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# Tapez le Tam-Tam and the People Will Come: A Study of Theater for Social Justice in Kaolack, Senegal

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*Tapez le Tam-Tam and the People Will Come:*  
A Study of Theater for Social Justice in Kaolack, Senegal

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## Abstract

This purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of theater to create social change and raise awareness of social issues as used by the troupe Bantaare in Kaolack, Senegal. Further study was done to determine why theater was successful and whether this type of theater can be implemented in the United States. I spent four weeks in Kaolack working with the troupe to understand their methods. While in Kaolack, I observed rehearsals and performances, conducted interview with actors and audience members, and reviewed relevant literature. My research showed that Bantaare's performances in urban neighborhoods and rural villages did empower people to change their beliefs and actions. Bantaare adapts traditional cultural practices, such as drumming and dance, to engage their audiences, and forum theater to encourage participation and gauge comprehension. I concluded that Bantaare's work is effective because they use music that is culturally significant, share information in a simple, understandable manner, and ask audience members to contribute to the performance. While this method of theater for social change is successful in Kaolack, Senegal, I believe that the exact format would not work in the United States, but with modifications it could be valuable there, as well.

Keywords: theater, social justice, forum theater

## Introduction

I discovered theater for social change while researching a project for a class and was immediately intrigued. As a theater student, I enjoy learning about new styles of theater, and the work of social justice theater was so unlike the theater I had been studying and practicing at school. I read about a group in Senegal that used plays to create dialogue on issues such as HIV/AIDS and women's rights, then invited audience members on stage to act out their solutions or ideas. I had recently been feeling unfulfilled by the theater work with which I had been involved, and I felt a need to do something that would have a greater impact on the community. I searched for ways to get involved with theater for social justice, but found nothing nearby. This interactive theater style seemed only to be present in a few cities with just a few theater troupes. I had never seen a performance like the ones I read about, and was not sure where to look. I could not understand why such an innovative theater form was not being used in the United States. After doing a little more research I discovered that there are social justice theater troupes, there are plays that address difficult social issues, and at my own school, The University of Kansas (KU), there exists an organization called the Interactive Théâtre Troupe, or ITT. While I have not observed this group extensively, seen any performances, and spoken with any audience members, I believe that ITT has helped students and faculty understand and address difficult issues. However, the organization is funded by the university and used for programs sponsored by KU, which limits the work that they can do. They do not observe their community and create pieces on themes they believe to be necessary. I want to be able to use theater to give a voice to all themes, without worry about who is sponsoring the message. To find out more about how theater is used to spread messages social justice, I believed I had to come to Senegal and see it for myself.

## Background

The use of theater as an instrument for social change is not a new idea. In the 1920s Bertolt Brecht began writing plays that challenged the political climate of the time. He believed that theater should not distract people from their lives, but rather help them reflect on current issues and inspire audiences to make changes regarding these injustices. His type of “epic theater” gave drama a new purpose and focused on social justice (Childers and Hentzi 1995, p.362). In the 1950s Augusto Boal created a style of performance in which actors choose a specific social justice issue, present a dilemma, and ask audience members to come up on stage and act out how they would change or solve the situation. Boal’s style of drama, called Theatre of the Oppressed, spoke directly about problems in society and let audience members try to find a way to fix them. In 1970 the government of Burkina Faso funded “*Théâtre pour le développement,*” (Theater for Development) described by Jean-Pierre Guingane in *Théâtres Africains* as a theater that served to “*dramatiser des scènes de la vie agricole où les paysans deviennent eux-mêmes acteurs et s’impliquent donc directement dans l’expérience dramatique*” (1990, p.126) (dramatize the scenes of agricultural life where the farmers themselves became the actors and directly involved themselves in the dramatic experience). *Théâtre pour le Développement* was inspired by Augusto Boal’s work, but took on a different form since the plays were commissioned by the government, rather than created in opposition to government. Theater for social change has developed separately in many cultures and looks different in each society, but there is no doubt that the idea of using theater to promote change is a widely accepted and appreciated technique.

However, in the United States there has not been a significant theater for social justice movement. In fact, between 2008 and 2012 there was a 12% decline in theater attendance among

adults (Voss 2012, p.10). Though this statistic does not represent attendance of social justice plays, or the presence of theater for social change, it does suggest that Americans are increasingly less likely to attend any type of play, including a social justice play. That is not to say that theater is not being used for social justice in the United States. There is a branch of Theatre of the Oppressed in New York, and many regional and local troupes stage plays that carry a message of social justice. However, given the rate of audience decline and the dominance of other forms of entertainment, like television, Americans are not likely to come to a theater performance. After learning about Theater of the Oppressed, I searched for ways to get involved with theater for social justice, but found nothing nearby. This interactive theater style seemed only to be present in a few cities with just a few theater troupes. People in the United States are already unlikely to seek out a live performance, and the limited amount of social justice theater available makes Americans even less likely to participate in this form of drama. To find out more about how theater is used to spread messages social justice, I believed I had to come to Senegal and see it for myself. Through my study abroad program I was put in touch with an organization called APROFES, *Association pour la Promotion de la Femme Sénégalaise* (Association for the Promotion of Senegalese Women) and their theater troupe, Bantaare<sup>1</sup>.

APROFES was established in 1987 by a group of young women who were part of a local group, *Magg Daan*, which is a Wolof<sup>2</sup> phrase that means ‘Grow up and Succeed’. *Magg Daan* organized programs for cultural development and supported various groups of people in Kaolack, like women, orphans, and the unemployed. A few women, including Binta Sarr, the president of APROFES, believed that women in Kaolack and surrounding villages needed more

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<sup>1</sup> Pronounced bam-tar-ey

<sup>2</sup> A native language of the Wolof people in Senegal. Believed to be the native tongue of 40% of the population of Senegal, and a second language to another 40%. One of the most widely spoken languages in the country.

support, so they created their own separate association. The mission of APROFES is “*de contribuer à la promotion socio-économique et culturelle de la femme Sénégalaise*” (to contribute to the socio-economic and cultural promotion of Senegalese women). APROFES supports female entrepreneurs, holds seminars on domestic violence, provides safe spaces for women to talk to someone if they are a victim of violence, and much more. (Coudrin 2010, p.9)

Their projects focus on providing aid to women and children in the Kaolack region, which includes the city of Kaolack, as well as surrounding villages. According to data collected in *Le Portail de la Coopération Décentralisée au Sénégal* in 2003, the region of Kaolack spans about 10,000 square miles and includes 6 cities and 41 rural communities. (La Gouvernance Locale, du Développement et de l'Aménagement du Territoire 2003.) APROFES divides the region into smaller sections and assigns an APROFES representative in each section. This person, always a woman and an APROFES staff member, oversees and helps implement the group's projects. In 2002, APROFES became a Non-Governmental Organization, or NGO (APROFES, 2003, p.2).

To aid with the education of the community on social issues, APROFES employs many strategies. They hold conferences, *causeries* (chats), write pamphlets and flyers, and use theater. In 1992, the members of APROFES founded a theater troupe called Bamtaare to create theater pieces with the goal of raising awareness and understanding of social issues in the Kaolack region. Prior to 1992, theater had been used to promote APROFES' messages, but the group was growing and saw the need for a formal troupe.

*Bamtaare* is a Pular<sup>3</sup> word meaning development. The group chose the name to illustrate their purpose as a theater troupe for the development of the Kaolack region and the Senegalese woman. All of Bamtaare's work is done in Wolof and though there are people in Kaolack who

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<sup>3</sup> A native language of Senegal, spoken by the Fula people.

speak Pular, the language of the region is predominantly Wolof. However, Thié nouma Diop, the director of the troupe, explained to me that the Pular word for development sounds more elegant than the Wolof word. He also said that the use of a Pular word in a Wolof community illustrates the troupe's goal of unity and acceptance of all people. Bamtaare is officially a part of APROFES and works on a number of the NGO's projects. However, APROFES encourages other organizations to collaborate with Bamtaare, as well. If a foreign organization or NGO is working in Kaolack and needs help spreading their mission or explaining their purpose, Bamtaare can be called in to organize a performance. The group provides Bamtaare with the necessary information, tells them what needs to be covered in the sketch, and Bamtaare works with them to make a piece that fits their needs.

During my research period I was advised by Thié nouma Diop, the director of the troupe. Thié nouma, or Thié, made sure I knew about rehearsals and performances, translated parts of the plays into French to make sure I understood the plots, and helped me set up interviews with actors, APROFES members, and partners who have sponsored pieces. He has worked with Bamtaare since 1997 and has a lot of experience promoting social justice and women's rights through theater. After almost twenty years working with Bamtaare, and his prior work in theater, he was able to share with me his understanding of theater in Kaolack and what makes it work so well.

### Research Focus

My main interest in coming to Senegal was to study social justice theater, specifically Theatre of the Oppressed, to see if it was an effective way to raise awareness, address social issues, and remove taboos from sensitive subjects. There is a branch of Theatre of the Oppressed located in Dakar, *Kàddu Yaraax*, which I was able to visit a few times early in the program,

before the research component started. I talked with the director, Mouhamadou Diol, and he described their work and some of the subjects their plays have addressed. However, after meeting with Mouhamadou and researching other theater organizations in Senegal, I decided that working with Theatre of the Oppressed and the troupe in Dakar would not give me all of the opportunities I wanted. I was interested in the use of theater in different types of communities, rural and urban, to compare the effectiveness in each area. *Kàddu Yaraax* did travel, but only to other urban areas. My program director, Souleye Diallo, suggested I research Bantaare, since their work was done in urban neighborhoods and well as in rural villages. Not much information about the organization was available online, but I got in contact with Binta Sarr, the president of APROFES, and she told me a bit about the troupe. Also, another SIT student had studied there in 2008 and written her ISP as a case study about the troupe Bantaare. Her research gave me good background information on the troupe and allowed me to enter my research period with prior knowledge and understanding, so I could focus my work on more specific questions. My initial question was whether theater could truly create change for a community or an individual. I wanted to know if people even came to see the plays and if the spectators really learned anything, if they felt inspired to change their society or community or lifestyle, and if these changes actually occurred.

As I worked with Bantaare and conducted interviews with people familiar with their work I came to realize that I needed to further the scope of my study. In the first few days it was clear to me that Bantaare's theater pieces were effective. Partners continue to request sketches, audiences love the performances, and APROFES members praise the troupe's success. Simply researching whether or not Bantaare and social justice theater was effective in Kaolack would not lead to a very involved study. I had to explore *why*. People kept telling me that theater made

a difference, but how? Why did the spectators come? What made them remember the messages and change their points of view or actions? In the United States, with theater attendance on the decline and ‘slacktivism’<sup>4</sup> on the rise, social justice theater does not have the same affect. My research shifted focus to understand why social justice theater is effective in Senegal, specifically in Kaolack with the troupe Bantaare, with the intention of applying what I learned to my work in the United States in attempt to yield similar results.

### Methodology

All of my field work and research was conducted in Kaolack, Senegal. I spent four weeks living with a host family in the neighborhood of Kasnack and working with APROFES and the troupe Bantaare. During the course of my study I employed several different methods of collecting data and information. Spending the whole research period in Kaolack gave me the opportunity to try various research techniques and develop a routine that allowed to me become familiar with the city and with the troupe.

### *Observation*

While in Kaolack I was able to sit in on multiple meetings of the troupe, as well as other events in which Bantaare and APROFES took part. I sat in on rehearsals, workshops, performances, and other events. Coincidentally, during my first week there Bantaare was given a new project, so I had the chance to see how the troupe creates a theater piece from the very beginning. I watched one workshop as well as a few rehearsals for this new piece. I also saw rehearsals for existing pieces that Bantaare was asked to perform again. Through observation I learned the dynamics of the troupe and the role of each member. I witnessed the collaborative

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<sup>4</sup> “Actions performed via the Internet in support of a political or social cause but regarded as requiring little time or involvement, e.g., signing an online petition or joining a campaign group on a social media website” (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2014).

atmosphere and their method of sharing ideas before trying out a new scene. I observed three performances in Kaolack, as well. Thié made sure that I had a seat where I could see the entire playing space and encouraged me to take notes and pictures.

### *Participant Observation*

In some instances, I could take an active role in the troupe's work, or in an APROFES event. After the troupe rehearsed a scene, everyone would give feedback, and they always asked my opinion. It was difficult for me to give useful advice and criticism, however, since the sketches were all in Wolof and I could not understand most of what was said. I could express what I thought had happened and Thié said that helped the troupe gauge the clarity of the scene, even for someone who cannot understand the dialogue. One of the troupe members, Pathé, taught me a few rhythms on the tam-tam<sup>5</sup> and I tried to play for a few of the rehearsals. I did not play with the musicians during the performances, since I did not know all the rhythms and could not keep up, but I did get to participate in the rehearsals. As I watched practices and performances I became familiar with the songs, and tried singing with the group a few times. During performances I was often pulled up to dance with the audience members. My role as a participant observer helped me understand the importance of the music and dance that accompanies this style of theater.

### *Interviews*

While in Kaolack I was able to interview most of the theater troupe, as well as other people who have been involved with Bantaare in various ways. Thié reached out to some members of organizations who have commissioned pieces in the past and coordinated interviews with them, so I could find out why they chose to use theater as a means of spreading information and what

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<sup>5</sup> A type of drum, also known as a sabar, played with one stick and one hand. The drums can be various sizes and can be played standing or sitting. See Appendix Figure 2.

they saw as a result. I spoke with audience members after one of the performances to get the perspective of someone outside of APROFES and Bantaare. Finally, I interviewed Binta Sarr, the president and a founding member of APROFES, who helped create the theater troupe. Through interviews with the actors I learned more about how the troupe works, why each person works with Bantaare, and how they view their work.

### *Literature Review*

When I was not in rehearsals and at performances I took time to read documents relating to theater for social justice, as well as texts describing the history and work of APROFES and Bantaare. I was given a manual called *SIDA et Théâtre* (AIDS and Theater) produced by UNESCO that describes how organizations can use theater to educate communities about AIDS. Bantaare was not currently working on any pieces dealing with AIDS or HIV, but a lot of the advice written in the manual was applicable to any subject. I also read *Théâtres Africains* (African Theater), which details the history of theater in West Africa and touches on theater for development, how theater evolved to its current state, and why people like to attend performances in West Africa.

### *Limitations to Research*

In the four weeks I spent observing the work of Bantaare and learning about their style of theater I did learn a lot. However, a four-week research period was simply not enough time for me to adequately address all the questions I had. It took a few days to understand the organization of the troupe and get settled in Kaolack. It took time to set up interviews and plan time to read and decide what my next steps should be. I was able to conduct all the interviews I planned, but was left with a lot of material that took time to sort through.

Aside from time constraints, language was also a barrier. All of Bamtaare's rehearsals and performances are in Wolof, which is better for the community, but harder for me to understand. I had to have someone explain to me what was being said in practices and sketches. I was not able to understand audience members when they gave feedback after a play, so unless someone near me spoke French and could translate, I missed what they were saying. Two of my interviews were done in Wolof, as well, with a troupe member translating. The troupe member was asked to translate on the spot and did not have time to prepare or talk with the interviewee before starting. The rest of my interviews were conducted in French, which is not my native language, nor is it the native language of any of my interview subjects. This creates an amount of uncertainty when communicating, since my questions may have been unclear or grammatically incorrect, or I may have misinterpreted answers. People also may have misinterpreted my questions or not been able to adequately express themselves to me in French.

Another restriction was the number of performances I was able to attend. I got to see three 'spectacles,' or performances, which was just enough to be able to compare them and get an idea of the format, but not enough to fully engage in this type of theater. One of the reasons for the limited performance schedule was the timing of Magal, a celebration when Mouride Muslims make a pilgrimage to Touba. Because of the placement of Magal, many people were travelling during my research period and no performances could be scheduled.

Finally, I felt a bit restricted by my choice of topic. I am interested in how effective Bamtaare's presence is in Kaolack and why their performances work as a means of sharing information. However, measuring "effectiveness" is not easy. I did not have any statistics regarding knowledge of audience members before and after attending a play. I got to interview one audience member, but that is not representative of Bamtaare's audience as a whole. Eventually

my focus shifted away from determining the effectiveness of theater for social change in Kaolack. I came to understand that it was effective. NGOs continued to use it, people in the community spoke highly of it, and people gave me examples of changes it had made. Instead, I began to concentrate on why theater had this affect in Kaolack, why theater was successful in helping people learn and retain information and make changes in their lives.

### The Troupe Bantaare

#### *Organization*

Bantaare has been under the direction of Thié nouma Diop since 1997. The troupe Bantaare currently consists of nine members, including Thié. Not all of the members have speaking parts or act in the performances. Some play the drum, some dance, some have multiple roles. The members are as follows:

Thié nouma Diop—Director  
Fatou Dia—President, actor, and singer  
Abou Mbengue—Actor and percussionist  
Pathé Chonga—Lead percussionist and actor  
Lindor Mbaye—Actor and assistant director  
Maïssa Diop—Actor  
Mame Fatou Diop—Actor, singer, and dancer  
Alima Dembele—Actor, dancer, and lead singer  
Moustapha Ndiaye—Percussionist

There is also a *Comité d'Appui* (Committee of Support) for the troupe that acts as a liaison between Bantaare and the sponsoring organizations. The committee makes sure Bantaare receives all the necessary information and then includes it in their final presentation. There are two members of the *Comité d'Appui*, Babou Ngom and Mamadou Lamine Ly.

When APROFES or another organization wants to commission a piece, they provide all the information and it is given to Thié. Usually the information is written in French, but Thié relays the information to the troupe in Wolof. Together the troupe brainstorms and comes up with ideas

for scenes. Once they have a complete piece, after two or three rehearsals, they invite a representative from the NGO and the *Comité d'Appui* to see the final product. The representative can suggest edits or request changes. The troupe makes changes, if necessary, and the piece is ready to present. This process normally takes no more than a week. While I was in Kaolack I had the opportunity to witness all of these steps.

### *Workshops and Rehearsals*

A lot of my observation of Bamtaare was done at their rehearsals. The troupe met every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday night from 5:00pm-7:00pm in the courtyard of a local elementary school. I arrived in Kaolack in early November, rehearsals had just started up again after the rainy season. Bamtaare performs outside, so during the rainy season they do not schedule any performances. Since rehearsals had just begun again, they were sparsely attended this first week. Some people did not show up for the first few nights, and often actors would not come until 6:00 or later. Sometimes Thié would start the rehearsals before everyone showed up, but most nights we would wait for an hour until all the actors were present. The troupe did not practice the same piece every night, nor did they run lines or rehearse scenes every time. Some rehearsals were just for practicing songs or drumming. Since I arrived toward the beginning of Bamtaare's performance season, I was able to observe the troupe starting a new piece, as well as refreshing old pieces. My first rehearsal with Bamtaare happened to be the start of a new creation.

The first step of the creation process is an *atelier*, or workshop. During my first week of research Bamtaare was asked to create a piece for an NGO called ARAPAZ that works in rural areas in the Kaolack region. Thié was given a list of information and at rehearsal that night he explained the material to the actors. ARAPAZ had recently helped install toilets in a village and wanted to teach people how to keep them clean and the importance of bathroom hygiene. Every

member of the troupe shared ideas on how to create a play with this information. Thié took each idea into consideration before he spoke. He gave a general summary of a sketch, scene by scene, and asked the actors to try it out. They had only discussed for about 30 minutes, but were already prepared to get up on their feet and give it a go. They rehearsed the first scene, in which Mame Fatou visits Alima and accidentally steps in poop. She sees Alima's son playing near the bathroom, which has not been cleaned. Fatou complains to Alima and tells her it is not sanitary to have poop on the ground. Alima does not seem to care. There were no written words or script for this scene, so Alima and Fatou tried different lines until they created a scene that Thié and the troupe liked. Even then, no one wrote down any lines. Each time they would perform this scene they would be slightly improvising. The plot would not change, but they were free to try new lines and phrases if they needed to. Thié gave them some guidance here and there, but overall, he let Alima and Mame Fatou do most of the work and keep trying new things until they felt comfortable.

The rehearsal process was similar to the workshop session. The troupe would be performing for play about domestic violence around Kaolack, which is a theme they have worked on before. They have already developed and performed a piece for this purpose, so there was no need for a workshop. All of the actors were familiar with the plot, but this season there were some members of the troupe who did not return, so roles had to be reassigned. People with new roles practiced their scenes and Thié and Lindor, the assistant director, helped make sure they knew all the information and where the scene should lead. Not having a set script helped the troupe make these changes in casting fluidly and with only a few rehearsals. When an actor felt comfortable with a role and Thié believed that they included all the relevant material, the troupe moved on to a different scene or practiced their songs. Thié never planned ahead of time what

would be rehearsed each day, and he only made people practice until they said they were comfortable. The scenes were only practiced as needed, not in order. I did not see the entire piece until the first performance. Thié trusted the actors of Bantaare to work until they understood. He did not feel the need to overwork them or rerun scenes multiple times. Since the actors did not have to memorize exact lines, slight variances in scenes was okay, and the actors had all been a part of the domestic violence sketch in the past. Thié did not try to control what an actor said or how they presented their character. He was there to offer support and guidance, but his role as a director was very much hands-off. He encouraged collaboration within the troupe. After a run through, Thié would sometimes offer his suggestions, but he always opened up the discussion to the other actors and asked their opinions. If another member of the troupe had an idea or comment, Thié always tried it out. Thié explained, “*Bantaare crée une création collective, je suis le qui commence la création collective*” (2016.) (Bantaare creates a collective creation. I am the one who starts the collective creation.) While Thié was officially the director of the troupe, he did not make his leadership position into one of power or control. He was the person who communicated with the *Comité d’Appui* or the sponsoring NGO. He was the one who combined people’s ideas and comments into one coherent sketch. But overall, Bantaare works as an ensemble. This creates a unity, an equality, among the members, which they extend to the audience, as well. Bantaare’s style of theater gives spectators a chance to dance and sing and even act. The three performances I saw while working with Bantaare were unlike any I had ever seen.

### *Performances*

Bantaare uses a few different types of performances. Sometimes the most useful form for a theme is the *théâtre conférence* (conference theater). The troupe puts together a simple sketch,

usually with the purpose of education on a specific topic. When an NGO has a lot of new information they want to share with a community, they may request that Bamtaare share it in a play. *Théâtre conference* performances, according to Thié, last about 10 minutes. They may be part of a day long education event, or a quick, standalone performance. Other times, Bamtaare has done a sort of ‘flash theater.’ They set up in a public space, like a bus station, and start talking loudly to attract attention. Usually they stage some kind of argument based on the given theme, and once a crowd gathers they launch into their play. Most often, however, Bamtaare presents *Théâtre totale* (complete theater), which is also called a *spectacle*. A spectacle begins with just the drummers, as the actors set up the stage area and put costumes on. As the drummers play, people from the audience get up and dance, in my observations always women audience members. After the initial drumming and dancing, the women of the troupe come out and sing two or three songs in Wolof. The songs have been written by the troupe members and relate to the theme of the performance. Women get up and dance and sing during this section, too. By this time the sun has usually begun to set and it is time for the play. For a spectacle, the play itself is about 25 minutes. After the play, Thié comes out and asks the audience to participate. In this portion of the spectacle, audience members can comment on how characters could have acted differently, what they should do next, or what changes need to be made. This element is related to Augusto Boal’s concept of forum theater and is used to keep the audience engaged and further their comprehension and retention of information. Sometimes spectators simply share their ideas from their seats. Others come up and speak from the microphone. Sometimes an audience member will take the place of an actor and replay the scene, changing the dialogue to reflect what they believe should have happened. When people are done sharing, an APROFES representative comes to address the crowd and talk about the organization’s efforts to end

domestic violence, and how they help people who are victims. The representative is always a woman from APROFES who works in the region where the performance is being held, so the women know and trust her. She explains the *points d'écoutes*, or listening spaces, which are locations around the region of Kaolack where women can speak to an APROFES employee if they know of a situation of violence or if they have experienced violence themselves. She lists some of the options available to women who want to leave their husbands and how APROFES can help them. After this speech, the drummers come back out and play until everything has been cleaned up and put away. While in Kaolack I was able to observe three spectacles: one in the neighborhood of Boustane, one in the village of Gagnick, and one in the village of Keur Gamou.

The troupe performed the same play in each community on the theme of domestic violence. In the play, Maïssa comes home and asks his wife, Alima, for a glass of water. She is in the middle of cleaning fish for dinner and the water she gives him tastes like fish. He gets angry, throws the cup at her, and begins to hit her. Alima decides to leave him and goes to her mother's house. When she explains that Maïssa hit her, her mother asks what she did to provoke him. Her mother tells her that she must go back home because it is her responsibility as a wife to take care of the house and her family. Alima refuses, saying she will go into town and get a legal separation. Later, Maïssa talks with his friend Lindor. Lindor says that everyone in the town knows that Maïssa hit his wife. He suggests that Maïssa stay at home and let Alima come back to him. He is the husband and deserves respect. Lindor's wife, Mame Fatou, suggests that he go see Alima, apologize, and ask her to come back. Maïssa decides to stay at home and wait. In the next scene, Maïssa is struggling to do laundry when his son, Pathé, comes in. Maïssa asks Pathé if he knows how to wash clothes. Pathé gives him some (wrong) advice, then asks what they will have for dinner that night. Maïssa says they will have to have plain rice for the third night in a row,

since that is all he can cook. The father and son lament the absence of Alima, who usually cooks and does the laundry. Maïssa gives up on the laundry and goes to visit Lindor. Lindor has been to see Alima and tells Maïssa she will come back only if Maïssa promises never to hit her, apologizes and tell her how much she is needed. Maïssa refuses at first, but realizes that he misses his wife and does need her. He goes to Alima's mother's house and tried to apologize, but Alima won't listen. Maïssa promises never to hit her, yell at her, or mistreat her ever again. Alima believes he is sorry and goes back home.

There were many similarities between the three evenings. The troupe performed the same three songs and staged the same play. When we arrived at each location, chairs were set up and women and children were already there, ready for the show. During the drumming, women always got up to dance. No one from Bantaare invited them up, they simply knew that it was acceptable. As the drumming continued, more and more people showed up. The crowds usually had about 200 people made up of mostly women and children. The most men I saw at a spectacle was 10. The audiences reacted to the play in similar ways. They talked to the actors while they were performing, commented when they thought something was right or wrong, and laughed in the same places. It seemed that every audience found the first scene to be the funniest. When Maïssa threw the water cup at his wife and began to hit her the audience would always yell at Maïssa and laugh and clap. It surprised me that the audience found this to be one of the funniest scenes. It did not seem like they were cheering him on, but the scene was obviously amusing to them. Thié told me that they were laughing at what he was saying, that she gave him fish water, which she had to right to do after he spent so much money on her. Even this does not seem too funny to me, but the audiences loved it. After the performance, members of the audiences did want to give advice or suggestions on how to change the scenario. In all the communities, at least

one woman would say that she would have made sure to wash her hands and get clean water to avoid the problem. People usually made suggestions on how to avoid the violence in the first place. Few people talked about what Alima should have done after Maïssa hit her.

There were differences between the three performances, as well. There were two performances in villages, and one in the urban neighborhood of Boustane, which is within the city of Kaolack. In Boustane, the performance took place in the street outside the house of a neighborhood leader. However, in the villages there was a designated space for outdoor events, such as music, theater, or community meetings. Aside from this, there did not seem to be distinct differences between rural and urban performances. There were differences between the spectacles, but not because of the rural or urban setting. For example, most people who gave suggestions at the end were women, but after the performance in Boustane an older man raised his hand and said he believed that the husband should have just gotten his own water, since his wife was busy. One major difference occurred in the last performance I observed, in Keur Gamou. One of the actors, Mame Fatou, had left Kaolack to start school in Dakar, and Maïssa was sick. But the show must go on. Fatou stepped in to play Mame Fatou's role and Abou played Maïssa's role. Since the sketch was a collaboration, everyone was familiar with all the roles. There is no script, so the actors did not have to worry about memorizing lines. They knew the structure of the play and the transition happened seamlessly.

### Findings and Analysis

#### *Effectiveness*

My research question and concentration shifted after the first few days of my time in Kaolack from whether theater for social justice was effective and created change, to how and why it was successful. Though general effectiveness was not the main focus of my study, it is

important to address the question and present my findings on this subject. In asking if Bantaare's work in the Kaolack region was effective and yielded results, the response I received was overwhelming affirmative. 'Effectiveness' is a difficult concept to measure. There are no statistics reporting on spectators' knowledge and understanding of an issue before and after a performance. Binta Sarr told me that APROFES does return to neighborhoods and villages to assess the results of their work as a whole, including the effectiveness and response to theater.

*Quand on retour à la communauté où on a fait le théâtre, ils ont dit, à partir des messages, je ne frappe plus ma femme, à partir des messages j'amène ma fille à l'école, à partir des messages, ils ont compris qu'il faut utiliser une moustiquaire, à partir des messages, des gens se lavent les mains. Et ça c'est les évaluations, qui ont montré des changements des comportement, des changement concrètes, au nouveau communautaire. Il y a des villages ou les enfants n'allaient pas à l'école. On a fait la sensibilisation et tous les enfants vont à l'école maintenant. Ça c'est un bon résultat. (2016.)*

(When we return to the community where we did theater, they say, after hearing these messages, I no longer hit my wife. After hearing these messages, I send my daughter to school. After hearing these messages, they understand that they have to use a mosquito net. After hearing these messages, people wash their hands. And these are the evaluations that show changes in behavior, concrete changes, in a new community. There are villages where children did not go to school. We did outreach and now all the children go to school. That is a good result.)

If changes do occur in a community, for example, if there is a decline in domestic violence or an increase in the use of mosquito nets, it is hard to attribute these changes entirely to the use theater performance. Changes occur slowly and can be difficult to observe or track. Also, APROFES and other NGO's use multiple methods to share information aside from theater, including conferences, posters and documents, and radio transmissions. It is impossible to determine how much of the noted changes can be attributed to theater and how much have been caused by other means of outreach.

Despite these limitations, I do know that people in Kaolack continue to use drama to share important messages and information with groups of people. People praise Bantaare and

there is no doubt in anyone's mind that theater is necessary as a way to communicate with the population and discuss issues of social justice. When I spoke with Daniel Ruperez, the coordinator of ARAPAZ, he expressed how surprised he was when he witnessed his first spectacle. He had not heard of forum theater or social justice theater before arriving in Kaolack. APROFES approached him and asked if he would like to work with Bantaare and he agreed. I asked Daniel what he thought of Bantaare and the use of theater for education and social justice.

*Ça marche très bien, il était incroyable. Tout le monde a participé, il était très intéressant.... C'est la meilleure façon de passer des messages.*

(It works very well, it was incredible. Everyone participated, it was very interesting... This is the best way to share information.)

NGOs like ARAPAZ and APROFES utilize various methods for spreading awareness and information. Daniel spoke about the conferences and training sessions he has done in villages around Kaolack. These methods may seem more practical or professional than a play, and community members who attend these events do learn new information. However, theater has a power that these other methods do not seem to have. Thié told me a story about a performance Bantaare gave about the bad conditions of the highways, warning drivers to be careful and giving advice on how to stay safe on the roads that are full of potholes and rocks. There were some government officials present and Thié was worried that they would be upset and think that Bantaare was attacking them or accusing them of neglecting the roadwork that needed to be done. After the performance, one of the officials approached Thié and told him that the play had touched him. He said that he now understood the dangers caused by the current road conditions, he saw it was necessary to make changes, and he would work to get the roads fixed. Thié does not know whether the official kept his word, but at least in the moment the theater performance had an effect on him. He was inspired to make a change. Fatou Dia, the president of

Bamtaare told me that “*Le théâtre c’est le moyen de fait la sensibilisation. Si on joue le théâtre on peut comprendre facilement le thème.*” (2016.) (Theater is the way to raise awareness. If you use theater, people will easily understand the theme.) Something about theater makes people understand. This is what I set out to discover.

### *Reasons for Effectiveness*

Like attempting to measure the influence and success of theater in Kaolack, pinpointing the cause for its effectiveness is difficult, as well. Both concepts are theoretical, in that there are no numbers or data that can explain them. I got to sit it on many rehearsals and performances, but I only had four weeks to observe and try to draw a conclusion. As an outsider, someone just learning about social justice theater in Kaolack, it was not practical for me to determine why Bamtaare’s performances were effective. Surely, they had developed their style of theater based on their own experiences and the methods they saw to be useful. I wanted to understand why theater works, why people come, why NGOs keep requesting partnerships, why people retain information from the sketches and then actually implement it. The easiest way to do this was to ask people. I knew that the questions were abstract and difficult to answer. The members of Bamtaare probably did not sit around after rehearsals trying to figure out *why* people enjoy their performances or remember the messages they imparted. The spectators probably did not go home after a show and think about what made theater effective or why they liked to attend. I wondered if my research question was one that would never have a definitive answer. I knew that in order for information to be shared at all, there had to be an audience. Why do so many people come to Bamtaare’s performances? Here are some ideas people shared with me:

*Parce-que...un tape le tam-tam pour informer les gens, de dire que le théâtre est parti de la. C’est la culture, on tape le tam-tam pour atteler l’attention des gens. Quand on tape le tam-tam, quand on cri ensemble, tout le monde dit ‘Voilà, qu’est que se passe?’ et on a l’attention de tout le monde. (Diop, Mame Fatou, 2016.)*

(Because...you play the tam-tam to inform people, to say that the theater is coming. When you play the tam-tam, when you sing together, everyone says ‘Wow, what is going on?’ and you have everyone’s attention.)

*Je pense que nous avons une culture où dans tous les manifestations vous avez trouvé le tam-tam, vous avez trouvé les chantes, vous avez trouvé les danses, et je pense que notre théâtre, il y a le tam-tam, les chantes, les danses. (Sarr, 2016.)*

(I think that we have a culture where, in events, you have found the tam-tam, you have found songs, you have found dances, and I think that our theater, there is the tam-tam, the songs, the dances.)

*Sa marche parce-que quand on tape le tam-tam, des gens viennent. Parce-que les gens aiment le tam-tam, c’est la culture. (Ngom, 2016.)*

(It works because when you play the tam-tam, the people come. Because people love the tam-tam, that’s the culture.)

*Dans le village, quand tu chantes ou tu danses, ils viennent, ils regardent des exemples. (Dembele, 2016.)*

(In the village, when you sing or you dance, they [the people], come, they watch the examples.)

It became clear to me very early in my research that the tam-tam is a crucial part of theater in Senegal. The drumming that begins each spectacle is not just a way to let the actors have time to get dressed and set the stage before the play. It is not just a way to pass the time before sunset, when the weather cools down and the lighting is best for a performance. It is a call to the community. When people in Kaolack hear the sound of the tam-tam, they know that something, some kind of special event, is taking place. Sometimes people know about a performance ahead of time. There were always a few women already seated when the troupe arrived. But as the drummers played and women danced, the crowds grew considerably. It may be that women who did not know about the spectacle simply came because they had heard the tam-tam, and then ended up staying for the performance. Audience members take part in the presentation before the troupe members themselves! During the next section of the spectacle, when the women of

Bamtaare sing the songs they have written, the audience is still part of the action. Women continue to get up and dance and sing. The music engages the spectators before the play even starts, making them more than spectators, but performers as well. Bamtaare does not worry about no one showing up or about an uninterested audience. One reason Bamtaare is successful in Kaolack is because of the culture of music, the recognition of the call of the tam-tam.

The music gathers people together, but that is not where the message lies. The lesson comes from the play. What about Bamtaare's sketches helps people understand and remember information? Why can theater be used to discuss such deep, difficult issues, like domestic violence? Ndaye Ngor Niang, director of the Cultural Center of Kaolack credited theater's simplicity.

*On prend une troupe de théâtre, il joue la pièce pour 10 minutes et tout le monde comprend. Il va rester dans la tête, généralement. (2016.)*

(You take a theater troupe, they perform a play for 10 minutes and everyone understands. It is going to stay in their heads, generally.)

Unlike conferences and speeches and seminars, theater is quick and engaging. Since the play or sketch is so short, the troupe has to share the message in to simplest way possible. A play does not have time to go into other issues and details. They get the main points across in a simple, easy to understand way. According to Thié, "*Le théâtre permet qu'on dise certaines choses qui sont difficiles à discuter comme ça sans le théâtre.*" (2016). (Theatre allows one to say certain things that are difficult to discuss like this without theater.) Bamtaare works with sensitive issues, like domestic violence or HIV/AIDS. They speak directly about the issues without sugarcoating anything. Thié says that audience members understand that it is not real people talking about taboo topics, it is just actors. In the UNESCO manual about theater for social justice, it is emphasized that it is important to make sure the information in the sketches is

correct and free of any judgements or stereotypes. If the spectacle addresses these issues in a positive, nonjudgmental manor, audiences are more likely to adopt this attitude as well. (2003, p.6) Perhaps Bantaare discusses a topic in a way that is different and presents the issue in a new light or different perspective. The simplicity and tolerance presented in the sketches can open doors for change within communities. For example, I spoke with an audience member, Marie Thioun, after the performance in Boustane. She explained that

*Les femmes qui sont maltraite et qui ne savent pas avec qui elles peuvent parler, ces pièces permet qu'elles de savoir avec qui elles peuvent parler. Il y a beaucoup des femmes qui sont maltraite, qui ne savent pas où elles peuvent aller... La pièce aide des femmes de connaitre qu'est elles peuvent faire.<sup>6</sup> (2016.)*

(The women who are mistreated and do not know who they can talk to, these pieces allow them to know who they can talk to. There are a lot of women who are mistreated, who do not know where they can go... The piece helps women to know what they can do.)

She continued on to tell me that she is not currently married, but now if she finds a husband she will expect him to treat her with respect. If he mistreats her, she knows where she will go. The women who see these performances understand and share. Theater makes the issues less taboo, less scary. Maïssa Diop told me that “*Il y a des changements parce-que dans les villages, des femmes prennent l'information a ses maris.*”<sup>7</sup> (2016.) (There are changes because in the villages the women take the information to their husbands.) Using simple language, as well as performing in the audience’s native language, Wolof, rather than French, makes the themes understandable and accessible.

However, once people are there why do they listen so attentively to the sketch? Having observed audiences’ reactions during the play, I do not think people lose interest or zone out once the music stops and the actors begin. They truly listen and give their full attention to what is

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<sup>6</sup> Translated from Wolof by Mame Fatou Diop

<sup>7</sup> Translated from Wolof by Alima Dembele

being said. I think the reason for this was perfectly explained to me in the very first interview I conducted. Thié took me to see the Inspector of Education, who had commissioned pieces from Bantaare to teach parents how they can help their children improve their reading skills at home. He simply said “*Nous sommes une société de l’oralité.*” (We are an oral society.) With this statement, I was given a new perspective. Wolof culture, along with other communities in West Africa, is a culture rooted in language and the spoken word. Written language in early West African society is primarily a reflection of European culture and colonial influence. Werner Glinga, in *Théâtres Africains* writes

*Le théâtre africain [est] ...le théâtre qui épouse plutôt le registre et de l’oralité souligne l’aspect de la continuité de l’histoire en actualisant les mythes...[C]’est surtout dans les rituels qu’on a découvert les sources ou même la manifestation de théâtre africain...Pourtant si l’on n’ignore pas la richesse de la théâtralité de la vie traditionnelle africaine, on ne peut affirmer que le théâtre africain est né des rituels, des contes, ou des danses...La public africain est donc familiarise depuis longtemps avec la technique. (1990, p.37)*

(African theater [is]...the theater that combines the art form with orality, emphasizing the aspect of the continuity of history by bringing myths to life...It is especially in rituals that one has discovered the sources or the manifestation of African theater...Yet if one does not ignore the richness of the theatricality of traditional African life, one can only affirm that African theater was born from rituals, from stories, or from dances. The African public has for a long time been familiar with this technique.)

The spectacles that Bantaare presents are derived from established traditions and familiar customs. When the drummers start playing they do not have to tell the audience members that it is ok to get up and dance. I was surprised at every performance to see women follow the same patterns and routines. They knew these rhythms, knew the dances that accompany them, and never questioned whether they could get up on stage. This is the tradition. In *Théâtre Africains*, Valy Sidibe explains the history of griots in some African cultures. Griots were members of West African communities whose profession was the spoken word. In English, we might say ‘storyteller,’ but griots had more responsibility than just telling stories. Using song and poetry

and spoken word, a griot would make announcements, share history, give lessons, council leaders, and celebrate events. Griots were present at ceremonies, such as weddings, and performed there. (1990, p.105) People in West African societies, including Senegal, have a history of sharing and receiving information through speech and music. Bambaare did not create an innovative new way to capture people's attention and give lessons. They have taken their own history and culture and use it to bring social change.

These spectacles are not exactly like traditional performances, however. The addition of forum theater makes it something different. Alima explains that "*le théâtre passe des messages comme la nouvelle génération.*" (2016.) (Theater shares messages as the new generation.) The use of forum theater in combination with traditional music and celebration creates a new kind of performance. The audience comes, dances, and feels comfortable with the familiar opening. The simple and straight-forward language and plot of the play make the lessons relatable and accessible. But the forum aspect is essential for assessing comprehension and making the spectators feel involved with the piece and with the theme.

*Si on fait le théâtre-forum, la publique participe au spectacle. Le théâtre pose des questions directement au public. Sa permet de mieux comprendre le même message. (Niang, 2016.)*

(If you use forum theater, the public participates in the spectacle. Theater asks questions directly to the public. This helps them better understand the message.)

After each performance, when Thié asks the audience what they think and what they would change, he is pulling them in and encouraging them to reflect on what they saw. He does not send them home immediately after the show, but rather keeps the theme alive and holds further discussion. Sometimes audience members come up and act out one of the scenes with an actor. There are no barriers between spectator and performer. Forum theater puts everyone on the same level, so the actors do not seem like they are talking down to the audience. In conferences and

seminars, audience members only sit and listen. With theater, the troupe and the audience work together to reflect and find solutions. This makes people believe that the message is for them, that they can be a part of the change.

*On sait 'le théâtre qu'ils faisant, c'est pour moi!' Quand tu penses qu'il est pour toi, tu vas changer le comportement. On peut influencer les comportements. (Ngom, 2016.)*

(One knows 'This theater they are doing, it is for me! When you think it is for you, you are going to change your behavior. One can influence behavior.)

That is the goal of Bamtaare. That is their purpose. They want to change the beliefs and actions and behaviors of people in their community. To do this, they ask these people to be the ones who find solutions to the issues at hand. "*La réponse, la solution vient de la publique.*" (Ndour, 2016.) (The response, the solution comes from the public.) The audience is included; they cannot simply go home and forget and go back to their normal lives. They have been part of something dynamic. Yes, the spectacles have dancing and singing and comedy, but that is not what brings about change. Change comes from the public, from the spectators themselves. They provide the solutions. Bamtaare does not tell anyone what to do or provide any answers. They empower people to seek their own solutions, which in turn makes people believe they can put these changes into effect.

### Conclusion

I have found that, in Kaolack, theater is in fact an effective method for spreading social justice and encouraging change. I have found that changes really do happen in neighborhoods and villages visited by Bamtaare. These changes are a result of Bamtaare's inventive mix of cultural tradition, comedy, and audience participation and empowerment. Given the cultural history of the performing arts in Senegal and the importance placed on oral tradition, it may be

that messages cannot be conveyed fully without the use of music or dance or theater. Binta Sarr, in explaining why APROFES created a theater troupe, said

*On pense que le développement ne pas se faire sans le théâtre, parce-que le développement c'est la connexion entre tous ce qui est économique est tous ce qui est culturelle... Le théâtre est le porte d'entrée au nouveau communautaire pour pouvoir lancer les messages, amener la population à comprendre ses messages, et faire un changement de comportement et de mentalité. (2016.)*

(We think that development does not happen without theater, because development is the connection between all that is economic and all that is cultural... Theater is the gateway into a new community to be able to launch new messages, help the population understand these messages, and change the behavior and mentality.)

Essentially, what is development without theater? In Senegal, with the formula used by the troupe Bantaare, theater is development.

### Implementation

My personal goal in studying Bantaare was to figure out why their theater works and bring what I learned back to the United States to implement it here. However, after completing four weeks of research with the troupe in Kaolack, I see that this take is not as easy or straightforward as I expected. I studied what works in Kaolack, Senegal, a community with a cultural history that differs greatly from my hometown of Columbus, Ohio, or the city of Lawrence, Kansas, where I go to school. When I asked Fatou for advice on how to use theater for social justice in the United States and how to get audiences as large and enthusiastic as those in Kaolack, she suggested I buy a tam-tam. If I learned how to play the tam-tam and set it up on the street, I do not think people would flock to hear it. Probably no one would start dancing or singing. In the United States, the tam-tam does hold the same value as it does in Senegal. In our society, the tam-tam is not a call for attention. In fact, I am beginning to wonder if theater for social justice in the States could be very effective at all. Senegal is, as Ngor Ndour told me, an oral society. But, as explained by Binta Sarr, “*Aux Etats-Unis, des gens ne sont pas sensibiliser*

*dans une culture comme ça.*” (2016). (In the United States, people are not raised in a culture like this.) Theater in the United States is different. Traditionally it is not a participatory event.

Audience members sit quietly, do not talk during the performance, and certainly do not go onto the stage. The purpose of most American theater is distraction or entertainment. In Senegal, according to Ngor Ndour,

*Le théâtre, ce n'est pas un théâtre comme ailleurs ou le théâtre un peu Parnasse, quoi, c'est l'art pour l'art. Ici l'art a une fonction sociale. Ce n'est pas l'art pour l'art, mais le théâtre a une fonction sociale, une fonction éducative, une fonction de la sensibilisation, une fonction de comportement. (2016)*

(Theater is not like theater elsewhere or the theater Parnassus<sup>8</sup>, which is art for art. Here, art has a social purpose. It is not art for art, but theater has a social role, an educational role, a role in raising awareness, a role in behavior.)

Daniel Ruperez, of ARAPAZ, told me that in the organization’s work in Europe they do not use theater to spread information. They may use television or the radio, but never theater. Americans and Europeans do not connect with live performance in the way Senegalese people do. When I think about ways I have seen organizations try to spread information, I think of posters in the subway or commercials on television or people standing at a booth trying to give away free pens and Frisbees with their organization’s name. I even think of School House Rock. The ways people have discovered in the United States as a means to inspire change or raise awareness are typically not theatrical. We have a much less oral society. The way to reach the American people may not be through a sketch and African drumming. But if that is not the way, what is? I do not want to give up on theater for social justice simply because I think it might not work, or it does not seem to be widely used and accepted.

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<sup>8</sup> Parnassianism was a French movement during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that focused on ‘art for art’s sake.’

Rather than directly taking Bambaare's methods, I can borrow their creation process. That is, use Bambaare's general outline, but not their specific pieces. Babou Ngom gave me the following advice on how to create a performance and get people to come see it:

*Il faut choisir l'heure, il faut choisir l'endroit, il faut essayer de choisir le thème, qu'est que les gens aiment ? Après tous cela, il faut créer l'évènement. Quand le théâtre est produit aujourd'hui, il faut faire comprendre à tout la ville qu'il y a du théâtre. Tu vas voir des gens. Tu peux faire des affiches, mais des gens ne peuvent pas lire des affiches. Tu vas faire du porte-à-porte. Parce-que le thème affect la communauté. Tu es responsable. Il y a un spectacle sur ça, tu intéresses des gens, tu essaie d'informer. Aux Etats-Unis des gens n'ont pas de temps, ils ne connaissent pas le théâtre. Il faut partager l'information, il faut se battre. Il faut que les gens viennent. (2016.)*

(You have to choose the time, you have to choose the place, you have to try to choose the theme, what are the people like? After all this, you have to create the event. When theater is produced today, it is necessary to make the whole city understand that there is theater. You go see people. You can make posters, but people here cannot read the posters. You go door to door. Because the theme affects the community. You are responsible. There is a performance on this, you get people interested, you try to inform them. In the United States, people do not have time, they do not know theater. We have to share the information, we have to fight this. People have to come.)

Following his advice, as well as the formula used by Bambaare, I can put on a performance that would interest people in the States, but it will look very different from Bambaare's performances. For example, maybe I want to create a performance that raises awareness about date rape at the University of Kansas. I have chosen the theme, now I have to choose the time and place. I would not bring my performance to a street corner in the middle of town, or outside the house of the *chef du village*<sup>99</sup>, an equivalent of which may be the major of Lawrence, or the Chancellor of the university. This works for Bambaare, but at KU I would mount this performance in the parking lot of Daisy Hill, a big collection of dorms on campus and home to thousands of students. A weekend night would not be an ideal time, since a lot of people go out and will not be home.

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<sup>99</sup> In Senegal, each village has a *chef du village*, or village chief, who acts as the primary leader of the region. He makes most decisions and gives advice. Before performing in a village, it is necessary to the *chef du village* for permission.

Weekday afternoons would not work, since that is are when most classes are. So maybe I would plan for a Saturday early evening, before people went out, or for a weeknight. In creating the event, I would gather my team and, like Bantaare, we would bounce ideas around until we found a plot and characters and scenes that got our message across. We have to include information defining date rape, talking about it in a way that does not stigmatize survivors<sup>10</sup> or make it seem like being raped is anyone's fault. The scenes should discuss ways to stay safe and assess one's surroundings. We can include scenes giving examples on what to do in different situations, as well as what to do after different scenarios occur. We can talk about campus and community resources available to survivors who have experienced date rape or sexual assault. Once the sketch is ready, we have to get people to come. Babou suggested posters. We can hang them around campus, in dorms or classrooms or dining halls. But that will not be enough. What are some effective ways to tell people about our performance and get them interested? Posts on social media, like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter would reach a lot of people. Setting up a table on the main road on campus and passing out flyers, along with candy or cookies would spread the message. Even taking Babou's advice and going door to door in the dorms and talking to residents could work. But once people know, will they actually come? I could try to *tape le tam-tam*, like Fatou suggested, but that is not as culturally effective in Lawrence, Kansas. Maybe we decide to set up huge speakers in the parking lot and hire a local DJ to play for an hour before our play. I could ask campus clubs, like the hip hop dance group and the A Capella choir to perform. Maybe I can even set up food and games and give away T-shirts. My spectacle will not look like the ones in Kaolack, but I need to find a way to draw a crowd that works for my intended audience. The sketch will follow, hopefully using comedy, just as Bantaare does, to

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<sup>10</sup> 'Survivor' in this case refers to someone who has been the victim of rape, sexual assault, or sexual harassment.

hold the audience's attention and make the theme less taboo and scary. Then, to finish it off, we present the forum section. I do not know how people in the United States would respond to this tactic. American audiences are not used to participating in theater. But if I manage to create an environment unlike traditional theater, a more comfortable, casual atmosphere, perhaps audience members would be willing to come forward and share their ideas. With an open dialogue and the sharing of opinions, the students can express their thoughts, understand the theme, and find solutions to use in case they are ever in such a situation.

This is all hypothetical. I do not know whether this would work, or if it is any more effective than how theater is currently being used for social justice in the United States. But if I am going to continue to work in theater, this is what I want to do. In the words of Fatou, "*Si tu n'as pas de la justice sociale, tu n'as pas rien. On doit participer à la justice sociale.*" (2016.) (If you do not have social justice, you have nothing. One must participate in social justice.)

#### Recommendations for Further Study

My research focused on how and why Bamtaare and their social justice theater was an effective means for creating social change and spreading important information. My interest in this topic came from my desire to work with social justice theater in the United States and the lack of resources I found. I recommend a study of theater for social change in the United States, or a comparative study of Bamtaare's work with a specific social justice theater in America. It would also be interesting to study how social justice theater is used in other countries or continents and compare how culture affects the performances and effectiveness. As I was preparing to return to Dakar and analyze my research, I read the final Independent Study Project report written by Francesca Bochner, who studied Bamtaare in 2008. She recommended that someone speak with

audience members, which I was able to do. I hope that my research helps another student delve even deeper into this subject.

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## Appendix

*Figure 1: Tam-tam drumming*



*Figure 2: Activity Log*

Date	Activity Description	Start time	End Time	Number of hours
11/6/2016	Writing interview questions	1pm	2pm	1
11/7/2016	Meeting with Thié nouma Diop	9am	10am	1
	Interview with Thié nouma Diop	10am	11am	1
	Transcribing interview	11am	12pm	1
	Rehearsal with Bamtaare	5pm	7pm	2
11/8/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	11am	2

	Interview with Ngom Ndour	3:30pm	4:30pm	1
	Bamtaare rehearsal	5pm	7pm	2
11/9/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	9:30am	0.5
	Reading <i>Document de Capitalisation</i>	1pm	2:30pm	1.5
	Bamtaare rehearsal	5pm	7pm	2
11/10/2016	Event at APROFES	4pm	6pm	2
11/11/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	9:30am	0.5
	Reading <i>Document de Capitalisation</i>	10am	11:30am	1.5
	Rehearsal with Indian dance troupe	6:30pm	8pm	1.5
11/12/2016	Reading <i>Théâtre Africain</i>	4:30pm	7pm	2.5
11/13/2016	Transcribing interview with Ngom Ndour	11am	1pm	2
11/14/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	9:30am	0.5
	Conference in Niolo on <i>Bourses Familiales</i>	12pm	2:30pm	2.5
	Interviewing members of Bamtaare	5pm	7pm	2
11/15/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Conference at APROFES on domestic violence	11am	3pm	4
	Bamtaare rehearsal	5pm	7pm	2
11/16/2016	Interview with Ndaye Ngoor Niang at the <i>Centre Culturel</i>	10:30am	11:30am	1
	Rehearsal with Indian dance troupe	7pm	8:30pm	1.5
11/17/2016	Interview with Daniel Ruperez of ARAPAZ	10am	11:30am	1.5
	Reading UNESCO document	12pm	1pm	1

11/18/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Writing interview questions and translating	10am	11am	1
	Interview with Mariame Kann	1pm	2pm	1
11/21/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Rehearsal at Agroprov	11am	1pm	2
	Bamtaare rehearsal	5pm	7pm	2
11/22/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Checking Bamtaare equipment	10am	10:30am	0.5
	Rehearsal at Agroprov	11am	1pm	2
	Bamtaare performance in Boustane	3pm	8pm	5
11/23/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Reading APROFES document	10am	11am	1
	Agroprov rehearsal	11am	2pm	3
	Reading <i>Theatre Africain</i>	5:30pm	7pm	1.5
11/24/2016	Reading old ISPs	10am	11am	1
	Online research and compiling information	11am	1pm	2
	Reading <i>Théâtre Africain</i>	3pm	5pm	2
	Translating documents	7pm	8pm	1
11/25/2016	APROFES Formation at <i>Hôtel Relais</i>	8am	1pm	5
	Reading APROFES documents	3pm	5pm	2
	Dance performance	9:30pm	12am	2.5
11/26/2016	Formation at Agroprov with Bamtaare	9am	5pm	8
11/28/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Reading notes and organizing	10am	12pm	2

	Performance in Gagnick	4pm	8pm	4
11/29/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Reading UNESCO document	11am	12pm	1
	Interview with Binta Sarr	7pm	8pm	1
11/30/2016	Meeting with Thié	9am	10am	1
	Performance in Keur Gamou	4pm	8pm	4
12/1/2016	Writing ISP	4pm	7pm	3
12/2/2016	Writing ISP	10am	6pm	8
12/3/2016	Writing ISP	10am	5pm	7
12/4/2015	Writing ISP	10am	5pm	7
12/5/2016	Writing ISP	8am	2pm	7
<b>Field Hours:</b>				<b>77</b>
<b>Total Hours</b>				<b>135.5</b>