Managing Community Relations and Empowering Development Through Film: A Study of Joe Odedina's Annual Community Film Screening

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Abstract

Beyond entertainment and even education, we hypothesized that film can do more, and that it can specifically play a role in managing community relations, enabling development, and promoting social cohesion across diverse backgrounds. These two experiments were conducted in Oke-Iya, Kwara State, Nigeria. They include open-air film screenings and film and photography skill acquisition workshops. We use symbolic interactionism, social capital theory, social systems theory, and rational choice theory, as theoretical frameworks which guided our investigation and analysis. We further examine the transformative potential of film-based interventions in communities. Our findings reveal that film can facilitate meaningful interactions, nurture collective identity, empower individuals through skill acquisition, and enhance community engagement and collaboration. These theoretical perspectives provide insights into the mechanisms through which film can influence community relations and contribute to development. The study demonstrates the significance of film as a powerful medium for managing community relations, uniting people, and stimulating development. Its recommendations present a guide for future initiatives aiming to leverage film for community empowerment, engagement, and sustainable development. It therefore concludes that film has the potential to facilitate positive change within communities.

Keywords: Managing, Community Relations, Film, Development, Empowerment.

Introduction

A Greek proverb says, "A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shades they know they shall never sit" (Pearse 2017, p. 26). There is no better way to start this analysis of

the experiment at Oke-Iya, Kwara State, than with that quote. The lead researcher and chief conductor of the experiment, Joe Odedina, is 61 years old in a nation - Nigeria, where life expectancy is 53. Life expectancy in neighbouring countries of Niger and Ghana are 61 and 64 years respectively. It is however not the norm for life expectancy to be so low as it is as high as 80 years in places like France, Japan, Singapore, and Hong Kong (World Bank, p. 2017). In a country like Nigeria, where the life expectancy is that low, a 61-year-old qualifies to belong to the class of 'old men' referred to in the opening proverb, and his altruistic efforts qualify as the planting of a tree in whose shades he may never sit due to his age vis-a-vis the life expectancy ratio of his nation, Nigeria.

Nigeria is currently plagued by a situation where the most competent hands emigrate from the country, in search of greener pastures, to more developed countries, thereby leaving an underdeveloped country further immersed in its state of underdevelopment (Stark 2004, p. 15). As far back as 23 years ago, a May 6, 2000, top article in *The Economist* addressed this issue but then in the context of migration to countries in the European Union. It said: ''Any regime that concentrated on luring the highly skilled would run the risk of robbing poor countries of the people they are least able to do without.'' (*The Economist* 2009). To further drive home the point, just about a year later in its May 31, 2001 lead article, *The Economist* adds that: ''There is a risk, especially when immigration policies target only the highly skilled, that the best talent will be drained from poor countries to rich ones''. This situation has been referred to as "brain drain" (Mba & Ekeopara 2012, p. 41). Earlier, migration policies hinged towards seeking out (largely unformed) potentials, developing them, and keeping them. This was evidenced in the issuance of scholarships, and the admittance of low-skilled labourers (Bortolazzi 2023, p. 225). However, today's reality is a kind of migration where the most competent and skilled move into developed nations. And this is often looked upon favourably by the receiving developed nation as evidenced by immigration policies that are deliberately made to ensure that only high-skilled individuals migrate to developed countries from underdeveloped ones. This has been explained by a number of reasons such as ageing populations, poor economic growth, cash-strapped social security systems, and a continuous downward spiral in the availability of skilled workers (Zahanec & Zimmerman 2011, p. 1).

Just as witnessed between developed countries and underdeveloped countries, so is it with underdeveloped states and developed states within countries. In Nigeria, Lagos attracts the most competent hands. Facebook data identified Lagos as the central hub that attracts people

across the West African region (Jacobs 2014[1]). The data showed it belonged in the top 10 cities in the Global Urban Migration Chart (Okulaja 2017[2]). Within Nigeria, Kwara State ranked 3rd in the list of states whose indigenes emigrated to Lagos State, behind only Ogun and Oyo states which are direct neighbours to Lagos State (Statisense 2022[3]). It was the only state from the Northern region in the top 10 states. Compared to Lagos which has just 3,345km^2, Kwara State has a land mass of 36,825km^2. Yet in that comparatively small area of land occupied by Lagos, there are nearly 20 million people making up about 10% of Nigeria's population (Adewuya et al. 2022, p. 92), while Kwara State has about 3.7 million people (*Budgit* 2022, p. 119) living in its vast 36,835km^2 space.

It is against this background that the researchers set out to find a way of provoking balance. While Kwara state is quite a suburban state, Oke Iya is a very small community in this economically-small state. This meant that the community is devoid of essential social amenities like potable water, good roads, and electricity. Furthermore, most members of the community were unemployed and limitedly employable, with those who were fortunate enough to find work typically engaged in informal sectors that provided subsistence-level incomes. The size of the economy of Kwara State is put into proper context when one considers its GDP which is about N1tn (one trillion Naira) as of 2021, thereby ensuring it ranked 35 out of 36 states. In contrast, the GDP of Lagos state is N41tn (forty-one trillion Naira). With a land mass of 36,825km^2 (Adeoye et al 2013, 817), Kwara State is larger than more than 12 African countries, including Gambia, Rwanda, Mauritius, and Guinea Bissau.

Subsequently, the project used film as a means to mitigate inequalities and narrow the socio-economic divide between the affluent and marginalized populations. The experiment involved the use of film in different modes to provoke community relations. These modes included: skill acquisition & empowerment, documentation, documentary-making, communal film exhibition, and community development. The experiment, however, commenced with the Oke-

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[1] In the study, Facebook data revealed that 67% of individuals from Badagri, Nigeria, identified Lagos as their most likely current city, thus establishing Lagos as a central hub attracting people across the West African region (Jacobs 2014) (source: [https://www.businessinsider.com/facebook-global-urban-migration-maps-2014-1?r=US&IR=T]).

[2] In the study, Lagos emerged as a top global destination for urban migration, ranking 18.6% over two years, securing its place in the top 10 cities on the Global Urban Migration Chart (Okulaja 2017) (source: [https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/ex/sustainablecitiescollective/facebook-reveals-lagos-leads-global-urban-migration/259896/#:~:text=Facebook%20data%20on%20coordinated%20migrations,a%20period%20of%20two%20years]).

[3] Intra-Nigeria migration data indicates that within the country, Kwara State holds the third position for emigration to Lagos, following Ogun and Oyo states, which are direct neighbors to Lagos (source: [https://twitter.com/StatiSense/status/1606575092217020417]).

Iya community with the hope of gradually but continuously expanding to the entire Kwara State, by developing a model which would be tested for at least five years before being taken to the Local Government level where Oke-Iya is located - the Ifelodun Local Government, and before being proposed to the Kwara State Government for possible statewide adoption. It was financed and organized by Joe Odedina, a Nigerian film scholar and native of Oke-Iya. This report captures three years of the project - 2020, 2021, and 2022. It uses the Systems theory, Communicative Action Theory, Symbolic Interactionism Theory, Applied Theatre Theory, and Social Capital Theory to analyse how the experiment was carried out.

Social Systems Theory

Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Theory introduces "episodes," moments where a system temporarily suspends its usual structures to enable reflection and change. This is relevant to our research, which aims to reshape community relations through film. Luhmann emphasizes that communication—comprising utterance, information, and understanding (Luhmann 1990, p. 6)—is the cornerstone of social systems and essential for social reform. Effective communication must be understood by both sender and receiver; otherwise, it fails (Luhmann 1990, pp. 65-66; Hendry and Seidl 2003, p. 183). In our project, the concept of autopoiesis, where the communication system generates and selects changes, guided our approach. We created goal-oriented and time-limited episodes to facilitate change. Goal-oriented episodes end when specific objectives are achieved, while time-limited episodes conclude at set times, encouraging focus and progress (Mezias 2000, p. 81). We used strategic and operational conversations as episodes to shift contexts temporarily, ensuring diverse input and disrupting established hierarchies. This approach was essential in Oke-Iya, a community with a structured hierarchy, to create new discursive spaces and enable transformative change.

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory, first proposed by Bourdieu in 1985, defines social capital as "the aggregate of actual or potential resources linked to membership in a group" (Bourdieu 2004, p. 21). This network grants members access to social resources such as favors and social credit. Consequently, membership of such networks could lead to an accumulation or enhancement of human capital (Machalek and Martin, 2015, p. 894). Social capital consists of two parts: the network of relationships that provide access to resources and the quality and quantity of those resources (Bourdieu 1985, p. 242). Interactions within these networks ensure shared norms and values, facilitating knowledge and information exchange (Fiorini et al., 2018, p. 114). In

Nigeria, such relationships are often formalized through social clubs, family names, or associations. These relationships are maintained through symbolic exchanges like gifts, words, and marriage, transforming them into symbols of recognition. Groups often concentrate their social capital in a single representative, such as the head of a family, who acts on behalf of the group and maintains its reputation. This representative must possess significant social, economic, and symbolic capital to benefit the group. For any project aiming to influence community change, having sufficient social capital is crucial.

Theory of Symbolic Interactionism

Coined by Herbert Blumer and developed by George Herbert Mead, Symbolic Interactionism examines how subjective meanings of symbols shape social interactions. It posits that people use symbols—words, gestures, objects, behaviours—to construct and interpret the social world, creating shared meanings through interactions. Mead's theory involves a triadic nature of meaning: the symbol (representation), the object (the thing represented), and the interpretant (assigned meaning) (Mead 1927, p. 312). For example, the word "pen" represents a writing tool, and "tree" may symbolize shade or environmental concerns (Mead 1934, p. 80). Meaning, according to Mead, is constructed through social interactions and shared understandings within a social context (Mead 1934, p. 69).

Blumer expanded on Mead's ideas, emphasizing three core principles: Meaning: Individuals act based on attributed meanings, which are socially constructed; Language: A tool for symbolic communication, allowing representation and conveyance of meaning; and Social Acts: The building blocks of social reality, where individuals' joint actions create shared meanings (Blumer 1969, p. 50). The theory of Symbolic Interactionism is crucial for understanding how film can facilitate community relations by enabling shared symbols and meanings among members of a community.

Rational Choice Theory

The Rational Choice Theory examines individual decision-making across multiple disciplines. It is however rooted in economics and political science. The theory originated with Jeremy Bentham's hedonistic calculus which asserts that maximising pleasure and minimising pain are central to human choices (Bentham 1939, pp. 31-32). It then extended to diverse areas. Gary Becker applied it to crime, proposing the "rational criminal" notion, where individuals weigh the benefits and costs of criminal activities before engaging in them. He therefore suggested

that economic incentives and deterrence could shape individuals' choices regarding crime (Becker 1968, p. 3). Similarly, James Coleman expanded it to education, highlighting how rational actors make choices based on preferences and available information, influenced by social capital like family background and networks (Coleman 1966, p. 275). Anthony Downs also applied the Rational Choice Theory to political science with the "median voter theorem," asserting that voters are often rational agents who assess costs and benefits before making decisions, driven by self-interest and utility maximisation by selecting the option that aligns closest with their policy preferences. Based on this self-interest and preferences, voters weigh the expected benefits and costs associated with different political platforms and candidates (Downs 1957, p. 6). This theory emphasizes rational cost-benefit calculations, subjective values, constraints, and utility maximization across economics, political science, sociology, and criminology. Understanding these motivations can enhance community development projects like the discussed Film project and community development in general as an understanding of the motivations behind people's choices can guide decision-making, improve project outcomes, and ultimately help avoid potential pitfalls.

The Experiments

Experiment 1: Open-Air Cinema

In 2022, the film screened was *Ayinla* (2021), directed by Kunle Afolayan. This film extensively incorporated the music of the late Apala maestro, Ayinla Omowura, who, although he passed away in 1980, continues to have a profound impact on the Apala music genre. Ayinla's influence revolutionized the music genre (Oludare 2018, p. 217), making him one of the foremost advocates of Yoruba's Apala music (Bakene & Fadipe 2022, p. 5). Even though Apala music predates Ayinla's birth, it wasn't until figures like Haruna Ishola and Ayinla Omowura emerged that the genre gained widespread acclaim and even international recognition (Lasisi 2012, p. 110). Ayinla's music has a profound resonance among the Yoruba community, particularly with those who were in their twenties and thirties during his era, now aged between sixty-two and seventy-two in 2022. His songs formed a major part of the memories of their youth, so the film screening evoked nostalgia and personal memories associated with his songs. In spite of grey hair adorning their heads, the viewers wore expressions of childlike joy as they recalled memories associated with these songs. With the screening progressing, a tranquil ambience engulfed the room, immersing everyone in the unfolding story.

When, at the end of the film, Ayinla dies, everyone gets moody and breaks into groups and the atmosphere becomes a communal one. In groups, under the lighting of the moon, conversations started around the villains or heroes of the Ayinla story. Nothing was discussed about community development that day, except the announcement and constant reminder of the meeting that was to be held the next day. But what stood out in this session was the manner in which these attendees who had not seen each other in a long while remained engaged, immersed in conversations about Ayinla's life and music. In spite of the stress from the journey, they stayed out till about 12: 40 a.m.

On the following Saturday morning, the community gathered at the town hall for the inauguration of the new executives of the Oke-Iya Descendants Union. The King of the community was present - an indication of how important the event was to the community. Joe Odedina was elected President of the Community Descendants' Association, and his team presented an eight-point agenda for their administration, which received widespread support. The event was live streamed on Facebook, allowing the participation of community members both at home and abroad. The community's trust in Joe Odedina's leadership was evident in their comments and endorsements. The event successfully raised over 3 million Naira in donations.

For over eleven years, Joe Odedina dedicated himself to an open-air cinema initiative in Oke-Iya, Kwara State, with the central goal of enabling communal unity and promoting community development. The logistics for the cinema screening began in the afternoon, and the setup included power arrangements and seating for attendees. These items were stacked and set aside until 4:00 pm, when local youths collaborated with the exhibition team to arrange the exhibition space. Electricity was sourced from the nearest building to power the event, ensuring stable operations. A key focus during the setup process was to ensure the stability of the surfaces used for seating. Subsequently, the team and young members of the community gathered under the shade of trees, where they bonded and shared experiences. Simultaneously, pre-teen and teenage children engaged in playful activities, while adult community members congregated in a designated area of the Odedina family compound and engaged in culinary activities. Accompanying the adults were children, who lingered in the vicinity. In a separate location beneath another expansive tree, community hunters with their firearms assembled, voluntarily assuming security responsibilities alongside their hunting dogs.

By 6:00 pm, the children were summoned to partake in a meal, which was served within the premises of the Odedina Family Compound. While the adults had already occupied the sheltered spots beneath the trees, the children dined under the canopy. After their meal, they were provided additional food to take home. Ensuring inclusivity, every attendee received a takeaway package. As the sun began to set, the previously stacked chairs were arranged beneath the tents, allowing both a clear view of the projector screen and the ability to interact with fellow attendees. The arrival of adults gradually ensued, and their conversations indicated extended periods of separation, with some individuals not having seen each other for a year or even several years. To announce the event, music was played near the road, occasionally employing a volume that captured the attention of passersby, who would then stop, greet acquaintances, engage in embraces, handshakes, and small talk, and subsequently return to their vehicles and depart. Children travelling in these cars rushed to join their friends beneath the canopy, some of whom would stay, while others would leave with their parents. This scenario was repeated multiple times. Less than half an hour later, at approximately 6:45 pm, individuals reemerged clad in fresh attire. Greetings became less elaborate as attendees settled into a collective community presence. Promptly at 7:00 pm, the film screening commenced. The gathering not only rekindled relationships but also facilitated meaningful interactions and nostalgic reflections among community members.

Experiment 2:

By 2019, the Joe Odedina December Film Screening had become the only form of outdoor Film Screening/Open Cinema event in the Southern part of Kwara State. For at least 8 years prior to 2019, the rural community of Oke-Iya had been exposed to this open-air cinema culture consistently. This prepared the ground for the 2021 film empowerment project, a Film Production Skill Acquisition Project for Okeya High School Students by the Film Unit of the Department of Performing Arts and Film Production in collaboration with the Centre for Community Development, Kwara State University, where Joe Odedina was Head of the Department at the time. In the project's first outing, on the 1st of November, 2021, 30 Senior Students (SS Class) of Okeya High School, and other younger participants gained an understanding of the physical characteristics, proper handling techniques, and overall functionality of film equipment. Olaitan Rantimi, a female student from the school expressed that the experience left her with an overwhelming sensation akin to being transported to the moon. Her remark signifies the profound impact and transformative nature of the project. Adhering to a practical training methodology, the project provided an opportunity for these

students to gain firsthand knowledge and experience in operating camera equipment, marking their initial exposure to such tools. Their excitement was palpable. This reflects the enthusiasm and engagement generated through this immersive learning process.

They were divided into two groups, Groups A and B. Everyone got to feel a touch of all the parts of both sides. Group A was primarily engaged in acquiring proficiency in the handling of film equipment and the art of capturing rushes, while Group B concentrated their efforts on the intricacies of digital video editing on Adobe Premier Pro. Upon conclusion of the first day's activities, a selection of rushes captured during the session were meticulously compiled into a mini documentary, titled "Film Production Skill Acquisition for Okeya High School Students (Community Development Programme)", which is now publicly accessible on YouTube. This documentary serves as a testament to the skill acquisition endeavours undertaken by the students within the context of the community development program.

They started by discussing what a documentary is and what the short documentary, which was going to be the product of the programme, would focus on. Students also received comprehensive instruction on how to effectively use camera and sound recording devices in the production of an audiovisual documentary. This was ultimately uploaded on YouTube. Additionally, the students were auditioned for the role of narrator in the documentary production. As a result of these initiatives, students gained a deeper understanding of audiovisual storytelling within the context of their community-based filmmaking project. Then they started the workshop proper. After the workshop, a student of the school who participated, Aransiola Christiana Oluwanifemi, said "Oh my God, the workshop was fun and so educating. I learnt that the purpose of documentary is to educate and inform. I think I want to be a documentary filmmaker now after this workshop (CiNNeMA KWASU 2021, 4:22 - 4:36)" Another student participant, Sulaimon Usman Babatunde, said that "I think this is one of the best things I have ever done in this school" (CiNNeMA KWASU 2021, 4:03 - 4:11).

The school administrator Babatunde Rachael Mojirola mentioned that the students had only ever been consumers of the audiovisual media as it is the prevalent form in this age, but the workshop has offered them the opportunity to become producers and even possibly earn a living from the skills acquired.

Discussion of Findings

The film screening project facilitated social interactions among community members, creating opportunities for meaningful exchanges. Attendees at the various events engaged in discussions, where they shared personal experiences (both past and present, even as they built

more shared experiences among themselves from year to year), and formed connections based on shared interests and goals.

As children came together every December, during the festive period, from different cities and states to Oke-Iya, those who were 11 in 2011, had become young adults of 22 years by 2022. They, along with the young adults in the community, therefore developed a collective identity tied to the development of their community through these shared experiences during the film screenings and other affiliated projects. This collective identity ensured a sense of belonging, solidarity, and shared responsibility among participants.

The film screening project also acted as a platform for bridging social capital, bringing together individuals from diverse economic backgrounds and social networks. Attendees formed new connections, which increased the flow of information, resources, and support within the community. The project also facilitated the development of trust among community members. Through shared experiences and interactions, attendees-built trust, enhancing cooperation and collaboration for community development initiatives.

The film screening project contributed to systemic change within the community. It promoted collective thinking and platformed discussions on community development, thereby influencing the community's social systems, leading to the formation of new norms, values, and practices that supported positive change. For example, normally, the Post-colonial Nigerian city dweller is more invested in accruing wealth for himself and his immediate family. This is particularly evidenced by the general lack of development in rural areas, in spite of these areas having kindreds in the big cities. At some point during the one of the discussion sessions platformed, a form of mentorship merger where established urban dwellers were merged with mentees of the same gender for development.

The project also created feedback loops within the community system. Attendees shared their insights, concerns, and ideas during the film screenings and consequent discussions, creating a continuous exchange of information and fostering adaptive responses to community needs. It was during one of such sessions that the mentorship programme commenced, and it was also during one of such that the programme was modified.

The projects provided community members with information and knowledge about various aspects of community development. Based off the discussions platformed, attendees had more raw facts with which to make informed choices and decisions based on these insights gained from the films and discussions. As the Rational choice theory suggests that individuals are motivated by self-interest, the film screening project tapped into this motivation by highlighting the benefits of community development and demonstrating how individual actions contribute

to the collective well-being. Attendees were inspired to take action and contribute to the development of their community. On the day succeeding the 2022 film screening day, during the inauguration of the Joe Odedina-led Oke-Iya Descendants Union fundraiser, they were able to raise millions of naira in donations. This is the first time the community would come together to contribute on such a large scale, towards the development of their community.

Another part of the experiments was an empowerment project on film and photography skill acquisition. Through the workshop, hands-on training sessions, and practical exercises, these young individuals attained a commendable level of proficiency in operating cameras, adjusting settings, framing shots, and effectively managing film equipment. As they got equipped with this technical knowledge, the participants began to feel empowered to express their creative vision and skilfully capture poignant moments for the remaining part of the project.

During the project, participants' ability to express themselves through photography was honed. They learned how to tell stories, convey emotions, and communicate their perspectives through visual storytelling. Thus, the camera became a tool for capturing the immediate, documenting their journey, and for self-reflection, enabling them to explore their story, experiences, and aspirations. This newfound ability to express themselves through photography empowered participants to share their unique stories and perspectives, first with the workshop class, and eventually with others.

Engagement in the project opened participants to the realisation that they had a bank of creativity in them. They then gained confidence in their ability to be anything - even photographers and possibly filmmakers. As they honed their technical skills and received positive, constructive feedback on their work, participants gained a sense of accomplishment and empowerment. Photography and film became a means of self-empowerment, allowing participants to discover their strengths and showcase their unique perspectives to the world. This goes beyond directly helping the individual participants, it ensured community engagement and collaboration as the participants returned to their community, actively seeking opportunities to document local events, traditions, and everyday life. Thereby ensuring that Oke-Iya which used to be a remote community in a remote state got more visible to the outside world. This collaborative approach encouraged community members to become active contributors to the project, from Babatunde Mojirola, the Oke-Iya Commuity School Principal, to other teachers, strengthening social bonds and promoting a sense of collective ownership over shared narratives.

The project ultimately opened doors to new entrepreneurial opportunities for its participants. As film and photography skills are widely sought after, the students who participated gained

access to the Nigerian creative industry, which hosts Nollywood, one of the largest film industries in the world. They gained a foot into exhibitions, competitions, and potential professional avenues. Film and photography became another tool in their toolbox for personal development, creative expression, and potential economic empowerment. The new skills learnt became a creative outlet enabling affording them technical competence at self-expression, and also offering a sense of accomplishment derived from capturing and sharing or selling meaningful pictures. For the community and especially the participants, this contributed to increased happiness, self-esteem, and overall mental well-being.

Recommendations

Based on the experiments undertaken during the series of projects involved in this study, the following recommendations can be made for future attempts aimed at using film to manage community relations and to platform a sense of collective engagement aimed at promoting community development:

1. **Enable Meaningful Interactions:**
   - Design activities and discussion sessions that encourage engagement in a welcoming and inclusive environment.
   - Incorporate group activities, icebreakers, and collaborative projects to enhance social connections.
   - Build and leverage social capital among community members through diverse networks and shared interests.

2. **Involve Community in Planning:**
   - Ensure community members are involved in planning and decision-making processes to enhance ownership and empower contributions.
   - Engage key stakeholders and influencers within the community for smooth collaboration and leverage local support and resources.

3. **Respect Local Social Systems:**
   - Recognize and respect local social systems, such as showing deference to elders and authority.
   - Engage with local leaders, like the Oba and Chiefs, to gain support and appreciation for the initiatives. (See Picture 1 in Appendix.)

(A picture of the community's King and Chiefs welcoming the production team. At the centre is the Oba of Oke-Iya, flanked to his left by his Chiefs and to the right by Joe Odedina, the coordinator of the project.)

4. **Create Feedback Mechanisms:**
   o Establish feedback systems to gather input from community members and stakeholders.
   o Regularly assess the impact of projects on the community's social systems and adjust strategies as needed.

5. **Communicate Benefits Clearly:**
   o Articulate the benefits and positive outcomes of projects to community members.
   o Use success stories, case studies, and best practices from other communities to inspire participation and involvement.

6. **Enable Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:**
   o Strengthen networks and partnerships to sustain the impact of projects.
   o Prioritize collaboration, knowledge sharing, and resource pooling among community members.

Recommendations for Skill Acquisition and Empowerment Projects:

1. **Comprehensive Training Programs:**
   o Develop comprehensive training covering both film and photography skills, including hands-on training and practical exercises.
   o Include modules on camera operations, composition, lighting, editing, and storytelling techniques.

2. **Inclusive and Accessible Projects:**
   o Ensure projects are inclusive and accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds, including marginalized communities.
   o Provide necessary resources and training materials, and conduct sessions in central, easily accessible locations.

3. **Collaborative Learning Environment:**
   o Promote a collaborative rather than competitive learning environment.
   o Encourage group activities, peer mentoring, and collaborative projects to enhance community and mutual support.

4. **Cultural and Community Engagement:**

   o Encourage participants to explore and document their personal, collective, and cultural identities through their work.

   o Provide guidance on cultural sensitivity and how to highlight local issues and community strengths through film and photography.

5. **Career Guidance and Opportunities:**

   o Offer guidance on career opportunities in film and photography, including freelance work, exhibitions, and collaborations.

   o Provide resources, networking opportunities, and mentorship for professional growth.

6. **Measure Impact and Document Success:**

   o Measure the project's impact on participants' personal growth, self-esteem, and well-being.

   o Collect feedback and document success stories, testimonials, and achievements to attract support for future initiatives.

Conclusion

In this work, we have explored film's role in managing community relations, enabling social cohesion, and promoting development through open-air screenings and film/photography skill programs. The work is grounded in the theory of symbolic interactionism, social capital theory, social systems theory, and rational choice theory. With these, the demonstrated film's effectiveness beyond entertainment and education. The Open-air screenings sparked dialogues, platformed an exchange of perspectives, and cultivated community identity, promoting solidarity and commitment to development. The skill programs also empowered young individuals creatively and economically, enhancing self-expression, community engagement, and social capital formation. The theoretical perspectives also grounded film's impact: symbolic interactionism emphasised shared experiences and identity formation; social capital theory highlighted connections and resource-sharing; social systems theory addressed systemic influences; and rational choice theory explored motivations for community contributions. Integrating these frameworks provided insights into film's transformative potential in community relations and development. Our recommendations support future film-based initiatives for empowerment, engagement, and sustainable community growth. Film is therefore a potent tool for managing relations, uniting communities, and enabling development. Serving a dual role of offering artistic expression whilst also driving positive social change.

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Appendix

Picture 1:

(A picture of the community's King and Chiefs welcoming the production team. At the centre is the Oba of Oke-Iya, flanked to his left by his Chiefs and to the right by Joe Odedina, the coordinator of the project.)