2009, when I was in Chajul, perhaps because we were working side by side so often. After leaving Chajul, however, I kept in contact with her. Through several e-mail and online chat conversations, Farr shared some valuable information about the impact of “LWCS,” including a report that adults still were talking about the performance three months later, and that the students overwhelmingly asked us to come back and do more theatre.

To build on this enthusiasm, between 2009 and 2010, while Farr still was in Chajul, I worked with her to help the students start theatre activities. Farr and I focused on the possibility of students starting a club where they could write scenes and perform them in the marketplace,
but this project did not come to fruition, as the students did not follow up on their desires, and Farr, who had theatre experience, was unable to monitor them as she performed her other duties. The students practicing and performing theatre, essentially, would have been another program that LHI would have had to support, and LHI did not have the personpower to make it a priority.

**Student Questionnaires 2009**

The students’ enthusiasm for theatre also was evident from the exit survey questionnaire that was administered, and their behavior and retention of skills in 2010. A questionnaire (see Appendix B) was distributed to all of the LHI scholarship students (57 at the time), even if they had not participated in the play, and nineteen questionnaires were returned. Some students who needed help understanding the Spanish-language questionnaire received it from Yat Tiu, Robbins, and Farr. Because some students’ responses were contradictory, it is difficult to give reliable quantitative results. For example, one student answered that the central message of the play left him with “a lot of experience that I didn’t have in my life, because through this, I learned many things,” and that the play was “important for my community because there are some people that don’t know about this show;” but that respondent also answered “No” when asked if the message of the play was important to the community. Another respondent answered “No” when asked if the play was important to the community but said later on the questionnaire, “For me, [the play] is good for the town because they should know how to carry out a show in my town.” Some respondents also did not directly answer the question, “What do you think the central message of the show is?” However, in spite of the confusion, the qualitative statements made by the students still can be used to generally contextualize their experience and the play’s impact on the community.

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48 Que piensas tu que fue el mensaje central de este show?
In general, respondents focused on the experience of being in a play more than they answered questions about IAP and the message of the play. However, two respondents did express that the message of the play was not a problem in their community, supporting that claim with a qualitative statement when asked why. As one of them said, “Because our town has a traditional culture. For example, the corn and bean(s).” It is possible that this respondent was discussing the nutrition skit devised by the students, Hackett, and Gibson. This was one of three respondents who indicated on the questionnaire that they did not participate in the play; hence, he or she was speaking as an audience member. However, this person’s response about the traditional culture in Chajul does relate to food (including corn and beans) and how it is cooked, which does affect people’s attitudes and behaviors surrounding cookstove use. The second respondent supported his or her skepticism about the play’s message when he or she wrote, “Because we don’t know well if our community [has this problem].”49 This student participated in the event, but was in the nutrition skit that preceded “LWCS.” She or he identified the main message of the play (tema del show) as, “It’s the first time that my classmates participated in how to show the darker part of the community.”50 It is not clear what issues this student identified as the message of the play but she or he believed that exploring social issues in this way was new to the town and that she or he was not sure if those problems had been correctly identified.

When asked what they did not like about the show, six respondents found no fault, but nine clearly did not like that some students “messed up” or did not participate fully. Two respondents were unhappy with the conditions of their community that were represented in the play, with one saying that there was too much smoke in the homes and community of Chajul and

49 Porque no sabemos bien si nuestra comunidad.
50 Es la primera vez que participaron los compañeros de como mostrar la parte mas negra de la comunidad
another saying, “I don’t like that homes do not have stoves in our poor community.” Of the remaining two respondents, one did not like the time required to put on a play and the other was not happy with the content created or “theatre,” saying, “I didn’t want (like) theatre and the house that we made.”

The students’ responses and the responses from the LHI staff show that there was a lot of potential for using theatre to engage people in discussions about community change in Chajul. The play was met with enthusiasm by the actors and audience members, and participants on and off stage were engaged in a discussion that questioned many long-held beliefs, attitudes, and cultural practices that potentially were harmful to individuals.

**2010 Results of Home Visits and Student Workshops**

In June 2010, I visited seventeen homes in Chajul, spending one to two hours in each home. I observed that each house and open fire configuration was unique, with some fires in the corner away from the door and the beds, some in the middle of a room, some next to the doors, and some in separate rooms with doors that closed. Practices for tending a fire also varied widely, with some fires fueled by only one or two small pieces of firewood, whereas others were fueled with up to 10 pieces. Some people tended their fires several times during our visit, keeping the fire hot, whereas others did not tend their fires at all, letting the room fill with smoke.

The variety of open fire configurations and tending practices cannot be accounted for in the results, and I am aware that the conclusions are derived from a small sample size of only seventeen homes. However, there are more similarities than differences between the homes. Most notably, firewood was burning inside every home during the entirety of my visits, and the

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51 Por que no me gusta que no estufo en nuestras casas en la comunidad es pobre.
52 Yo no quiero al teatro y el casa que hacemos.
results of the theatre interventions reveal, among other things, that the effect of IAP in these homes is extensive. The following sections report on the success of each of the theatre models, including image theatre, but also the scenes that were provided to participants: “Child Falling in the Fire,” “Student Coughing,” and “Doctor from Chajul.” Additionally, I discuss the attitudes and behaviors dealing with open fires and cookstove purchase that were exhibited by actors during the performance of the models. The chapter concludes by discussing the outcomes of the plan to present performers with a model and then not allow them to change, or dynamize, problems presented in the models but instead, to provide them with a dynamisation and solution in the “LHI Office” model.

**Evaluation of “Life without Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove”**

In each of the seventeen homes, I asked the student participants if they had performed in “LWCS,” and I asked the adult participants if they had attended the performance and, if they had, whether they had participated in the discussion. Each of the home visits was unique, and despite my efforts and successes to remain consistent when presenting the models, I was not as consistent during the rapport-building portion of the visit. I often let the conversation meander, and because this was the portion of the intervention when I planned to ask families questions about their 2009 experience with “LWCS,” the evaluation of “LWCS” is based on those conversations more than it is on questions that I had prepared but never had a chance to consistently ask. I asked each family the same first question—“Did your son/daughter participate in the play last year?”—but because participants recalled different details from the performance and discussion, the prepared questions quickly were set aside and I had a conversation with people about what they remembered. The students who had participated, almost to a person, in “LWCS,” in 2009, remembered the play in great detail in 2010. Evidence of detailed recollection
is discussed below in relation to the “Child Falling into the Fire” scene, but during the initial interview, students also recalled minute details.

Thirteen of the seventeen homes had sons or daughters who participated in the play. Parents often remembered details only when asked questions, such as, “Do you remember the children playing trees?” or they did not remember at all. None of the adults who remembered attending the performance participated in the discussion but several remembered details about the play and the message. The low level of recollection among adult “LWCS” attendees, all of whom passively watched the performance and discussion but did not participate, confirms my suspicion, and Freire’s theories on praxis, that “reflection and action upon the world [are necessary] in order to transform it” (51). During the home visits, when adult participants could not recall details from “LWCS,” I sometimes told them, “It is okay if you do not remember last year’s performance. You will have the opportunity to perform this year and it is much easier to remember details if you are participating.” I employed this affirmation as a transition into using image theatre, which was the first step in the theatrical intervention portion of the home visit.

**Student Theatre Workshops**

The purpose of the theatre workshops was to provide a fun activity for students and to improve their skills in using theatre to reflect on issues relevant to their lives. As reported in Chapter Three, the workshops produced some outcomes, including the improved acting skills of the students. During the exercises, several attitudes and behaviors were revealed about open fires and cookstoves, with the only newly discovered attitude worth noting discovered during the “Family Game of Power.”

It was clear from students’ representations of family life that their fathers made decisions about purchasing items for the home, but they attributed a lot of “power” to their mothers and
grandmothers because these women cooked the food and controlled the fire. During the exercise, students often put the chair of power near the fire and said that is where their mother and grandmothers sat. However, several students placed the chair away from the fire, with one student saying that the chair of power did not represent a chair but, instead, was a chimney. As that student explained, “So it [the smoke] wouldn’t hurt the lungs and make lungs sick, so it gave it power by stopping the smoke.” Many students were aware of the harmful nature of IAP and knew that a cookstove with a chimney could reduce that risk. Many students also demonstrated that IAP adversely affected the people who are closest to the fire, and they shared this information with the other participants at the workshop.

**Reporting which Energy Technologies were Present in the Homes**

As explained in Chapter Three, the methods employed in this research included asking participants about their home energy use during the rapport-building portion of the visit, paying particular attention to four technologies: (a) cook stoves, (b) light bulbs, (c) cellphones, and (d) electrical outlets. However, it proved difficult to find a time to ask about all four technologies, especially when a question was not required. Moreover, the presence of light bulbs and cook stoves could be verified visually. However, I asked about light bulbs in every home in case there was one hidden or not functional. I asked about the presence of cellphones and outlets in a handful of homes, although I observed many of them. I found that because light bulbs were the only source of light available other than fire, it was important to track which families had light bulbs. All 17 homes visited had at least one light bulb, but one family had its power temporarily discontinued because the bill had not been paid. Two families had a Chuj, or wood-fired sauna, but these sometimes are separate from the house and hard to see. Most important, I noted which families had open fires in separate rooms from their sleeping quarters. Any information collected
about the four targeted energy technologies was shared with LHI in the individual home reports that I wrote.

**Image Theatre**

As discussed in Chapter Three, I used image theatre to introduce adult participants to being expressive in a safe and easy way. I used image theatre to segue out of the discussion about the problems associated with using an open fire in the home into the theatre models I had designed to present cookstoves as a possible solution. After participants had self-identified a problem associated with using an open fire, I asked them, “Can you show me what that looks like?” No participant refused or claimed to be unable or uncomfortable with creating an image. To the contrary, many participants enjoyed performing, and they needed very little instruction. I documented eighteen image models with sixteen participants. In three homes, I did not document the image theatre models with my digital camera, twice because it had a dead battery. In the remaining home, the participant expressed that she did not like the smoke that filled her kitchen, which was separate from her house, and she much preferred to be inside the main room. The kitchen was a separate room and very small, just big enough for the fire. Because I could not think of an image that would work within that small space that I could document, I took her photograph inside the home and away from the smoke, but we did not discuss the photograph as a model because it did not represent a problem that needed to be solved.

After the first few interventions, I realized that the easiest way to get participants to talk about problems associated with open fires was to ask what they did not like about open fires, and my interpreter, Maria Velasco Raymundo and I consistently used variations of the phrase *no gusta* in Spanish, which means “do not like,” to ask them about this issue. If further explanation was needed, Velasco Raymundo and I used variations on the Spanish verb *molestar*, which
means “to bother.” Asking participants what they did not like, or what bothered them most, about stoves consistently and quickly helped participants to identify problems with open fires. The use of clear language led participants to create images with their bodies that represented the problems that they had identified, and I did not have to demonstrate or describe actions as often when participants clearly understood what was being asked. Clear language that did not lead participants into acting in a certain way reduced the chances that participants’ actions were not of their devising but were merely being mimicked.

Participants struggled with understanding the concept of freezing, or holding perfectly still in the created image. Some participants were mostly frozen, but some were in constant motion. I explained briefly why freezing in one position was essential if we were to examine the image as a model that could lead to discussion, but my explanations seemed to discourage the enthusiasm with which participants were acting out their self-identified problems. As explained in Chapter Three, I planned to document the images with a digital camera, and I found that a flash photograph froze the image sufficiently. After the first few homes, I stopped asking participants to freeze unless it was absolutely necessary, which allowed the image model to be photographed without discouraging enthusiasm. After visually documenting the image models, I showed the image to people by displaying it on the camera’s LCD screen, and we discussed the problem. I avoided proposing solutions, but did discuss them if people mentioned them or if they were part of the image.

Of the eighteen image models, three were images created by people who owned and used their stoves regularly, and that represented what those three people liked most about their stoves. The images identified three benefits of having a cookstove. The first person said that she liked

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53 Lykes’s book *Voices and images* mentioned in Chapter Two, and the book *Material World: A Global Family Portrait* by Menzel, Mann, and Kennedy, are examples that document family stories with photographs.
her stove because it used the same amount of wood in a month that an open fire used in 20 days. Because her family purchased wood, the efficiency of the stove meant substantial savings. The image that she created (see Photograph 12) shows her putting two small pieces of wood into her cookstove.

![Photograph 12](image). Image theatre of a woman showing how little wood her cookstove uses.

Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 7, 2010.

The second person, in the same home, said that he liked that he could sleep in the same room as the cookstove and not have smoke wake him. His image (see Photograph 13) shows him half lying on the bed pretending to be asleep. The third person said she liked that there was no smoke in her house because the chimney had been removed. She stood by her cookstove and pantomimed forming a tortilla and placing it on the hot griddle, and being happy. That image (see Photograph 14), however, is confusing in some ways because the room is filled with smoke because the woman had lit an extra open fire on the floor because her cookstove was not large
enough, and she was in the middle of cooking snacks for a local school. Hence, the image probably could not be used as an educational or marketing tool, but the other two photographs easily could be used.

*Photograph 13* Image theatre of a man showing how he can sleep in the same room as his cookstove without smoke waking him. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 7, 2010.
Photograph 14. Image theatre of a woman pantomiming making a tortilla near her cookstove, who said she liked that the chimney removed the smoke from the house, but an extra open fire on the floor had made the room smoky. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 7, 2010.

The remaining fifteen image theatre models were created by people who used open fires in their homes, and the images documented problems associated with open fires and their use. Participants who produced these fifteen image theatre models identified five problems associated with open fires: (a) nine said that the smoke from the open fire hurt their eyes, (b) two said that they often were burned on the open fire, (c) two said that children often fall into the open fires and get burned, (d) one said that the open fire made her house dirty, and (e) one said that the open fire gave her headaches. The documented photographs of the best eight examples of the image theatre models are provided below, with captions explaining them. The first four photographs (see Photographs 15, 16, 17 and 18) show women who are in pain or discomfort, photographs 19 and 20 are of image theatre models that represent solutions to the problem of
IAP, and photographs 21 and 22 are of women who are stopping children from playing near a fire.

*Photograph 15.* Image theatre of a woman who has a constant headache because of the smoke from her open fire, and whose daughter (pictured) approached her during the image theatre performance and seemed to console her mother. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 10, 2010.
Photograph 16. Image theatre of a woman who has burned her arm in the same spot again and again, claiming that because her open fire was placed in the corner, she was forced to reach across pots, causing her to often burn herself. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 10, 2010.

Photograph 17 Image theatre of a woman who was bothered by the smoke as she was cooking.

Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 12, 2010.
Photograph 18. Image theatre of a woman whose eyes hurt so much that she could not see well enough to weave, even when there was no smoke in the room. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 12, 2010.
Photograph 19. Image theatre of a woman who administers eye drops to her daughter’s itchy or painful eyes. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 14, 2010.

Photograph 20. Image theatre of a woman who splashes water in her eyes when she is overwhelmed by smoke. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 14, 2010.
Photograph 21. Image theatre of a woman preventing her children from playing near the fire.

Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 11, 2010.
Photograph 22. Image theatre of a young woman preventing her younger brother from playing near the fire. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 15, 2010.

During one home visit, I created an image theatre model without the person’s input. The woman had a plancha-style cookstove that was given to her by a government program over ten years before our visit, which she did not use because the stove was too high off the ground to be practical for her to reach the pots and to see inside them as she cooked. I asked her to sit near the open fire and cook as I took a photograph with the cookstove in the background (see Photograph 23). The woman started a fire in the cookstove because she knew that we were coming to talk to her about cookstoves, but she had not used it in years.
Photograph 23. Image theatre of a woman using an open fire instead of the cookstove that was given to her by a government program. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 9, 2010.

In conclusion, the principal reason for asking people to create an image theatre model was to ease them into creating with their bodies. However, the resulting documentation of the models is an additional outcome of the activity. The 15 image theatre models created directly from people’s input represent five possible concerns related to open fires in Chajul that probably affect the majority of community members in Chajul who live in similar conditions (i.e., small households that use open fires to cook food). From my reports to LHI, the organization now is aware of these five problems and that IAP is the cause of well over half of them and is causing many residents in Chajul daily pain and discomfort. Additionally, a good portion of people are concerned about children and mothers getting burns from the fires. A smaller percentage of people probably would list cleanliness as the biggest problem associated with open fires, but it definitely is a concern because other people mentioned it during other parts of the home visits.
Many of these problems associated with open fire use were common knowledge or could have been guessed at before I arrived, but now there are documented photographs that illustrate these points.

**“Child Falling into the Fire” Model**

As described in Chapter Three, the scene “Child Falling into the Fire” was designed to slowly introduce adult participants to acting. No one refused to participate, and all that was required of them was to react to their son or daughter pretending to fall into a home fire. One promising outcome of creating this model was watching students who participated in “LWCS” recreate this scene that they helped to create. All of the students who participated in “LWCS” remembered when their fellow student, John, fell in the fire, and they recreated it with very little instruction. When John comically fell into the fire during “LWCS,” it obviously made an impression on the students. However, one student, Herman, who played the father in “LWCS,” mimicked John’s actions so precisely that I was impressed with his ability to recall the exact body placement and stage action that took place almost a year before. I remember how John fell into the fire because it was comical, and I have watched the tape of “LWCS” many times, but Herman only saw it a handful of times during rehearsal and he was able to recreate it in more detail that I would have been able to.

During “LWCS” John had a soccer ball and he stumbled toward the fire, throwing the ball in the air and catching it. He dropped the ball and fell into the fire, curling his body around it such that from the audience’s perspective, it looked like he was lying in the fire. Although some of the students mimicked John closely enough that their recall of that detail was indisputable, Herman’s recreation of the scene, without question, was an exact step-for-step restaging of John’s actions. After I asked Herman if he remembered the moment in “LWCS” when John fell
into the fire, Herman said “Yes,” and he ran and got a soccer ball. Herman entered throwing the ball in the air, and he dropped the ball and fell, curling his body around the fire. None of the other students displayed Herman’s ability to recall and recreate such minute details, but all of them remembered the situation and needed very little instruction, which I took as a positive outcome of starting with this scene derived from “LWCS.” The students remembered “LWCS” well and had retained, and in some cases, gained performance skills.

During the “Child Falling into the Fire” scene in the home visits, all of the adults who moved at all rushed to their son or daughter when he or she pretended to fall into the fire. Every one of those adults led their son or daughter away from the fire and apologized, saying “I’m sorry you fell in the fire and were hurt,” or asked them to be careful, but none of the parents scolded their child. A few parents needed additional coaching to understand what they needed to act out. Adult participants who failed to act did so mostly during the first few interventions, when Velasco Raymundo and I were discovering how to describe the scene without telling people exactly what to do. Parents also failed to act when their son or daughter did not clearly fall into the fire. Some of the sons’ and daughters’ actions were not clear enough for their parents to react; consequently, those sons and daughters also needed additional coaching.

In addition to the many realistic portrayals of caretaking displayed by the adults, and their attitudes and behaviors exhibited during the situation of a child being burned in an open fire, the discussion also revealed many remedies for treating burns. After the scene, I asked people what would happen after a child was burned. Three adults said that they would take the child to the doctor for medicine. Another participant said that she would take her son to a Mayan doctor, where it was common practice to blow on the burn to make the pain go away. Home remedies for burns included rubbing an assortment of substances and concoctions on the injured area,
including saliva, sugar, a paste made from sugar and saliva, a paste made from sugar and tomato, and toothpaste. Each family seemed to have a unique recipe for soothing or healing burns.

I acted only in one scene during these home visits. Velasco Raymundo and I went to a home and the student left for school almost immediately. Velasco Raymundo played the characters in the other scenes and I played the child falling into the fire. The mother consoled me and said, “My poor boy,” as she spit on my arm and rubbed it in, laughing the whole time.

After they performed the “Child Falling into the Fire” scene, I asked every person if the same situation of a child being burned by an open fire had happened to his or her family. People’s answers produced some interesting results. Of the families that said one or more of their children had been burned, all of them identified a little boy as the child who fell into the fire. All of the boys were under 4 years old when they were burned. After this gender pattern became apparent, I mentioned it to a few families in later interventions and each of them laughed. In an interesting contrast to the laughter, every adult who answered “No” when asked if his or her children had ever fallen into the fire responded with almost the exact same phrase in Ixil, “Thank God this has never happened.”

Despite some participants needing assistant, the majority of adults clearly reacted to their sons or daughters falling into the fire with love and care. However, none of the adults mentioned the solution of getting rid of their open fire, and I did not mention it either. I continued onto the next scene, leaving that problem of children getting burned unsolved and awaiting a solution.

“Child Coughing while Studying near the Fire” Model

The next model I presented, “Child Coughing while Studying near the Fire,” at first, seemed to be a complete failure, as most of the adults did not react as their child sat coughing by the fire. Initially, I thought that the adults did not understand what they were supposed to do, but
all of them had just performed in the “Child Falling into the Fire” scene. I soon realized that the parents were not revealing their lack of acting skills but, instead, were revealing their attitudes and behaviors toward a child coughing because of breathing in smoke. Velasco Raymundo prompted a few people in Ixil, telling them to remove their sons or daughters from the smoke, but not one adult acted on his or her own. Because some students’ coughing was not very forceful, I often prompted them to cough so hard that their mom would help them, but none reached that level of coughing. I am not sure if that level of coughing exists, because coughing near the fire seems to be the norm.

The lack of action on the part of the parents to relieve their son’s or daughter’s coughing points to most people in Chajul not seeing coughing as something that is immediately harmful. In contrast to the swift action and sense of urgency that the parents exhibited when their child was burned, their lack of action when their child coughed is even more striking. However, a contrary position also is possible: Adults might be just as aware of the health risks of IAP as they are of burns, but smoke is just a part of their everyday life that cannot be avoided, whereas burns can be avoided. The people might know that smoke slowly is killing everyone, and that burns can badly disfigure someone who falls in a fire, but even if they do know about the dangers of smoke and burns, most are not taking actions to prevent them.

“Doctor from Chajul” Model

The “Doctor from Chajul” model did not reveal a contrast in behaviors, as did the previous scenes, and it proved to be difficult to convince people that the doctor was from Chajul. In almost every home, I had to add “de Chajul,” meaning “of Chajul,” as the student introduced himself as a doctor who had come to ask the family some questions about its stove. Moreover, although the character did avoid being “Mr. Wise,” and came across more as the “questioning
doctor” that I had devised, students playing the questioning doctor sometimes stopped asking questions and, instead, gave advice. Two students even suggested buying a cookstove as a solution. Several adults asked the doctor for health advice and for medicine that would take away headaches and itchy and painful eyes. Interestingly, one mother even asked the doctor, who was being played by her son, for money.

*Photograph 24. A student playing the “questioning doctor” from Chajul asks her mother about the residue above the open fire. Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 9, 2010.*

One of the expected outcomes of the “Doctor from Chajul” model was to inform adults that open fires were harmful to their respiratory health. As discussed in Chapter Three, Morrow thought that comparing the residue above the open fires to what people’s lungs probably looked like would be effective; consequently, I instructed each person playing the doctor to share that information. However, because the scene was performed in Ixil, and some material did not get interpreted back to me, I can only assume that students playing the doctor followed my directions
and made this comparison of the dirty ceiling to dirty lungs. I am positive that many “doctors” did mention this comparison because the student playing the character pointed to the dirty wall and then to his or her chest (see Photograph 24). I also always heard an interpretation of the adults’ responses, and many of them commented on the comparison.

“LHI Office” Model and Dynamisation

The three models leading up to the “LHI Office” model—“Child Falling into the Fire,” “Child Coughing while Studying near the Fire,” and “Doctor from Chajul”—posed problems associated with the use of open fires, and participants had not had the chance to express what their obstacles were to stove purchase. After I explained that they would be pretending to go to the LHI office and asking what it would take to buy a cookstove, the floodgate often opened up about all of the obstacles, barriers, and reasons why purchasing a cookstove was not practical for them. I politely told them that they did not have to buy a stove if they did not want to do so. I also said that they did not need to worry about money, home ownership, limited space, or any other obstacle; they simply had to go to the LHI office and ask what it would take to buy a stove. The LHI staff member there would help them to solve the problem, and when they left the office, they would have a plan to purchase a cookstove that took into consideration all of their obstacles they had raised.

Performing the “LHI Office” model as a dynamisation in the 15 homes that did not own cookstoves was an outcome, itself. In a majority of the homes (10), an LHI office member participated in the scenes, and each of the LHI office staff members—Morrow, Wong, Barry, and Hernandez Ijom—performed in the “LHI Office” model at least once (see Photograph 25). Morrow, Wong, and Barry played themselves, but Hernandez Ijom chose to be Yat Tiu, LHI’s program director, who was on maternity leave. There were five times when a member of LHI’s
staff was not present and Velasco Raymundo played Veronica. People from each of the homes performed in the scene. If they had not already mentioned their interest in purchasing a cookstove, I asked if they were interested just before we staged the “LHI Office” model, to ensure that people wanted it and that this scene would help them to come up with a solution. Because I did not want people to feel as if they were being tricked into purchasing a cookstove, I reiterated that the purpose of the scene was to help them to come up with solutions. Participants in each home said that they were interested, and fourteen out of the fifteen came up with solutions and a plan to purchase a stove. One person refused to come up with a plan, even though she said that she wanted a stove, repeatedly claiming that all of her money went toward sending her children to school, and that she would not spend money on anything else, even though she was well aware of the health risks and named many of the problems associated with using an open fire.
The other fourteen participants created a plan to purchase a stove. Many of them were not aware that cookstoves could be purchased on a six-month interest free payment plan. To participate in that program, LHI required people to sign over the deed to their land. Some were willing to do so, but others were not; moreover, some people did not own their land and did not have a land deed.

At one home, Wong played herself in the “LHI Office” model, and the most important outcome of any of the home visits occurred. The family she was attempting to help find a solution did not have a land deed but the members wanted to participate in the six-month payment program. During the scene, Wong questioned LHI’s policy and said that because the family had worked with LHI for so many years, it would be able to participate in the payment program without the land deed. This was an important statement because actual change happened in the scene, with Wong changing LHI’s policies for this family and saying that the policy must be reexamined if more cookstoves are to be sold. The decision also showed how important it is to have people with decision-making power participate in theatrical interventions.

Twelve of the fourteen participants that problem solved a plan to purchase a cookstove were women and all twelve finished the scene by saying that they would have to speak to their husbands before they returned to LHI’s office. The two men who participated in the “LHI Office” model spoke at length, never referring to, or asking for, their wives’ opinions, and they even spoke more than did the LHI office worker, which was in contrast to the scenes with women, where the LHI office worker did the majority of talking and focused on how LHI’s
programs could solve obstacles preventing stove purchase. The two men spent the majority of the scenes talking about situations in their homes and how LHI’s programs could fit into those conditions. In contrast, the women left with much more specific and clear plans that could lead to stove purchase. The outcome of every woman saying that she needed to ask her husband first and the way the two men dominated the planning session reinforced the obvious: Women in that culture have very little control of their lives.

The Porousness of Reality and Fiction

The fourteen people who problem solved a plan to purchase a stove during the performance of the “LHI Office” model left the “office” within their home and often said that they would stop by LHI’s office soon. The people seemed to be referring to the actual LHI office, as they still were in the fictional office. None of them reacted to this duality and none commented that they were in two places at once but their actions and the further examples discussed below show that people were aware of this double distinction.

I always tried to stage the “LHI Office” model away from the fire, placing it at a table and in another room, if possible. By that point in the intervention, participants and I had been performing around the fire for up to 30 minutes. I believed that if we moved away from the fire and out of the smoke, the sense of relief would encourage them to see the benefits of buying a cookstove as they entered the fictional office. In all but one of the homes, I staged the scene away from most of the smoke; that one home was such a tiny one-room house that it forced placing the office next to the open fire, which was emitting quite a bit of smoke. The mother entered the office and said, “Thank you for meeting me in your office. I would like to talk to you about buying a cookstove.” Edilma Magdalena Hernandez Ijom, LHI’s local coordinator, who was playing Veronica, told the mother, “This [getting a stove] is good for you, because look at
the smoke. [She gestured to the smoke in the room and to the ceiling above the fire.] It’s not good for your kids.” The mother agreed and looked around at the smoke. When the scene was over, I turned to Hernandez Ijom and said, “Hay mucho humo en su oficina,” and I gestured towards the smoke in the same way as she did. Everyone laughed, including the mother, who clearly spoke enough Spanish to understand my simple joke. Hernandez Ijom’s conflation of the fictional and physical setting, and the mother’s acceptance of this conflation, is evidence that the adult participants were immersed in the scene and that there was porousness between the reality of being in their homes and being in the fictional place, which is similar to Richard Schechner’s theory of “make belief,” as described in Chapter Two. This evidence of gliding between two spaces and being aware of the transgression when it was pointed out shows that people were performing within a fiction but that they still were aware of their physical place. This is an exciting outcome of the interventions because it shows, as Cohen-Cruz put it, that participants were engaged in an exercise that enacted “their real beliefs with real consequences” (38).

There were several incidents where people commented on the fine line between reality and fiction during the scenes. Most of them involved comments and laughter when their sons or daughters played a character other than themselves and the parents had to pretend that, for example, they were speaking to a doctor. There were two incidents, however, that were unique. The first incident involved the same mother mentioned above who asked the doctor (being played by her son) for money. Later in the scene, the same mother mentioned her son in conversation, and when she did, she pointed at her son who still was playing the doctor. At that moment, he simultaneously was the doctor and her son, although this moment passed without comment. In the second incident, I was visiting Hernandez Ijom’s house. She had earned enough money through working extra hours to buy a stove for her family, but she was waiting for the

54 “There is much smoke in your office.”
parts of the stove to arrive to be installed. In spite of the imminent arrival of her family’s stove, Hernandez Ijom wanted her mother to participate in the theatre activities. From the moment we walked in to the home, everyone was laughing and we were having fun. When it was time for Edilma to play the doctor, her mom became serious and asked, “Is this real or are we joking?” For a moment, the mother was not sure what was reality and what was fiction. After a moment, though, she realized her mistake because she said that she knew her daughter was not a doctor. It also is possible that Edilma’s mother was making a joke, but if she was either momentarily confused or joking about being so, her comment is further evidence of the porousness between reality and fiction that was being experienced by people performing models in their home with their sons and daughters playing characters other than themselves.

The “Practice how to Talk to Your Husband about Cookstove Purchase” Model

In the two homes that had cookstoves, I could not use the “LHI Office” model and the other three models also were barely applicable. I did attempt a few of them just for practice, but they were designed to lead up to the “LHI Office” model, which meant that there was little point in performing it. The two homes that used cookstoves were the first two homes visited, and I struggled to think of theatrical activities that would work for those family members. In the first home, I sat with the family members and talked about their new cookstove and their family. In the second home, the mother, Anita, said that she wanted to buy a new cookstove because her stove was old and too small. Anita had been making money by cooking snacks for a local school, and she needed a stove at least twice as big to accomplish that task. Unfortunately, the teacher with whom Anita was working recently had told her that the school would not be buying snacks anymore, which was a devastating blow to Anita’s family’s income. I saw Anita’s problem as an opportunity to create a model in which Anita talked to the teacher about getting her job back. We

55 “Algo chistosta o real?”
could dynamize solutions and give Anita the practice that she needed to convince the teacher that her services were worth the money. I explained my plan to Anita, but she told me that she already had talked to the teacher twice and that the teacher told her, “Wait, I will come to you.”

I had been in the house for only a short time and because I was determined to discuss or possibly dynamize a problem, I asked if Anita had any other problems. She said that her husband drinks heavily and that he beats her. It is not uncommon for husbands to physically abuse their wives in Chajul, and it is not uncommon for wives to talk about it; during the home visits, three women mentioned being victims of domestic spousal abuse and one mentioned both child and spousal abuse. I did not attempt to create a model and dynamize Anita’s problem’s with her husband, as Anita was not asking for help but merely explaining her situation.

My encounter with Anita impacted me greatly. I regretted not using theatre of the oppressed (TO) techniques to model her oppression and dynamize possible solutions. I informed LHI’s staff what Anita had said, as I did each time similar information was disclosed to me, but my frustration inspired me to devise a new scene for the home interventions. During the tenth home visit, the husband was not present, and after the “LHI Office” model, the mother said the same thing that twelve other women had said almost verbatim, “Yes, I am going to talk to my husband because he is the only one that can help us with this.” I said, “Okay, let’s practice that.” For various reasons, I used the “Practice How to Talk to Your Husband about Cookstove Purchase” model only two times, during that visit and the 16th visit. In both instances, the father was played by a daughter. She entered the scene as her father and started talking first, and although this speaking order might have been realistic, I asked the persons playing him to begin again but to let the mother start the conversation. Both scenes also ended with the father getting his way and making the decision. During the sixteenth home visit, I asked the mother and
daughter to play the scene again, dynamising it such that the mother got her way, but they were unable to accomplish that outcome. In both houses, I asked the mother-daughter pairs if they thought that their portrayal was similar to how a real conversation between their mother and father was likely to happen, and both pairs of women said that it was similar. Given that both scenes depicted the man controlling the conversation and dictating what would happen, I tended to believe that if a real conversation were to happen, it would be similar in many ways, with the man would dominating and getting his way.

**Home Reports**

As mentioned above, I provided LHI with individual written reports about each home visited, which served as needs assessments for the seventeen families visited. It was a time-consuming task and the seventeen reports and the summary of them were over 50 pages long (A sample report is provided Appendix D). LHI staff members were excited about receiving the reports because they did not have the time to do such a needs assessments or even conduct friendly visits to each family’s home. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the reports focused on families’ home energy use, but I informed LHI about families that were at risk for other reasons. For example, I documented which families self-reported domestic abuse, and which families reported that the father was not presently living at home and for what reason. The bulk of the reports discussed the attitudes and behaviors that family members exhibited during the performances and discussions held in each home. I also submitted a summary report that documented the overall findings from this research, which discussed trends observed. These reports were an outcome that allowed LHI to serve families better through improved services.

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56 There were four women who reported domestic abuse and all mentioned alcohol as a contributing factor.

57 Two fathers were not living with their families and both had left to look for work. Another father recently had arrived home from working near the border with Mexico, but was now home and did not have a job.
but those reports also helped the organization to devise a more creative marketing strategy and to rethink its sales strategies.

**Key Informant: Katie Morrow**

As mentioned in Chapter Three, LHI’s executive director and cofounder was skeptical about whether adults in Chajul would cooperate with me, suspecting that they would refuse or lack the ability to participate in theatre activities. After seventeen home visits and no refusals to participate, as the following conversation showed, Morrow and Wong agreed that theatre is a good way to work with families in Chajul:

Morrow: I think it [theatre] is a really great way to deliver information to families. They learn kinesthetically, so by learning through theatre, they learn in the same way they have normally learned.

Me: Just to clarify, by kinesthetically, what do you mean?

Morrow: Learning by doing or doing by performing.

Courtney: Making tortillas, weaving, chopping wood; not sitting in the classroom.

After submitting the home interview reports, Morrow also agreed that theatre is a good way to collect information from families as well.

Since my visit in June 2010, and partly due to the home reports, LHI has changed its sales strategy for cookstoves. In addition to the locally assembled and distributed CES plancha stove, the organization now sells a cookstove that is distributed by HELP International, a large international aid organization. The new stoves are less expensive than the previous cookstove because the price is subsidized by HELP, and the stoves come with a water filter. In less than six months, LHI has sold over 150 HELP cookstoves in Chajul, compared to the 30 CES stoves that it sold the previous three years. The HELP stove and accompanying water filter help LHI to
fulfill its development goals of improving community health by reducing IAP and by improving the quality of the drinking water. However, accomplishment of those goals might be short lived because people complain about how small the stoves are, and the main reason cited for buying a HELP stove is the low price; consequently, it is not yet clear whether the HELP stove is an appropriate and sustainable energy technology for people in Chajul.

Conclusion

My work in 2009 revealed best practices for using theatre to work with the indigenous people in Chajul and underrepresented people around the world who are unaccustomed to using theatre to reflect on issues affecting their lives. The performance skills gained by the Chajul students through the rehearsal process, their enthusiasm, and Limitless Horizons Ixil staff members’ assessments of using theatre to meet the organization’s development goals indicated the potential of conducting future theatre work in Chajul where practitioners collaborate with adult and student spect-actors on issue-based work. The hurried facilitation of “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” by Veronica Yat Tiu also revealed the need to prepare facilitators more fully. However, the fact that Yat Tiu discovered new information about cookstoves and engaged more than 300 community members in an hour-long discussion about an important issue reveals the potential for future public performances in Chajul, where community members discuss an issue and propose solutions.

In June 2010, I spent over twenty hours with more than sixty people in seventeen homes discussing and investigating home energy use through theatre. I also spent four hours with more than twenty students, many of whom also invited me into their homes. During those four hours, students and I workshopped new games, exercises, methods, and techniques that engaged them in a fun way and, simultaneously, built their skills, making them more able to use theatre to
engage issues of concern. The theatre exercises, especially “The Family Game of Power,” revealed people’s attitudes and behaviors about cookstoves and indoor air pollution that previously were unknown to me, LHI staff members, and many of the participating students.

The theatre models performed during the home visits also revealed people’s attitudes and behaviors associated with the use of open fires and cookstove purchase. The level of participation among participants, and the ease with which they performed the models, points to the potential of using participant-identified and thoroughly researched models that lead toward a final model that has them practice a behavior that fulfills the issue-based development goal in question. For the final model in Chajul, people devised a plan to purchase a cookstove after they had acted out several models that represented problems that could easily be solved if they owned a cookstove. However, this is just one potential issue and solution that can be presented and dynamized using this method. The next chapter proposes future applications of using this method in Chajul, and discusses the implications of the results for community members in Chajul, Limitless Horizons Ixil, and the field of theatre for development, as well as the limitations of this research study and suggestions for future research.
Chapter Five

Discussion of Results, Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusion

This dissertation sought to establish the use of theatre for development (TfD) methods to give people in Chajul, Guatemala opportunities to reflect on, and take action towards reducing, the risks of indoor air pollution (IAP) in their homes. Chapter One established a need for the reduction of IAP in people’s homes in Chajul and showed how TfD methods based on theatre of the oppressed (TO) techniques could be an effective tool for Limitless Horizons Ixil (LHI) in its efforts to sell cookstoves. Chapter Two placed this study within the historical context and ethical issues inherent in the field of TfD, and examined scholarship on best TfD practices. Chapter Three detailed the TfD methods that were employed during the 2009 and 2010 interventions in Chajul, with Chapter Four presenting the results of the theatre interventions. This final chapter discusses the results, identifies limitations that characterized the study, proposes directions for future studies, and concludes by summarizing this research study.

Discussion of Results

LHI’s decision to sell HELP cookstoves and water filters is an indirect result of the theatre interventions. LHI staff members performed in the “LHI Office” model, and, as demonstrated by Wong’s willingness during one scene to change the stated policy regarding land deeds, they reflected on how their then-current strategy was preventing some people from purchasing stoves. LHI staff participation in the theatrical interventions brought authority and credibility to the theatre interventions, and must have helped participants from Chajul to make connections between the scholarships provided by LHI and the product (cookstoves) being sold by the same people. LHI was paying for sons and daughters to go to school because the families could not afford to pay, and those same people now were telling them that a cookstove was a
necessary purchase for the family’s health. Increasing the transparency of LHI’s double role as a service provider and as a seller of products is an additional result of the theatre interventions.

The impact that LHI staff participation had on the 2010 home visits was welcome by me and the participants, especially considering that when I arrived in Chajul in June 2010, I did not think that LHI staff members would have time to assist me. Like many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), LHI is understaffed and underfunded, and its staff is overworked. In 2009, I had a different experience with staff participation when Yat Tiu served as the facilitator to “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” (“LWCS”) and Robbins served as a translator and liaison to the students and families. The LHI staff was less available in 2010 for several reasons, including the expansion of programs, Yat Tiu being on maternity leave, training of new staff members, and the timing of Morrow’s travel dates. Luckily, each staff member participated in the “LHI Office” model at least once, and the impact of that staff participation was one of the most promising results of this study.

Additional results revealed by the theatrical interventions that helped LHI to focus its organizational goals were reported in the 2010 individual home reports and the summary report that I submitted to LHI. In addition to reporting on people’s attitudes and behaviors associated with open fires and cookstove purchase, I detailed the possibility of using theatre in the future to accomplish LHI’s other development goals. As discussed below, the students and parents who had been exposed to using TfD techniques were an asset to LHI’s future plans.

One of the most interesting results from this study was the lack of sales of CES plancha stores following the interventions conducted in Chajul in 2009 and 2010. Although the goal of the 2009 interventions was not to sell stoves, an increase in stove purchase, conceivably, could have been one of the outcomes. In 2010, the interventions sought to increase people’s awareness
of the need to purchase stoves, but sales also did not increase following those interventions. At first, this lack of sales of stoves seemed to indicate that the theatre techniques had not been successful, but the rapid sales of the cookstoves and water filters from HELP International indicate that the price of the stoves was the most important factor to many people, as was discovered from the theater interventions. The slow sales of the CES stoves indicates that an 800Q$58 ($100) stove is too high of a price and, therefore, is not appropriate for many people living in Chajul. Even though the HELP stoves are smaller than the CES stoves, and people complain about the difficulties of cooking tortillas on such a small surface, people are buying them and the chimneys are removing the smoke from people’s homes. As mentioned in Chapter Four, it is not yet clear whether the HELP stoves are an appropriate and sustainable energy technology for people in Chajul, as the small cooking surface could encourage people to start open fires to supplement the amount of cooking space available to them. During the home visits, multiple open fires and a combination of fires and stoves in one home were visible, and I reported this practice to LHI.

**Methodological Contributions**

The methods reported in this dissertation contribute to TfD scholarship in several ways. Most important, this research establishes a method for working with people identified as energy poor and with NGOs to investigate and promote the use of cookstoves with those individuals. The focus on cookstoves during the performances and discussions produced copious amounts of data about people’s attitudes and behaviors associated with using an open fire in their homes. The obstacles to purchasing stoves that were revealed in the interventions were difficult to solve on paper, but participation of the LHI staff in the theatre interventions demonstrated the potential for using provided dynamisations to solve problems associated with open fires and obstacles to

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58 “Q” denotes quetzale, the Guatemalan currency.
purchasing stoves. These methods can and should be used and expanded on by NGOs and engineers who are introducing new energy technologies to a group of people to ensure that those new technologies are appropriate and sustainable energy technologies (ASETs).

Creating theatre in people’s homes was a unique methodological contribution provided by this study. The methods used in the home visits stressed the importance of building rapport before easing people into performing. Participants were much more open in a private, one-on-one conversation than they would have been in public. The use of familiar situations—such as smoke causing people to cough and children getting burned—and a familiar setting—their home—provided local residents with material that they could perform, but it also created a “make-belief” situation that presented opportunities to look critically at their harmful daily activities. The full potential of using theatre in people’s homes has yet to be reached, and some possibilities are discussed below.

During the home visits, two previously undocumented TfD methods were employed: providing “problem” models and a final dynamisation. The practice of providing “problem” models as a method was necessary only because people in Chajul had previously demonstrated their inability to act out their problems and to devise solutions to them through dynamisation. The “problem” models were devised using participant-provided content and by consulting TfD scholarship. The situations from “Child Falling into the Fire” and “Child Coughing while Studying near the Fire” were provided by participants, and the situation of the “Doctor from Chajul” was inspired by the abuse of the “wise doctor” character described in TfD scholarship (Bastien 1359). The “questioning doctor” character I created for the “Doctor from Chajul” model preserved the authority of a medical professional and gave people the opportunity to express their concerns about health programs in relation to their own health. The creation and
implementation of these “problem” models provides TfD practitioners and scholars with an ethical and effective method for devising content for people who are unfamiliar with theatre practices and who need help expressing their problems through performance.

The second method established during the home visits was providing a final dynamisation as a solution to the previous “problem” models. The “LHI Office” model provided people with opportunities to reflect on the many problems associated with open fires (problems they were freshly aware of, given that they had just acted out the three “problem” models). It also gave local residents and LHI staff members the opportunity to practice taking action to solve those problems by discussing and creating a plan to purchase stoves. The events of the scene led LHI to reconsider its policies, and 14 of 15 people who participated said that they were going to implement the plan and take action to purchase a stove. The creation and implementation of the “LHI Office” scene, thus, established a method for devising solutions for people who are unable to dynamise solutions. The one participant out of fifteen who refused to accept a cookstove as a provided solution indicated with her actions that the method of providing the solution was not overly coercive and that the practice provided room for dissent.

The capacity for participants to disagree with the content and solutions presented in the theatre performances—just as one woman did in the home interventions and students did during the “LWCS” rehearsal process—was an important feature of the ethical methods developed specifically for the population in Chajul. The capacity for dissent and the possibility of dialogue that was insisted upon contributes to furthering the scholarship on ethical TfD methods. The difficulties that many TfD practitioners face when working with a group of people who are not accustomed to being a part of a dialogue will be lessened if those practitioners can insist on dialogue even when participants are not always able to give input. This need for dialogue within
what Paulo Freire called a “culture of silence” often is cited by TfD practitioners (Mda 196, Salhi 116) as necessary for “critical awareness” and action (Salhi 116). The methods established in this study give participants and practitioners ethical tools for creating dialogue and for promoting reflection and action.

In addition to the ethical theatre methods established in 2009 and 2010, the care taken in this research to investigate the appropriateness and sustainability of cookstoves indicates the level of knowledge that TfD practitioners must have when using theatre methods to introduce a technology for that theatre intervention to be considered ethical. Ideally, TfD practitioners should be knowledgeable about each issue dealt with during an intervention, but as the results of this study show, it is impossible to know what issues will be addressed during an intervention (in this case, domestic abuse and alcoholism). The uncertainty of what issues participants will consider relevant further stresses the need for ethical, dialogic methods. However, the methods in this study, which were based on the findings of scientific researchers (Dherani et al., Granderson et al., and Smith et al.) indicates that the more TfD researchers can learn about an issue, the more ethical their methods can be. For example, Granderson et al.’s research on the moisture content of wood affecting levels of IAP allowed me to ask several families how they collected and stored their wood. (Most had a system for using the driest wood). I then talked to those families about how wet wood caused more smoke, and I used my knowledge about what caused increased levels of IAP when staging and discussing the models in the home and staging “LWCS.”

Working collaboratively with a host NGO also is an essential skill for TfD practitioners. I constantly sought input from the LHI staff, just as I sought input from participants in the theatre pieces, about what was appropriate and relevant to their goals and the goals of their organization. For example, I worked with Morrow and Wong for months before my 2010 visit to establish
goals for the theatrical interventions that would align with the goals of LHI. Even after all that work to align our goals, when I arrived in Chajul we had a face-to-face meeting to ensure that the goals still were aligned. LHI’s staff also served as cultural liaisons to Chajul. Morrow has lived in Chajul longer than any English-speaking person ever has, and although her staff changes every year, LHI ensures that its staff members are knowledgeable of the customs and culture of Chajul and its people. LHI staff members not only helped me to navigate the complicated tasks of travelling to Chajul, booking a hotel, and finding food for every meal, but their input into what would and would not work in the theatrical interventions contributes to the scholarship on TfD-NGO collaborations. For example, as mentioned in Chapter Three, during the rehearsals of “LWCS” Molly Robbins, LHI’s international coordinator, warned about inserting didactic environmental messages into the play. She said that an environmental message could invalidate our whole play because indigenous people in Chajul are accustomed to the Guatemalan government using environmental messages as excuses to take away indigenous lands. Without a host NGO, TfD practitioners would be unable to access a majority of populations in the world.

This study also contributes to TfD scholarship some common mistakes to avoid when working with NGOs. During the 2010 intervention, Community Enterprise Solutions, the engineers and distributors of the plancha cookstove sold by LHI, did not want to work with me. As mentioned in Chapter Three, one of my goals was to collect information to help CES and LHI market a better selling, more sustainable stove. However, that goal originally included the phrase “to make and market a better selling, more sustainable stove,” which differs from the final goal because of the word “make.” When CES staff members saw that goal written in an e-mail, they were offended, thinking that I was saying their stoves needed to be replaced. I tried to explain that my only goal was to investigate how to reduce IAP in people’s homes in the most ethical
and sustainable ways. CES was trying to reduce IAP in people’s homes with its cookstoves, and its organizational leaders were not interested in using theatre methods to discover whether their stoves were an appropriate and sustainable energy technology.

I wrongly assumed that all cookstove manufacturers were attempting to improve their stoves. My research on cookstoves had revealed that efforts were being made by several major and minor stove manufacturers (e.g., Aprovecho, Envirofit, and Engineers Without Borders) to improve existing stoves by making them more fuel efficient and culturally appropriate (Bilger). The *plancha* stove that CES distributes, as Granderson et al. said, “is a well-established cookstove technology originally designed in Guatemala and constructed locally for over 25 years” (4). There is no doubt that the plancha is one of the most popular cookstoves in the world and, consequently, many researchers study its efficiency and practicality. CES is a wonderful organization, and the misunderstanding about my intentions was unfortunate. In considering the reasons why people in Chajul were not buying the plancha stoves, I failed to help CES accomplish its goals. My inability to help CES and its members’ lack of desire to work with me points towards the balance that every TfD practitioner needs to find between meeting the needs of the local people and meeting the needs of the host NGO.

**Conceptual/Theoretical Contributions**

The ethical methods mentioned above that were employed in this study also contribute to the field of TfD on a conceptual level. The criticisms offered by Taylor and Ahmed mentioned in Chapter Two about how easily TfD practitioners are corrupted indicates a need for TfD scholarship to justify its methods as noncoercive and participatory. This study strived to be consistent with Freirean theories by creating TfD methods such that practitioners and participants were “learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action
against the oppressive elements of reality” (35). When creating ethical methods, TfD practitioners should remember that they are working with participants in a dialogue. As Freire said, dialogue “is necessary, that is, unless one intends to carry out transformation for the oppressed rather than with them. It is my belief that only the later form of transformation is valid” (67).

In addition to further establishing Freirean theories as integral to ethical TfD practices, this study contributes to the understanding of Augusto Boal’s TO theories and practices, and how they can be used in ethical TfD practices as well. Boal argued that the objective of all participatory theatre was

the liberation of the spectator, on whom the theatre has imposed finished visions of the world. And since those responsible for theatrical performances are in general people who belong directly or indirectly in the ruling class, obviously their finished images will be a reflection of themselves. The spectators in the people’s theatre (i.e. the people themselves) cannot go on being the passive victims of those images. (*TO* 155)

The people of Chajul are the “passive victims” described by Boal, for they are among the first and last victims of colonialism. As Kirk Smith said, “Truth be told, they haven’t recovered since Cortez” (Bilger 92), and they have no means to publicly or privately reflect on their lives and to take action to change their lives for the better. This research study furthered the knowledge of Boal’s methods for creating a spect-actor (*Aesthetics* 6) by adjusting those methods to work with an indigenous group with no theatre performance traditions. Additionally, this study furthered the scholarship on the uses of models and dynamisations as proposed by Boal by adjusting the level of participation to match participants’ skills.
Limitations of the Study

As Robbins, pointed out in 2009, I was using theatre to convince the poorest people in Chajul to buy a cookstove that, for many of them, cost as much money as they earn in three months. LHI’s dedication to supporting families participating in its scholarship program allowed me to create a unique method, but I was denied access to working with people who more easily could afford cookstoves. I use the words “denied access” because LHI limited in several ways the people with whom I worked. In 2009, everyone in Chajul was invited to the performance of “LWCS,” but only LHI scholarship students could participate in the rehearsals and performances. During rehearsals, we had to close the doors to the LHI office because people walking by would stop and watch the rehearsals. The interest from people not associated with LHI was encouraging, but it also was a distraction to the rehearsing students. Several LHI students in 2009 and in 2010 asked if friends who were not on scholarship with LHI could participate in the rehearsals and workshops. LHI staff members decided not to let the volunteer students participate because they did not want to set a precedent of people not participating in an LHI program taking advantage of LHI-funded activities. For the 2010 home visits, I only visited families participating in LHI’s Work to (L)earn program, which limited me, again, to working only with people poor enough to be participating in an LHI assistance program. Logistically, it was difficult to arrange the home visits; hence, it is understandable that Wong and Hernandez Ijom chose families to which they had easy access.

Another limitation of this study is its lack of formal questionnaires and other instruments that could measure, for example, participants’ behavior change or the efficacy of the methods employed. The questionnaire distributed and collected from LHI students in 2009 are difficult to rely on because too many respondents misunderstood the questions. Those questionnaires
provided valuable information about students’ qualitative experiences in participating in “LWCS,” but they did not assess changes in their attitudes and behaviors that could be attributed to participation in the performance or discussion. This limitation was a result, mostly, of the language barrier and high rates of illiteracy in Chajul. It would have been highly impractical to administer a written questionnaire to audience members in 2009 or to adults who participated in the home visits in 2010. Future studies in Chajul will have to rely on testing methods, such as interviews and performance analysis, until literacy rates improve or alternative methods, such as administering questionnaires orally, are employed.

Finally, the method I devised for the home visits of providing a model with a dynamised solution was an original contribution to TfD methods, and it gave people the opportunity to participate in the theatre interventions in a way that they felt comfortable. However, by providing the dynamisation, the number of solutions that are proposed by participants is limited. Participants’ inability to propose and solve their problems meant that solutions to their problems were being proposed by outside sources, which reduced the chances that the proposals are culturally specific and will be viable. As discussed below, a group of teachers were able to dynamize solutions to a participant-identified problem. The teachers showed that dynamisations are possible and that the home visits would have had much different results if I had visited the teachers’ homes and created theatre with them about their use of open fires. Working with every person within their comfort and ability range does limit which theatre techniques are used, but it is a necessary limit because, as often is the case, the people who are most uncomfortable and unable to participate are the people who need the most assistance.

**Recommendations for Future Research in Chajul and Beyond**
After my two visits to Chajul, I had a large amount of data—over 40 hours of videotape, transcriptions of interviews and performances, and reports that I submitted to LHI—and many ideas of how to use those data and to continue using the methods established in Chajul in the future. In particular, a better system needs to be created to disseminate information about theatrical interventions to NGOs. In spite of the reports I submitted and the many e-mail and phone conversations that I had with LHI staff, there still were a few missed opportunities for using the data I provided to improve services.

As mentioned in Chapter Three, after the “Life without a Cookstove/Life with a Cookstove” (“LWCS”) performance in 2009, Yat Tiu said that she had not considered the fact that people who often not own their homes would not purchase stoves, but her observation seemed to have been lost. In 2010, LHI had no policy in place for people without land deeds, documents that were necessary for participation in the payment program. Additionally, CES stoves were not portable, and if families that borrowed or rented had to move to another home, which was a frequent occurrence, they would not be able to take their stoves. The faults of the land deed policy finally were revealed when Wong questioned it during the “LHI Office” model.

Yat Tiu and Wong becoming aware of the same issue, with only one taking action, illustrates the potential of TfD to generate solutions in a collaborative way. This collaborative model also demonstrates how obstacles revealed through creating models without dynamisation, as was the case in “LWCS,” are easily lost in reports and transcriptions of interviews. It could be argued that most of the obstacles to stove purchase that were revealed in the “LWCS” performance and discussion already were known and were not solvable by LHI implementing sweeping policy changes. For example, how was LHI supposed to adjust its cookstove sales strategies to deal with people who thought that the stoves were too expensive? However, one
thing that LHI did after 2009 was to collaborate with me again, and I adjusted my theatre methods for 2010 to address obstacles revealed during “LWCS.”

The people in Chajul, who now could now considered spect-actors, especially the very enthusiastic group of students who were in “LWCS,” attended all of the workshops, and participated in home visits, are an invaluable resource that can be called on to facilitate future TfD work in Chajul. For at least one student, Herman, his enthusiasm for theatre is matched by his interest in getting a cookstove for his family. Herman’s mother, who remembered more details of “LWCS” than did any other adult there, told me that since the 2009 performance, Herman has been asking her to buy a cookstove. As of my last visit, the family had not yet purchased a cookstove, but the family’s enthusiasm and willingness to participate illustrates the potential for future TfD interventions to involve sons and daughters directly appealing to their parents, and potentially involving their parents in TfD models that could be presented to a larger audience.

Before an intervention featuring children performing for their parents or with their parents could be attempted, more research would need to be done on how to involve men in the performances, or at least in the discussions that occur after the performances. As mentioned in Chapter Four, the men who attended stood in the back of the community center during “LWCS” and did not participate in the discussion. Very few men were present during the home visits, and the ones who were participated only in the “LHI Office” model when it was time to make a decision and solve their family’s problems. Future TfD interventions would benefit from male buy-in and participation.

Assuming that a plan could be devised to increase men’s participation in future TfD interventions, there are many potential TfD projects that are possible in Chajul. Future use of
theatre in people’s homes, certainly, is possible, but this method also potentially would be useful outside of Chajul and in places other than homes. Using theatre in a private setting is most advantageous when the site of the oppression also is present in that setting. It also makes sense that using theatre in the home would be limited to dealing with domestic issues, but other site-specific TfD interventions that followed the same methods of establishing porosity between fiction and reality could enable people to reflect critically on the site and situations responsible for the issue being discussed. Hence, studies should be conducted about using home visit methods in the workplace and in the marketplace.

The number of people in Chajul who have experience using theatre to reflect on their problems and to practice taking action is higher than ever. The most obvious way to continue using theatre in Chajul is to collaborate with LHI and the experienced spect-actors to help as many citizens of Chajul as possible to reflect on issues and practice taking action to solve problems other than IAP. One result of the theatre interventions in 2009 and 2010 was the discovery of societal issues that many people in Chajul stated were of greater concern to them than was IAP, such as domestic abuse, alcoholism, education, and, in some cases, deforestation and littering. People might have had difficulty seeing the importance of buying a cookstove and reducing IAP by other means when more important issues in their lives remain unsolved.

The lack of scholarship on using TfD in Latin America leaves many possibilities for future projects, but this brief sample of possibilities indicates the potential for using TfD to confront numerous citizen-identified issues. Because of the numerous possibilities, I have limited the following list to TfD projects that address issues that have been identified by people living in Chajul who participated in the performances and discussions.

**Configuration of Fires**
As discussed in Chapter Four, each home I visited had an almost unique configuration for its open fire. Some fires were placed in a corner near an opening in the roof, allowing smoke to escape, whereas others were in the middle of a room with one small door and three beds. Some fires were raised two feet off the ground and set back such that children could not reach them, but others were placed directly on an uneven dirt floor within easy reach of even the youngest children. As stated in Chapter One, Dherani et al. showed that any means of reducing IAP, including “switching to other fuels, improving combustion and ventilation, and possibly other measures, would make an important contribution to prevention of pneumonia morbidity and mortality” (395). Future TfD interventions, possibly in collaboration with Kirk Smith and researchers at Proyecto RESPIRE in San Lorenzo, Guatemala (see Chapter One), could examine which open fire configurations would reduce IAP and burns. I have been in frequent contact with Kirk Smith since meeting him in 2009, and he was interested in collaborating at the San Lorenzo research site. In 2010, I had planned to visit San Lorenzo, but scheduling conflicts, exacerbated by the eruption of Volcano Pacaya and the arrival of Hurricane Agatha, made any visit impossible. Even without help from scientists, I would feel extremely comfortable using TfD to promote open fires that were well ventilated and out of the reach of children. The “Family Game of Power” that I played with students in the 2010 workshop would be a useful practice for exploring fire configurations and how some are more harmful than others.

Women’s Health

In 2009, on my first morning ever in Chajul, I visited the home of a family that had just purchased a cookstove. The daughter was a recipient of a scholarship from LHI, and the family owned the home, which was one of the more spacious one-room homes I visited in Chajul. The mother of the family was very grateful to LHI for providing her daughter with a scholarship and
she was very open with her praise of the organization. It was not long before the mother was crying, asking, “How can I stop having children?” This was her most pressing concern and she had no one to turn to for advice. Several women who were accompanying me gave her advice, but this was not the only time that Chajul women confided in me and my colleagues about their health concerns. Another woman told me that physicians in Nebaj told her that she had a tumor and would die without an expensive operation. Chajul does not have a clinic, and LHI has been trying to establish programs and a permanently staffed clinic there. It could not come soon enough, and the long history of using TfD in connection with public health concerns would provide other possible future research projects, including using TfD to change people’s attitudes about certain public health issues, similar to the work done on HIV and AIDS in Africa, and using TfD to educate people about good nutrition and preventative medicine.

**Domestic Abuse and Alcoholism**

The number of women who disclosed to me incidents of alcohol-related domestic abuse made it clear that it is one of the most pressing public health concerns in Chajul. TfD could be used to give women opportunities to practice avoiding dangerous situations when their husbands are likely to abuse them, but it would be even more important to work directly with the men of Chajul. Morrow, Yat Tiu, and several indigenous women told me that a group of men sometimes will confront a man who has been physically abusing his wife. TfD techniques could be used to give the group of men planning to intervene a chance to practice their confrontation beforehand. If effective ways of confrontation were found, hopefully, there would be less chance for repeated violence towards the wife after the group of men left. Although I would not presume to know what would be effective strategies for confronting an abusive husband in Chajul, TfD methods
would be effective at dealing with such a situation by giving people opportunities to practice solutions.

**Working with Teachers**

On June 15, 2010, I had the opportunity to share with a group of teachers from Chajul theatre techniques that could be used in the classroom. LHI asked me to hold two workshops for teachers that day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In the morning, eleven teachers participated, but in the afternoon, not one teacher attended.\(^5\) The teachers who attended were very interested and enthusiastic about using theatre exercises in their classrooms. My lesson plan (see Appendix E) for teaching the teachers how to use theatre in the classroom included warm-ups, classroom-subject specific theatre exercises, TO techniques for engaging issues, and using indigenous performance traditions to teach culture and history. I gave each of the five schools represented a copy of the indigenous Mayan play *Rabinal Achi*, and a Spanish-language book of theatre exercises for teachers entitled *Manuel de Teatro Escolar*; I also left a copy of each book in the LHI library. During the workshop, the teachers and I used theatre exercises to devise lesson plans for teaching Mayan numerals, in addition to creating math equations with our bodies. The teachers created six images that told Mayan folk stories, and they planned to have their students use the same technique before writing creatively. They were unfamiliar with *Rabinal Achi*, but I stressed the possibilities of using theatre to teach about Mayan culture and traditions through indigenous performance traditions, whether that be *Rabinal Achi* or some other play or dance.

During the workshop, I also led the teachers through an image theatre exercise and showed them how to teach their students to be engaged in community-based issues. The lesson

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\(^5\) The reason that no teachers attended the afternoon session never was discovered. The teachers in the morning were so enthusiastic that I was prepared for a large attendance in the afternoon. Similarly, a rehearsal in 2009 was cancelled because not one student attended. Such attendance issues are just one of the quirks of working in Chajul.
plan included the quote by Boal, “This is theatre: the art of looking at ourselves.” In addition to pointing out the possible benefits of introspection, I told the teachers that they could use theatre to inspire leadership qualities in their students, and that theatre could be used to take action to fix problems identified by community members. In the photograph below (see Photograph 26), a group of teachers created an image of “Three people littering for every one person who is frustrated with cleaning up the litter.” The streets and waterways in Chajul are clogged with litter, which this group of teachers identified as a chief concern. I helped the teachers to dynamise the image to come up with solutions. They decided that the litter problem would not improve unless more people were cleaning the streets than were littering them. One solution that they proposed was picking up litter in the market square as they talked to people about taking pride in the appearance of the city. In a breakthrough for Chajul performers, the teachers acted out that dynamisation and tested whether it was a viable solution.

At the end of the workshop, all eleven teachers expressed interest in learning more about using theatre in the classroom. I told them that I would gladly arrange to conduct more workshops to take place in Chajul, but they were particularly interested in me visiting their classrooms. Hence, the potential for future collaborations with teachers and future research about using theatre in the classroom is very high.
Photograph 26. Teachers create an image of “Three people littering for every one person who is frustrated with cleaning up the litter.” Photograph by Jason Bisping, June 15, 2011.

Conclusion

People in Chajul are faced with many challenges in their everyday lives. For instance, the staple of their diets, corn, leaves many people in Chajul malnourished; some families cannot afford to send their children to school or pay for electricity; domestic abuse and alcoholism affect many families; and many people still feel the effects of the 36-year-long Guatemalan civil war. On top of all these problems, indoor air pollution created by open fires in people’s homes is killing people in Chajul at astonishing rates. The theatre methods employed in this research study proved useful for both giving and acquiring information about the use of open fires and cookstoves, and for reducing indoor air pollution in other ways. Other manufacturers and marketers of potential appropriate sustainable energy technologies that are willing to look critically at their designs and marketing strategies would benefit from using theatre for development methods to talk to potential clients to ensure that the new energy technologies, in fact, are appropriate and sustainable. As a detailed study of collaborating with one nongovernmental organization and a specific demographic of people, this study contributes to
understanding the use of theatre for development to collaborate with such organizations, and with people in similar situations as those who are supported by Limitless Horizons Ixil’s programs. Additionally, this research establishes a precedent of adjusting theatre for development methods to fit the situations and issues being addressed, which is important because every theatre intervention has its unique challenges. The complete methods plan employed in this study is applicable only to Chajul and very few other places. In fact, Chajul is changing so rapidly, and many people there now have experience using theatre to enable change, that future theatre for development projects in Chajul undoubtedly will need new methods. However, the methods of adjusted dynamisation, collection of data, and inclusion of host organization staff members in theatre interventions easily can be incorporated into any number of theatre for development projects.

Finally, although this research study contributes to the field of theatre for development by showing how ethical methods can be employed to work with underrepresented groups, there is much more that could and needs to be done. Hopefully, this research will inspire future work by scholars and practitioners concerned with energy justice and other pressing issues of global concern. For the people of Chajul, and the many others around the world who need energy justice and other forms of justice, research on theatre for energy justice is absolutely crucial.
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Live Performances

Boulder, CO.

Chajul, Guatemala.

Appendix A

“Life without a Cook Stove/Life with a Cook Stove”

Guatemala Project: *Script of Educational Skit for Cook Stoves*

Developed on Nov. 11 & 13, 2008 with Beth Osnes’s Dev. 3, World Theatre 20\textsuperscript{th} Century Class

Revised for the Community of Chajul Guatemala July 7-11 2009.

Presented as Forum Theatre in Chajul Community Center, July 11, 2009

Presented at the Energy Justice Conference, Boulder Colorado, October 23, 2009

First Skit: *Life without a Cook Stove*

Cast of Characters:

Trees to make a Forest

Bird

Father

Son

Mother

Grandmother

Daughter
Smoke Monster 1
Smoke Monster 2
Smoke Monster 3

**Props needed:**

Three small grey scarves
Pan for cooking
Grill
Linea for each tree
Small hand broom
Baby
Strap for carrying baby on back
Soccer ball

**Costumes:**

Bird in white
Smoke Monsters in dark colors
Three grey robes

**Scene 1**

Forest enters (“eetz, eetz, eetz…”)

Bird enters and flies around

Father collects all the wood with his son.
Father and son exit

Bird cries

FREEZE and discussion

Scene 2

House enters (“oatz, oatz, oatz…”) [with smoke monsters in the walls]

“We are a house without a cookstove”

Father and son enter with wood and sit

Mother (with baby on back) and grandmother enter and start fire

Daughter enters

Fire is started

Smoke monsters attack the Father and then the Daughter who exit in order

Smoke monsters attack grandmother and she dies

Smoke monsters attack son and he falls in the fire

Father and daughter enter

FREEZE and discussion

Facilitator asks questions of the audience such as:

What happened to the grandmother who collapsed?

Where did the Smoke Monsters come from?

Why are they harmful?

Did the daughters get to go to school?
If not, why?

Why is there so little food for the family to eat?

How did Father feel at the end when he came home to this situation?

Second Skit: Life with a Cook Stove

Scene 3

Forest enters (“eetz, eetz, eetz…”)

Bird enters and flies around

Father collects wood from one tree with his son.

Father and son exit

Bird and trees dance.

FREEZE and discussion

Scene 4

House enters (“oatz, oatz, oatz…”) [with one smoke monster in the middle of the wall]

“We are a house with a cookstove”

Father and son enter with wood and cookstove. They sit and play ball

The smoke monster hides behind the cookstove

Mother (with baby on back) and grandmother enter and start fire

Daughter enters

Fire is started
Smoke monster tries to attack the daughter but the grandmother chases it out of the house.

Father finishes playing ball and he leaves the house

Daughter leaves for school

Son plays ball next to the cookstove

   FREEZE and discussion

**Facilitator asks questions of the audience such as:**

What happened to the Smoke Monsters this time?

How could the Mother so easily sweep the Smoke Monsters out of her house?

Why were the daughters able to go to school?

How did the Mother get more time to start a sewing business?

Why was there more food to eat?

How did Father feel at the end when he came home this evening?

What caused their lives to change from one skit to the next?
Appendix B

Post-performance questionnaire (qualitative) (for student participants)

Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. They will be used only in this study.

1. What do you think is the main message this show is saying?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

2. Is the issue raised by the performance a problem in your school?
   
   Yes___ No___ (check one) In what ways?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3. What did you like about the play? Why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4. What did you dislike about the play? Why?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

5. Did you participate in the play? Yes___ No___ (check one)

   If yes, what did you do?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

6. If no, did you want to participate? Yes___ No___ (check one)

   If you wanted to participate but did not, what stopped you?
7. Did the performance make you change your thinking or feelings about a problem you face in your life? Yes__ No__ (check one)

If yes, in what way?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

8. From seeing the play, do you intend to change anything about the way you act in a difficult situation? Yes__ No__ (check one)

If yes, what are some examples (of how you plan to act differently)?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
Horizontes Sin Limites Ixil

Fecha__________

Gracias por presentar un show buenísimo a la comunidad. Por favor, responde a estas preguntas.

Tus respuestas a ser completamente confidenciales. Serán usadas solo en este estudio para ayudarnos la próxima vez que hacemos una actividad de teatro con estudiantes.

1. ¿Qué piensas tú que fue el mensaje central de este show?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

2. Es un problema en tu comunidad el tema del Show?

Si___ No___ (chequea uno) Cómo?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

3. ¿Qué te gustó de los ensayos? Por qué?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

4. ¿Qué no te gustó de los ensayos? Por qué?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________

5. ¿Qué te gustó del show? Por qué?

___________________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________________
6. ¿Qué no te gustó del show? Por qué?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

7. ¿Participaste en el show? Sí____No____ (chequea uno) Si, sí, qué hiciste?
___________________________________________________________________________

8. Si no, quisiste participar? Sí____No____ (chequea uno) Si quisiste participar pero no lo hiciste, por qué no?
___________________________________________________________________________

9. Después del show, cambiaron tus sentimientos o pensamientos de un problema en tu vida?
   Sí____No____ (chequea uno) Si, sí, de qué manera?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

10. Después de ver el show, piensas que vas a cambiar la manera que vas a actuar en una situación difícil? Sí____No____ (chequea uno) Si, sí, que son unos ejemplos (de cómo piensas que vas a actuar diferentemente)?

11. Otros pensamientos?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Appendix C

Tips for Consecutive Interpreters in English and Spanish

1. You are an interpreter of language and culture. You are not simply a translator of words. You are the expert in your local customs. It is your job to intervene when needed to ensure cultural appropriateness.

2. You will mostly be using Consecutive Interpretation. This means the speaker will say a few sentences and then pause for you to interpret before continuing to speak.

3. Since you have to briefly memorize the material, practice memorizing the information in “chunks.” If you can remember the most important part of each sentence, you can remember the whole sentence.

4. Don’t focus on interpreting every word. Convey the major concept as effectively and efficiently as possible.

5. If the speaker is speaking too fast or for too long between pauses, politely let them know immediately.

6. It is important that the conversation is smooth and follows the natural rhythm of what the speaker is saying. Even though the interpretation requires pauses, the interpreter should speak according to the natural rhythm of the speaker. This type of interpretation helps the audience focus and understand the material.

7. Don’t add your own opinion while interpreting. Interpret what the speaker says as closely as possible.

8. The person for whom you are interpreting should not look at you but at the people listening to the interpretation. You should also look at the speaker.

9. Speak loudly enough and clearly enough for everyone in the room to hear you.
10. Ask for water to be provided. You will be talking a lot and your throat will dry out.

11. Represent yourself as a community liaison, so act confident and proud of yourself and your community.

12. Be prepared: review material (watch DVDs, read informative texts) in both languages. You will learn important vocabulary and other information that is specific to the material covered.

13. Find ways to practice Consecutive Interpretation! Use the radio, a friend, the computer, books, etc.!
Consejo para intérpretes consecutivos (Chajul)

1. Usted es un intérprete de idioma y cultura. No es simplemente un traductor de palabras.

   Usted es el experto en sus costumbres locales. Es su trabajo intervenir cuando sea necesario para asegurar que todos estén haciendo lo que es apropiado para su cultura.

2. Más que todo, va a estar usando “Interpretación Consecutiva.” Esta significa que el hablante hablará algunas frases y después parará para que usted interprete antes de seguir hablando.

3. Porque tiene que memorizar el mensaje que dice el hablante por un ratito, practique memorizando la información en pedazos. Si puede recordar la parte más importante de cada frase, puedes recordar la frase completa.

4. No enfoque en interpretar cada palabra. Comunique el concepto más importante lo más eficaz y efectivo de lo que es posible.

5. Si el hablante está hablando demasiado rápido o para demasiado tiempo antes de hacer una pausa, avísele de inmediato.

6. Es importante que la conversación sea suave y siga el ritmo natural de lo que está diciendo el hablante. Aunque la interpretación requiere pausas, el intérprete debe hablar según el ritmo natural del hablante. Esta manera de interpretación ayuda a la audiencia enfocar y entender la material.

7. No agregue su propia opinión mientras vaya interpretando. Interprete lo que el hablante dice lo más cerca que sea posible.

8. La persona para quien esté interpretando no debe mirar a usted pero debe mirar a las personas escuchando a la interpretación. Usted debe mirar al hablante.

9. Hable en una voz suficiente alta y clara para que todos en el cuarto puedan escucharle.
10. Pida para agua antes de empezar. Usted va a estar hablando mucho y su garganta probablemente va a secar.

11. Represente a sí mismo como un enlace de su comunidad, entonces actúe que seguro de sí mismo y orgulloso de su comunidad.

12. Sea preparado: revise material (mire DVDs, lea textos informativos) en los dos idiomas. Va a aprender vocabulario importante y otra información específica.

13. ¡Encuentre maneras de practicar Interpretación Consecutiva! Use el radio, un amigo, la computadora, libros, etc.!
Appendix D

Sample Individual Home Report

House # 10

Date: 12 June 2010

Casa de [Stephanie]:

People Present: Jason, Maria VR, [Omitted]

Other family members identified but not present: [Omitted]

Last year’s play: Stephanie was in the play last year. She was the bird and she helped with the audience discussion by handing out the microphone.

Stephanie’s mother attended the play and she remembered this: “I saw the play and the cookstove used only two pieces of firewood. The open fire is not good for my eyes, my cough, or my body.”

I asked if she remembered Veronica leading a discussion: “Veronica talked about how this is good for our family. The smoke and the cough and the eyes. I talked to Veronica and I think this is a good idea, and I want to buy my stove and I would except for the money. Maybe one day I will buy a stove.”

Technology Present in the Home: One Light bulb, no kitchen but a slightly raised fire. (Mother said fire was raised to keep the kids out of it).

Notes on pre-briefing: Stephanie didn’t come to get us and they don’t have a cellphone.

Notes on Intervention: Note: The mother didn’t stop working. She weaved the whole time we talked about her family and she cleaned and worked around the house during the rest of the visit. She only stopped working briefly to participate.
**IMAGE THEATRE:** Performed some image theatre after the mother complained that she gets eye irritation and headaches every day. The image is of her stirring atoll and rubbing her eyes (see photo below).

Stephanie and her mother said they get headaches and itchy eyes from the smoke. The mother said she gets headaches “Three times in the day because I cook in the morning, I make lunch, and then dinner.”

**“Child Falling into the Fire” Scene:** Stephanie remembered Eliseo falling into the fire during last year’s play. She needed very little instruction. When Stephanie fell near the fire, her mother said “I am sorry I am going to take you to the doctor. Maybe I will buy a medicine for you.” I asked the mother if that had happened to someone in their family before? “Yes” and she laughs “I have one boy and he put his feet down in the fire and I was making coffee or hot water and it fell down on him.” She took him to the doctor.

![Photograph of Stephanie’s mother performing Image Theatre.](image-url)
“Child Coughing While Studying near the Fire” Scene: During the scene Stephanie avoids the smoke and she is coughing hard but the mom doesn’t move. Maria VR has to tell her what to do and the mother leads Stephanie away from the fire.

I ask if her children ever study by the fire. She said, “No, I make them go outside.”

I ask what other things she does to keep her kids away from the fire. (I am asking this because she seems to have good strategies for someone in a one room house. She has a raised fire and makes her kids study away from the fire. What else does she do? She answers, “I say, ‘Please kids, do not come here, because I am going to make dinner and I don’t want you to fall in it. I separate them from it. ‘Stay here away from the fire’”

There is a bed very near the fire and they tell me that the grandmother sleeps there. It isn’t clear if the smoke bothers her.

I ask if the mother always do her weaving outside. She says, “Sometimes inside and sometimes outside” This seems to rely on whether there is a covered place outside or if there if good light and room to weave directly by the door.

“Doctor from Chajul” Scene: Stephanie went outside to start this scene and when she knocked, her mom answered the door.

Stephanie/Doctor: “I am a doctor here in Chajul and I want to visit your house and ask you about the smoke from your fire and the mess on the ceiling above your fire.”

Mother: “Yes doctor, I think you say the truth. What can I do with this one? I don’t have any more room, and I know you said this one is not good because of a lot of smoke”

Stephanie/Doctor: “Maybe I see this problem in your body, really bad for your body, but maybe you can a stove and it will solve these problems”
Mom: “Yes, I need a stove, but my husband doesn’t have a big job for making money. He makes corn and green beans. That is a problem. He doesn’t have much money”

“LHI Office” Scene: Maria VR played Veronica and Stephanie and her mother came to the office. Stephanie did a great job translating. The office scene is a little closer to the fire than usual because I wanted it under the light.

After Stephanie and her mother entered the office and greeted “Veronica,” the mother said “I want to talk to you Veronica. I have been talking to my family. I want to buy a stove. I see the problem now. It has changed. My daughter is sick. I am. My kids are. I don’t have too much money now, but I can pay a little bit each month.”

“Veronica” explained the payment program and about needing a land document, and the mother said, “Thank you. I like the stove, because I am not going have to use the stove and only use three pieces of wood. (Note: she has at least 8 pieces of wood on her open fire.)

“Talking to the Husband about Buying a Stove” Scene

Stephanie and her mother were so informed and wanted a stove so badly that I decided to stage another scene about the mother talking to her husband about getting a stove. This would give the mother the opportunity to practice talking to her husband about a stove before she actually had to do it.

The mother said, “Yes, I am going to talk to my husband because he is the only one that can help us with this.” Stephanie played the father in the scene and the mother played herself. Stephanie entered and took control of the situation just as many men would. She didn’t give her mother a chance to talk. Although this was probably realistic and they agreed to buy a stove, I asked them to try the scene a second time and let the mother mention cookstoves first.

Mother: “What do you think? I need a stove. I want to buy it. What do you think?”
Father: “The fire is not good. There is lots of smoke and it is bad for the kids. I want to do this for the kids. Maybe you can go to the office and talk to LHI and I will help you.

That was the whole scene. I asked the mother if she thought the real conversation would be like that and she said “yes.”

**Observations:** A great house for visitors. They participated fully.

A mommy duck and her baby ducks were roaming in Katrina’s yard. I asked what they do with the ducks, and the mother said they sell them for “2-25Q but sometimes they die.” They were fascinated by Maria VR and how she learned English.

The grandmother said I should live in Chajul and learn to speak Ixil. I should bring my wife and daughters to live there.

The grandma was also fascinated by my camera and said she had not seen one before.

All of their beds (Four) in the same room.

Their fire area was the largest of any of the houses. Not only did it take up a lot of room, but it had a lot of wood on it. It was very warm in the house and the fire was roaring. At times the flames were several feet high.

This family was very aware of what a cookstove could do for their family and they mentioned cookstoves before I did. They mentioned cookstoves several times and remembered a lot of details from the 2009 play. Because they don’t have a separate kitchen and their beds are in the same room as the fire, they would benefit greatly from a stove. They also expressed interest in stove purchase but need help overcoming the obstacles preventing their family from purchasing a stove, which are mostly money related.
Appendix E

Lesson Plans for Teachers to Take Home (English)

Introduction of LHI staff and programs:

Katie Morrow
Courtney Rebecca Wong
Bridget Barry
Edilma Magdalena Hernandez Ijom
Lorenza Raquel Pantzay Sanchez
Isabel Veronica Yat Tiu

Manuel de Teatro Escolar

How to Get Copies: Speak to LHI about getting a copy. We will provide one per school location!

I. Using Theatre Exercise in the Classroom to Teach Various Subjects

a. Nombre en Acción

   i. Form a circle. Choose a person to go first. The person says their names and performs a corresponding action. Each name and action goes around the circle once. Each person takes a turn.

   ii. Variation for the classroom: Use this to practice vocabulary and concepts being learned in the classroom. For example: for students learning about public transportation, the words could be *micro, autobus, train, etc.* along with actions
b. Circle of sounds: Social Sciences (Slight variation of Nombre en Acción without action)
   
i. Teacher calls out a word pertaining to something the class has been studying such as tropical rain forests. The students, one at a time, name one thing that relates to that subject (e.g. humidity, density, undergrowth, South America)
   
1. Discover teacher subjects here
   
a. “Subjects you are teaching in class”
   
b. “Biggest problem you have with students”
   
c. “Equipment your school needs”

c. Body Sentence:
   
i. Use this pantomime game to have them tell us more about the subjects they are teaching.
   
ii. (Math) Students are divided into groups and must pantomime math sentences. The class must figure out the equation and solve it.
   
iii. (Creative writing) Students are divided into groups and must pantomime stories they create.
   
iv. (Literature) Students are divided into groups and must pantomime stories they have read for class.

d. Pantomime Warm-Ups
   
i. Move like a…. 

   1. Use to explore vocab

   2. Examples: Animals, Satellites, Planets, Atoms, Electricity in a Circuit, etc. depending on grade level.
ii. Hand off a…

1. Use this to explore weights and measures, body awareness, etc.

e. Scavenger Hunt

i. Find two teachers who are teaching something similar to you and share an idea.

ii. (Math)

1. Find 5 objects that are circles
2. Find 8 pieces of chalk of varying heights
3. Find 5 leaves that have more than three points on each leaf
4. Find 4 objects each of which have three parts
5. Find 8 small objects. Put them in order of weight.

iii. (Language Arts)

1. Find 10 things that start with the letter s.
2. Find 10 things that start with the first 10 letters of the alphabet.
3. Find 10 books with 10 different animals.
4. Find 10 ways to describe a tree.
5. Find 10 great first sentences to a sentence.

iv. (Science/Environment/Health)

1. Find 10 things that pollute
2. Find 10 things that are good for you.
3. Find 10 things that make 10 different sounds.
4. Find 10 different types of seeds.
5. Find 5 soft objects and 5 hard objects.
II. Using Drama about Guatemala History in the Classroom
   
   a. Example: Rabinal Achi, any other play in Spanish or Ixil
      
      i. Teaches Language
      
      ii. Teaches History
      
      iii. Teaches Teamwork

III. Theatre of the Oppressed
   
   a. “This is theatre- the art of looking at ourselves.” -Augusto Boal
   
   b. Teach your students to be leaders in the community.
   
   c. Teach them to take action on their convictions.
   
   d. Teach them to have convictions.
   
   e. Examples:
      
      i. Have students form groups that write and perform plays about important community issues. Invite important community members. Perform in public places.
      
      ii. Use theatre games to discover what is important to the students.
   
   f. Activities:
      
      i. Image of a Phrase:
         
         1. From groups of three or four: give everyone a common phrase on a slip of paper (Be careful, Thank You, Congratulations)
         
         2. Each group has 3 minutes to make a frozen image of their phrase, like a photograph.
         
         3. The image shouldn’t contain any movement or sound.
4. Look at the images one by one. The other members of the class describe what they see and tries to guess the phrase.

ii. Write a play that is a “model:”

1. This is any work you show an audience and expect to get feedback.
   a. The model should pose a problem that needs a solution.
   b. Hold a discussion before, during or after the model.
   c. Allow the audience to become “spect-actors” (spectator actors) and step into the model with their ideas.
   d. Allow the audience to change details in the model and have the actors replay the scene.
   e. Etc… use the audience to help solve the problem.

iii. Create a piece of “Invisible Theatre”

1. This is a publicly performed model but the audience is unaware that it’s a play.
   a. Example: Students could go to the market and stage a fight where one student is being rude to his friends and the friends stand up to him, correcting his behavior.
Appendix F: Human Resources Protocol 0510.2

---

**CERTIFICATE OF DETERMINATION: EXEMPT PROTOCOL UPDATE/CHANGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INVESTIGATOR:</th>
<th>PROTOCOL NUMBER:</th>
<th>ADDRESS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jason Bisling</td>
<td>0510.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PROTOCOL TITLE:**
Using Theatre for Development to Mediate the Introduction and Design of New Energy Technologies

**DESCRIPTION OF UPDATE/CHANGE:**
- Change Request, dated 05/21/2010
- Revised Protocol, dated 05/20/2010
- Revised Consent Procedures: Change from signed consent to verbal consent
- Revised Form: Participant informed Consent Form - Families, dated 05/20/2010
- New Form: Participant informed Consent Form - Families, Spanish Version, dated 05/20/2010
- Revised Form: Child Participant Assent Form, dated 05/20/2010
- New Form: Child Participant Assent Form, Spanish Version, dated 05/20/2010

**UPDATE/CHANGE APPROVAL DATE:** 05/21/10

**REVIEW TYPE:** Exempt – 2b

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) in accordance with Federal Regulations at 45 CFR 46 has reviewed this change request and determined that it does not affect the exempt status of this protocol.

The Institutional Review Board has approved this change in accordance with federal regulations, university policies and ethical standards for the protection of human subjects. In accordance with federal regulation at 45 CFR 46,112, research that has been approved by the IRB may be subject to further appropriate review and approval or disapproval by officials of the institution. The investigator is responsible for knowing and complying with all applicable research regulations and policies including, but not limited to, Environmental Health and Safety, Scientific Advisory Committee, Clinical and Translational Research Center, and Wardenburg Health Center and Pharmacy policies. Approval by the IRB does not imply approval by any other entity.

Please feel free to contact me at 303-492-1940 or by email at amanda.whitson@colorado.edu if you have any questions about this approval or about IRB procedures.

Thank you for your concern for human subjects.

Amanda Whitson, Date: 05/21/10
Enclosure

ARCE Room A15
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(303) 735-3702
Appendix G: Map of Guatemala