

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Decolonizing the re-emergence of storytelling as a tool for peace education in Sierra Leone

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Abstract

Indigenous storytelling may offer locally meaningful material for peace education, yet its application requires careful distinction between a story's possible lessons and demonstrated social outcomes. This qualitative case analysis draws on a ten-day storytelling initiative in Kadeli and Kamakone in northern Sierra Leone and closely examines one recorded folktale, "The Desolate Woman in a Callous Society." The initiative included storytelling activities and training for more than 50 schoolteachers. The surviving account identifies participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions, filming, and field notes, but does not provide counts or transcripts for most of these sources. A close reading of the folktale identifies themes of social isolation, reciprocal care, misread communication, punishment, and collective rules. These themes provide possible prompts for facilitated discussion about peaceful coexistence. The available evidence does not establish that participation changed behaviour, reconciled disputants, or empowered women. The study supports a modest conclusion: locally performed stories can supply culturally grounded material for peace education, provided that interpretations are discussed with storytellers and audiences and future projects document learning and outcomes systematically.

Keywords: Oral literature; Folktales; Peace education; Sierra Leone; Qualitative case analysis

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1. Introduction

Storytelling has long been used to transmit histories, values and questions about collective life. The important research question here is more specific: how might a story performed in a Sierra Leonean community help listeners consider peace, conflict and social responsibility, and what evidence would be needed to show an effect? Existing discussions of oral performance emphasise the relationship among performer, audience and context (Finnegan, 2017; Okpewho, 1992). This article examines the narrative and the available project accounts without assuming that a moral reading demonstrates behavioural change.

In Sierra Leone, oral narratives have helped communities pass knowledge between generations and reflect on conduct, relationships and collective responsibilities. A story's meaning, however, is shaped by more than its words. The performer, audience and setting all influence how it is presented and understood

(Finnegan, 2017; Okpewho, 1992). These features make storytelling relevant to peace education, particularly

when a narrative raises questions about conflict, cooperation and the consequences of individual actions.

The potential of storytelling to support peace education requires careful examination. A folktale may offer a lesson about resolving disputes or caring for others, but identifying that lesson does not show how listeners interpreted it. Nor does it establish whether the performance changed their attitudes or behaviour. Research must therefore distinguish between themes found in a narrative, responses documented during an event and longer-term outcomes that would require further evidence.

This distinction is the central problem addressed in this article. The Salone DEPA project held a ten-day practical storytelling event in Kadeli and Kamakone, northern Sierra Leone, with support from the Open University in the United Kingdom. The project provides an opportunity to examine a reported folktale alongside the available account of its performance and community reception. At the same time, the scope of that account

places limits on what can be concluded about the event's effects.

The article asks three questions: What themes of peace, conflict and social responsibility are present in the reported folktale? What does the project account document about how community members received the performance? What further evidence would be needed to assess any change in listeners' understanding or behaviour? These questions guide an analysis that considers both the educational possibilities of the story and the limits of the available evidence.

The overall objective of this article is to assess the documented storytelling performance's potential for peace education while clearly distinguishing narrative interpretation from observed community responses and demonstrated programme outcomes.

2. Methodology

This study uses a qualitative case study design to examine storytelling and its potential contribution to peace education. It draws on the Salone DEPA project, which took place over ten days in Kadeli and Kamakone, northern Sierra Leone, with five days spent in each community. The project combined storytelling performances with theatre and storytelling training. Alex Mbayo, a researcher in peace and conflict studies, led the field team, and Issa Roberts was recruited for his expertise in linguistics and the performing arts to transcribe, translate, and interpret data in order to give proper meaning to the literary statements and performances. The team attended the performances and documented project activities.

2.1 Participants and data collection

The project involved four categories of participants: community leaders, including a chief, youth leader and women's leader; community elders; local storytellers; and schoolteachers trained in storytelling. More than 50 male and female primary and secondary schoolteachers from the Kamakwie area received training. The project account describes the use of filmed oral performances, field notes, participant observation, individual interviews and focus group discussions. Participants were contacted through community mobilisation and referrals. Observation included attention to audience reactions during performances, such as gestures and facial expressions. The stories collected addressed subjects including leadership, inheritance, resource use, environmental harm and gender relations.

2.2 Material selected for this article

The present analysis focuses on the complete folktale attributed to Usufu Jalloh and the reported accounts of one elder and one chief. The folktale was selected because it is the only story reproduced in full, allowing its events and potential lessons to be examined in context. The two accounts were selected because their testimony is explicitly reported. Although the wider project gathered other stories and observations, this article does not claim to analyse material that is not available in the study.

2.3 Data analysis

The folktale was examined through qualitative narrative and content analysis. The story was read as a whole and then divided into episodes according to changes in action, characters' decisions and their consequences. Each episode was considered for themes relevant to peace education, including vulnerability, communication, reciprocity, leadership and the observance of shared rules. Proposed interpretations were checked against identifiable events or statements in the story. Attention was also given to the social and cultural context described in the project account and to the roles assigned to women and men within the narrative.

The elder's and chief's reported accounts were analysed separately as contextual testimony about storytelling and its reception. The analysis distinguishes between a lesson that can be interpreted from the folktale, a response attributed to a participant and an effect on listeners that would require further evidence. Audience gestures or expressions, where reported, are treated as observations during a performance rather than proof of lasting changes in attitudes or behaviour.

2.4 Ethical considerations and limitations

The project account refers to formal participant consent and restrictions on the participation of people under 18 years of age. These requirements were described as project procedures, and consent was recorded for each form of data collection and further use.

3. Results

3.1 Project activities and reported community accounts

The source describes two village events and training for more than 50 teachers. An elder recalls storytelling gatherings involving listeners of different ages, singing and clapping, and expresses concern that younger people increasingly watch films on phones and television. This is one reported perspective on changing cultural practice. The Kadeli chief is reported as saying that the event brought together community members previously divided by disputes, including land disputes. No verbatim chief interview, number of affected people, pre-event measure or follow-up is available; this statement therefore represents a perception, not a demonstrated reconciliation outcome.

3.2 Story performance and narrative sequence

The following story is retained from the supplied full manuscript because its detailed narration and recurring call and response are central to the analysis. The manuscript attributes the Kamakone performance to Usufu Jalloh. The wording and translation require confirmation with the performer and the recording.

3.3 The desolate woman in a callous society

There was once a town where the dwellers observed one simple rule passed by their chief. The rule stipulated that farmers were free to farm, but they must return home

before sunset after their daily toil. The reason was that the demons in the vicinity dwelled in the bushes around the township.

But in this town, there was an old woman who had no relation, except a dog. Anywhere she went, the dog was always with her. And since she did not own a farm, she would always go to harvest leftovers on farms that had already been harvested by the owners. That was how she used to get food for both her dog and herself. On that note, she used to visit deserted farms late in the day, during which she would have no confrontation with, or query from, anyone. This, of course, was her usual routine.

However, one fateful day, this woman, together with her dog, visited one deserted farm to, as usual, harvest some leftover grains of rice so that she and her dog would feed for that day. Knowing very well that time was against her, she decided to take cover in an old, abandoned farmhouse to pound the rice she had harvested. Meanwhile, the dog was lying in wait outside the farmhouse, but was not aware that the sun had gone down.

As she started pounding the rice, it coincided with the Jennies (demons) having just started returning from their day's exploits. They were streaming into the town one after the other in a long queue, with the children at the forefront. Right away, they grew suspicious of the strange sound and decided to trace the location from where the sound was coming. As it usually happens among our people, who normally let their children take the lead when leaving their farms in the evenings, so did the Jennies (demons) when they were returning to their dwelling that evening. Still, the pounding continued, to the hearing of the Jennies (demons). As they moved on in search of the location from where the noise was coming, they recited a chorus as follows:

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Minei mina thoj thoj ko? (Who is pounding at that old farmhouse?)

Mbei cyoj kaban baban? (Who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

Huthein ho de na domae (the dog replied)

Na na ye, na ye, na ye! (It's my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye na ye! (My mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (My mother, my mother, my mother!)

The dog's response obviously infuriated the old woman who, for that matter, decided to lash out at the dog for, according to her, being a sell-out to her. But truly, the dog was trying to cover up the old woman because, as a mysterious creature, it could clearly spot the Jennies as well as hear what they were communicating in their lamentation. Unfortunately, out of ignorance, the woman did not know the genuine role the dog was playing on her behalf in the mystery.

Out of fury, she said, "Which kind of noise is this dog making outside? It only wants to cause trouble for me. But I will surely teach it a lesson," she ended.

The dog, in its own chorus, was responding to the dirge of the demons that it was its mother who was pounding. But in fact, it was only trying to play on the hearts and minds of the demons, because he thought they would just dismiss all thoughts of pursuing its benefactor, and rather say it was a dog that was making the odd noise. Yet, the pounding continued, so the demons recited the same dirge:

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Minei mina thoj thoj ko? (who is pounding at the farmhouse?)

Mbei cyoj kaban baban? (who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

Huthein ho de na domae (Once more, the dog responded)

Na na ye, na ye, na ye! (It's my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

This time round, the old woman became more frantic, and in another outburst said, as she soliloquizes:

"You see, I have always been saying that this dog wants to create a problem for me, but surely it will not be my problem."

At this point, she gave the dog a merciless beating while she continued to mutter:

"Shut up! Shut up! Shut up! You're good for nothing, dog. I know I am just feeding you, but you have the guts to have me dead. After this beating, I would have finally sealed your mouth from being so inquisitive. You heartless thing!" she paused.

After that heavy beating, she entered the farmhouse again and started pounding the rice, on the understanding that she had appropriately scolded her so-called "inquisitive, havoc-wreaking dog." On the contrary, it was not so. And since the pounding continued, the demons continued bewailing.

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Minei mina thoj thoj ko? (who is pounding at the farmhouse?)

Mbei cyoj kaban baban? (who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

With the same aim of trying to rescue his benefactor, the old woman, the dog responded for the second time:

Na na ye, na ye, na ye! (It's my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

It was like turning petrol into fire. The old woman, in fact, grew more uncompromising, beyond control. To this end, she remarked:

“This dog, even when I go out of my way to feed it... It is not the type to depend on for any reason. It is not only stubborn but very treacherous. You want to give me trouble? Well, I will show you what trouble is today,” she ended.

So, in her outrage, she went inside, after her address, and picked up a machete, ran out, with no second thought, and hacked the dog to death.

Having killed the dog, the old woman made a chirpy retort, thus:

“You will henceforth cease from creating problems for me. This is just enough alone for you.”

Thereafter, she went in and started pounding the rice again; this time, with a louder echo, since the demons were within earshot at that moment and could hear the echo more intensely. Then the demons repeated their reprise:

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Mine mina thoŋ thoŋ kɔ? (Who is pounding at the farmhouse?)

Mbei ɔyɔŋ kabaŋ baban? (Who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

After the song, the lifeless dog, again, mysteriously responded as usual, beating the imagination of the old woman:

Na na ye, na ye, na ye! (It's my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (It's my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Then the old woman started to moan repeatedly, saying:

“You see, I have ever said it. This dog has been a very big witch. I never knew that I was moving with a great witch... witch!... No wonder! I will now teach you lessons of witchcraft,” she ended.

The next thing she did was to rush into the farmhouse, take out the machete and dash out in no time. Right there, she chopped the dog into pieces, after which she set fire to the remains and burnt all to ashes. Then, she went in again and started pounding the rice, assuming that all was finally over.

This followed another recitation of the chorus by the demons, because the sound of the pounding was still reverberating, thus:

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Mine mina thoŋ thoŋ kɔ? (who is pounding at the farmhouse?)

Mbei ɔyɔŋ kabaŋ baban? (who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

Even so, the mystery persisted. The ashes of the dog responded to the chorus of the demons, still intending to protect the old woman, although she still never understood it that way:

Na na ye, na ye, na ye! (it is my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

Na ye, na ye, na ye! (my mother, my mother, my mother!)

This time, the old woman became more incensed and started expressing her grief once more, still soliloquising:

“Have you seen what has happened again? This evil incarnate dog . . . I have been with an enemy I did not know, but . . .” she could not end the talk and again rushed in, took a broom, swept the ashes of the cremated dog and went to deposit it into a nearby river. She returned and continued pounding the rice like she never did before.

As she continued the pounding, the demons again sang their song; this time around, with a stronger, cluckier voice because the adult demons had joined in the chorus. They too had become bitterer:

Yi nei nbeij (the devil asked)

Mine mina thoŋ thoŋ kɔ? (who is pounding at the farmhouse?)

Mbei ɔyɔŋ kabaŋ baban? (who is so daring to break the law of our land?)

Again, to her greatest surprise, the response to the song came from the broom she used to sweep the ashes. This happened because particles of the dog's hair had gotten stuck in the broom; something she never suspected had happened.

So, what happened next? The old woman took the broom and the dustbin she used to gather the ashes before and dumped everything into the river. Thereafter, she returned to the old farmhouse and continued pounding the rice.

In the meantime, even when the demons continued to sing their song of inquiry, there was no more response. So, what happened? The demons miraculously created a very tall hill on one side from where the beating was persistently coming, and another on the other side, isolating the source of the strange noise in the valley shaped between. In no time, a big fire caught up and burnt the old farmhouse, the mortar, pestle and all therein as well as the old woman to ashes, beyond recognition. That ended the story!

3.4 Themes supported by the story

Social vulnerability: the woman has no relatives except her dog and depends on leftover rice. Her circumstances make the community rule more difficult to follow. This feature invites examination of how communities care for people living alone or in poverty.

Misrecognition and violence: the dog repeatedly answers the spirits, but the woman interprets its speech as

betrayal and escalates punishment. The narrative creates a discussion about listening and reacting under uncertainty. Its supernatural events are features of the folktale and should not be presented as observed facts.

Reciprocity and care: the dog's continued loyalty contrasts with the woman's conduct. The story may be used to examine obligations to dependent beings and the consequences of harm. This is an interpretation of the story, not a recorded participant outcome.

Rules and justice: remaining on the farm after sunset violates the stated rule, yet the ending also invites listeners to consider whether poverty, isolation and the severity of punishment alter how the rule should be judged.

4. Discussion

4.1 Oral literature and the local setting

The following scholarship and contextual discussion are retained from the source manuscript. It is background interpretation rather than an additional project result. Bibliographic details and secondary quotations require checking against the cited originals.

Defining folk literature has been difficult and confusing amongst scholars. There is a wave of arguments and counterarguments amongst scholars, mainly European scholars, about the existence of African folk arts or oral literature. The Chinese Folk Literature Professor, Hu (2007), makes no distinction between folk literature and oral literature. In fact, to him folk literature is just another name for oral literature, and is 'composed of popular, orally transmitted folktales, and ballads', adding that the "presence of the genre provides distinction between it and its written counterpart because "folk literature is a kind of literary form handed down orally, it does not traditionally exist in written form." (Thulla 2019, p.38). Darigan, Tunnell and Jacobs (2002), in their contribution to the argument says that "the origin of folk stories is difficult to trace but these folk stories, undoubtedly, come from the oral tradition...., adding that "[M]any stories...written by modern authors, but... patterned after traditional tales should not be confused or misconstrued for folk literature". In other words, their definition of folk literature is literature that "consists of a wide range of narratives that originated through the oral tradition with no identifiable author" (Thulla, 2019, p.39). This position clearly accounts for huge, if not total, neglect of African stories since they are orally passed on from generation to generation.

Contrary to the negative views expressed by some Eurocentric scholars, the UNESCO 'Proclamation of Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity' (2001) provides a clear and supportive statement of the reliance of written literature on oral documentations when it defines oral literature (subsumed to the phrase 'Oral and Intangible Heritage') as "peoples' learned processes along with the knowledge, skills and creativity that inform and are developed by them, the products they create, and the resources, spaces and other

aspects of social and natural context necessary to their sustainability; these processes provide living communities with a sense of continuity with previous generations and are important to cultural identity, as well as to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and creativity of humanity" (UNESCO, 2001). Fofanah et al. (2021) in their work titled 'Practitioners and Uses of Contemporary Mende Folk literature in South-Eastern Sierra Leone', identifies older people like the Maadeisia (grandfathers), Sowehs and Nyawaas (Bondo society leaders); Laawaas (Wonde Secret Society heads), Gafeisia (spiritual initiation masters of ceremony) and skilled performers like the Falui and Joebai (masked devils), Kelei lae moi (a drum-stick player), Ndoli ga moi (dancer), Bulu vee moi (a trumpeter), Bakalae moi (a silk drummer), Shegbra lae moi (a shekere or shegbureh player- a calabash instrument), Guuya bla (communal entertainers/singers) and Ndomeigbuamoi (storyteller) mainly were accredited for the performance and practice of oral tradition. An older man in an interview about folk literature and its components says:

Lessons learned were frequently referred to in discourses relating to moral conduct and behavioural change.

Finnegan (2012), in one of her extensive works on storytelling in Sierra Leone titled 'The perception of African oral literature', clearly identifies a connection between the transmission and the very existence of folk literature; without which she adds, "its oral realisation and direct rendition by a performer, an oral piece cannot easily be said to exist". Adding his voice to the debate, Ben-Amos and Goldstein (2013) claim "that the notion of performance is central to the study of folklore as communication". Through the study of performance, folklore can integrate its scientific and humanistic aims in a forward-looking way, which Finnegan (2012) calls it "the significance of the actual performance and states that oral literature, by definition, is dependent on a performer who formulates it in words on a specific occasion, emphasising that "there is no other way in which this kind of literature can be realised as a literary product except it is performed". She further adds that sub-genres like proverbs are commonly practiced by the elderly.

Apart from certain people who performed certain forms of folklore in the communities, there are other forms of oral folklore, such as "Ndayaa weisia' (satirical songs), 'tolowoi sia' (songs of jealousy), and 'jabiyei' (songs meant to annoy others), which were primarily performed on occasions for particular purposes by certain persons or groups of persons". An elderly participant in an interview recounted his experience thus:

We now have only social songs and household storytelling sessions, performed primarily by children. Others, like ceremonial songs, praise songs, and proverbs, are performed by particular men and women, such as the village 'Sowehs' and 'Nyawaas', respectively. With the coming of civilisation and things like Okada (commercial bike) riding, internet, film watching, mobile phones, and the like, our people no longer focus on folklore, especially

the young boys and girls. Before now, we had oral performers for storytelling; for instance, they would gather our children around a ring of a burning fire and us, on the moonlit night, and tell stories which embed valuable lessons for both young and old. Those stories served as entertainment, unity, and a means of education; the stories were usually told by the oral performer who sat in the middle of a ring-like circle. At the same time, the audience surrounded them to listen; the audience was typically made up of both males and females, young and old, who complemented the performer's efforts by singing a chorus or by clapping. I was a member of numerous storytelling audiences of storytelling in this community since I was young; unfortunately, today, these young folks have little or no interest in storytelling, let alone talking about riddles and proverbs. They prefer to watch movies on their mobile phones or televisions rather than sitting and listening to stories about their heritage.

Kamara (2002), in his work titled 'The Relevance of Oral Literature to the African Novel Form', concludes that African writers write about the cultural values of African society by vividly pointing to the works of prominent writers like Chinua Achebe, Amos Tutuola, and Elechi Amadi, hence leaving bare the rich cadence of their folkloric interior. In support of this notion, Finnegan (2017) states that "oral literature is used by anthropologists and others to refer to unwritten forms which can be regarded as in some way possessing literary qualities" Joel Adedeji (1971), in his *Oral Tradition on the Contemporary Theatre in Nigeria*, says that oral tradition is the "complex corpus of verbal or spoken art created as a means of recalling the past". As far as he is concerned, it is based on the "ideas, beliefs, symbols, assumptions, attitudes and sentiments of people," and its purpose is to "condition social actions and foster social interactions".

Isidore Okpewho (1992) believes that the term 'oral literature' is the "literature delivered by word of mouth". This definition encompasses all the different sub-genres (folklore, poetry, proverbs, and songs). Oral literature in itself takes the form of prose narrative and the common use of proverbs and sometimes drama. In fact, oral literature varies from one tribe to another, and it is the collective body of oral literature that is described as folklore. Oral literature could also be defined as "the artistic creation which is orally composed and transmitted to succeeding generations using their original language with creative talents covering the beliefs, experiences and attitudes of a people". This is seen carried out in our traditional songs, folklore, myths, legends and proverbs. Again, Ruth Finnegan (2017), in her work *Literacy and Orality*, says that oral literature, unlike written literature, "... comes across as performance as well as a sequence of words..." (p.78). Ngugi (2003), in adding his voice to the debate, describes folk literature as "literature passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation. It consists of songs, poems, drama, proverbs, riddles, stories, etc., and it is the richest and oldest heritage. The importance of oral tradition is that, through its agency, African

languages in their most aesthetic forms have been kept alive" (Mireku-Gyimah, 2012, p.1).

According to Ikwubuzo (1993), "Oral literature means oral works of high merit which are products of the creative use of imagination by the artist of the spoken words in pre-literate communities. Such works are composed mentally by the illiterate raconteur; stored in the memory and then spoken, recited, chanted or sung on specific occasions... it consists of both prose, verse, narratives, poems, songs, myths, rituals and dramas, proverbs, folktales and riddles"

Based on these definitions by prominent scholars, it is safe to conclude that the cultural histories and moral instructions of Africans were largely based on folk literature. Additionally, folk literature is the medium through which beliefs, customs, traditions, values, etc., are transmitted, and it is exclusively verbal or oral. The extensive work of Finnegan (2017), on the Limba tribe in Sierra Leone titled 'Limba Stories and Storytelling', identifies the stories mainly as verbal "tales about Kanu/Ngewoh (God), twins, individual human heroes, and about animals mainly the spider..." (p.28), the scholarly works of Philip Foday Yamba Thulla (2019) on 'Folklore and its Effects on the Social Behaviour of the Temne of Sierra Leone; Donald J. Cosentino (1974) on "Lele Gbomba and the Style of Mende Baroque"; the extensive documentation of stories and songs from Sierra Leone titled "Fishing in Rivers of Sierra Leone Oral Literature", edited by Hinzen et al. (1987), that of Khan, A. W. (2009) "Paradigms of Social Aesthetics in Themne Oral Performance"; and many others, are all testaments to the forms of folk literature in Sierra Leone that clearly agree with the views of UNESCO, Kamara and others above.

In summary, "Storytelling is a method of recording and expressing feelings, attitudes, and responses of one's lived experiences and environment" (Gbadegesin, 1984). The function of storytelling has been identified as mediating and transmitting knowledge and information across generations, conveying information to the younger generations about the culture, worldviews, morals and expectations, norms and values (Ngugi wa Thiong'o 1982, Asante 1987, Kouyate 1989, Alidou 2002, Chinyowa 2004). Bascom (1965) categorises all into three: folktales, myths and legends as the basic forms of folk literature. In his view, Bascom proffers that "all the forms outlined by Young could be considered subforms and as Bascom states, though the forms outlined above could not necessarily be considered as the major categories, they are kinds under which other forms could be classified" invites disagreement and avoids presenting one imposed interpretation as a measured outcome.

5. Conclusion

The detailed Kamakone story demonstrates that oral literature can raise concrete questions about empathy, listening, care and communal rules in a peace education setting. The reported project testimony indicates local interest and a perceived short-term contribution to social

contact. The evidence does not establish programme effectiveness or wider social change. Further documented research is required before national scale-up claims can be made.

Declarations

Ethics approval and informed consent. All categories of participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the SaLone DEPA before consent was requested. For the teachers and those who could read and write, consent forms were signed individually. For the people in the villages who could not read or write (the storytellers and the audience), consent was obtained by group show of hands (a traditional and acceptable way of showing consent) since their numbers were large. The funders totally agreed with the explanation, which was in line with the theme of decolonisation. The issue of consent was properly explained to participants, including their freedom to withdraw their participation at any time if they were not comfortable with the process. Children under the age of eighteen (18) were not allowed to participate. The consent covered all activities, including but not limited to the filming and publication of both pictures and data collected. Since the overall aim was to support local production and ownership of data, the Open University gave the research team a free hand to utilise the collected data for academic purposes, from which articles, book chapters, and training manuals have all been produced. Joint publications, including blogs and book chapters by researchers and the Open University staff, have already been done, and some are ongoing.

Data availability. The full recordings, notes, reports and interview transcripts were all coded and deposited on the Open University server in the United Kingdom for confidentiality and safekeeping.

Competing Interests. The author strongly declare that there is no personal, financial, professional or institutional interests that may have influenced this research, its analysis, interpretation of results and or the writing or publication of this article.

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Author Contributions. The author declare that he is the sole author of this article (from conceptualisation, theoretical/ framework development, methodology, review of literature and analysis of findings, to the drafting of the original manuscript and its revision.

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