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RADIO EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING PROJECT
NEPAL

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End of Tour Report

for

Julia M. Ledee

For the period of October 1, 1979 to June 15, 1981

Prepared by
Julia M. Ledee
June, 1981

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Radio Education Teacher Training Project

Nepal

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Julia M. Ledee
Scriptwriting and Radio
Production Adviser

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I. Major Responsibilities

1. The first major responsibility of this Adviser was to create, through workshops and discussion sessions a cohesive group of writers; informed, aware and in agreement as to the needs and priorities of the Project's development program. This plan started off initially with an eight week's workshop in script-writing and radio production. As much practical studio experience as possible was sought.
2. Assisted the other team members in conducting a program of formative evaluation of the written materials and unit recordings by field testing.
3. Designed the one hour radio program format to include a general interest segment determined as a "Magazine Program". A sample format is herein attached as Appendix A.
4. Produced for the writers individual program styles in keeping with each subject area.
5. Worked closely with local musicians on the creation of original music themes for the various subject area as well as the one hour broadcast.
6. Worked closely with the curriculum and written materials adviser in coordinating the team work to achieve as effective correlation of materials as possible.
7. Designed an audience involving format for the magazine section of the radio program. It included: "Teachers' question box" (listeners were encouraged to send in questions about teaching experiences), "The Health Advisor" (dealt with community health problems), "Let's Hear It From You" (songs, poems,

stories etc. recorded by the teachers at the contact sessions), "The Information Corner" (interesting bits of information relevant to the listeners' ambience), "Stories by Candlelight" (Nepali legends and folk-tales). "Quiz Yourself" (a teacher's mind tickler).

These "items" were written and produced by this advisor and the one assigned producer because no general writers were staffed, and by hook or by crook programs had to go on the air. See Appendix A.

6. Outfitting the Studio:

This not only involved the ordering of necessary equipment and supplies such as sound records and phonograph, editing machine and tapes, a multi-directional microphone, tape and cassette erasers, etc. it also required the training of staff to use it properly and maintain it.

Special instructions and procedures were prepared on the subject which should also prove helpful in managing the new studio. See Appendices C&D.

III Major Activities

1. Staff Development

a. Scriptwriters: After the initial eight weeks' workshops, for the 5 assigned scriptwriters, on-the-job training continued to be a major activity. Regular meetings were held individually to discuss each script as it was written and translated for ease of communication. Staff development was hampered first by the deputation of a limited staff of five, of which only two had the required subject area background; one was replaced later and another was shifted to the self instructional writing team; the last continues trying. Three new persons were deputed just recently (about 4 months ago) to write for Art, Rural Development and the Magazine Program -- The Art person is an industrial arts teacher; the Rural Development man's background is in agriculture; the general writer has been a primary school supervisor - no writing skill. Since their arrival this advisor has been devoting over half time daily to their training. Some of their units have been pretested.

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- b. Radio Producers: The project started out with one full time producer trainee. His long time broadcasting experience as announcer - narrator proved invaluable. With on the job training he was soon able to follow a pre-set format and produce the hour long programs.

Two other "producers" from the HMG recording studio were finally assigned in late October, 1980 after continuous requests. However, the assignments were only on a part time basis, and only one has any production skills. The other person, though trained in Malaysia limits herself to on-microphone work. To meet the need of an additional full time producer to handle the recording of the instructional units a scriptwriter who had shown aptitude was promoted to producer and another writer brought in to fill his place. Intensive on-the-job training has been accorded this new producer. See appendix A.

- c. Radio Technicians:

Sanotnimi Studio : Although the training of technicians (controlmen) was not part of the responsibilities, it nonetheless became a major activity. The technicians at the studio, though trained out-of-country, had been working in an unvarying pattern of lecture recording. The units and programs prepared by our staff writers included sounds, fades, cut-ins, edit-ins, drama scenes, etc. The technicians had to learn the techniques all over again.

Family Planning Studio: Because the project was accorded a limited time use of the HMG studio at Sanotnimi, permission to use the FPS was sought. The drawback was that the studio, closed up for one year, did not have a technician. The project then undertook the training of the man assigned.

- d. Children's Group : This was started recently to meet the need of "demonstration classes" used in the methods units. This advisor made arrangements with the SOS school director to use a group of their primary grades children, a classroom and

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occasionally one of their teachers. This arrangement, however, was changed by the project coordinator who preferred to borrow children from a friend's middle school and record instead in the studio. This of course killed the realism the writers were striving to portray.

Development of Scripts

- a. Instructional Units: This has been an on-going full time activity endeavoring to stimulate the group's creativity and interest. Accordingly, scripts were evolved from the simple one-voice lecture style with transitional music pauses to dialogues with scene setting sound effects and dramatisations. In later scripts which dealt with teaching methodology, classroom situations were written into the scripts to demonstrate the "how" and "when" seeking for as much realism as possible, the scenes were, at first, recorded in actual classrooms with real children.

Importance has been placed on using simple conversational language, short sentences with logical and natural phrasing; the use of picture words and avoidance of technical terms; use of examples that relate to the teachers' experiences and above writing a one to one dialogue between the writer and the listener. The message must be understood the first time; facts and concepts must be limited to not more than 3-4 in each unit and these then well developed. Early on in the period, orientation was given on different program styles to hold the listeners interest. Writers were advised to write active rather than passive programs requiring a listener's participation, even if only to look at a book page. Acting on this advice, the Math units have successfully presented number tricks and gains. The teachers report on this has been encouraging. Advice was also given on critical points to be covered in the methods units. Writers have been encouraged to include live class demonstrations of exercises and a teacher testing for criterion levels of performance.

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At all time, writers have also been encouraged to work closely with their team counterpart so that the SL and the script agree on the issues.

To be of greater help to the teachers, the suggestion has been given that a unit's closing include:

- a good summary
- preview of next unit in the series and what to prepare for it.
- suggestion (if necessary) to follow up by working in SL.

One difficulty encountered by the scriptwriters has been in the proper time duration of their units. To help solve this problem a one minute sample recording was done by each writer at a controlled pacing for radio. The following suggestions were then made:

MEASURING YOUR SCRIPT

To get an idea of the length of your script:

- A. Count the number of words on one page.
- B. Multiply by total number of pages
- C. This will give you the overall total number of words
- D. Record part of a page - timing it to one minute. This will give you how many words per minute.
- E. Divide the total number of words written by the number of words per minute. This will give you the duration of your spoken script.
- F. Remember to add the seconds allowed for the music interludes.

LETTER STILL

WRITE- TALKING AND INFORMING A FRIEND
USE SIMPLE WORDS
USE SHORT DEFINITE SENTENCES

If you do this you can eliminate the music interludes which will soon become boring to your "friend", the teacher.

REMEMBER: THE TEACHERS NEED THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE THEM.

IF
you have failed
to make them understand
you have failed!

It is gratifying to note the research data shows that with few exceptions the units have been found effective, well understood and generally acceptable to the teachers whose comments state they "have learned by listening". Before going off the air in mid May, this advisor suggested a survey be made on which units, if any, the teachers wished to have repeated. Surprisingly enough out of so many units written an average of seven were requested in each subject area. There is, however, room for improvement, particularly in art education and Rural Development tested and found lacking by the teachers.

- b. The Magazine Program : this type of program is a new concept and listening experience for the project's target audience. Placed between the two instructional units in the hour's broadcast, its purpose is to inform and entertain, and also serve as a listener's sounding board. Unfortunately, due to lack of a competent writer it continues to fall short of its intended goal. See appendix A

d. Related Activities

- a. Assisted at the field supervisors' Training Programme by presenting a slide show on the use of audio in the school.
- b. Reviewed the research data on the in-school radio program in collaboration with the UNICEF advisor to improve the effectiveness of the REPT Project Improving Radio program. See appendix E
- c. Collaborated in the in-country scriptwriting orientation offered by an ALSB team.
- d. Have consistently collaborated with the project evaluation team by submitting more specific research questionnaires on the listening habits of the target audience. The continuous feedback has served as a guide and stimulus to the writers. See appendices F and G.
- e. Interacted with a UNICEF researcher for the problem of disabled children in the classroom. Plans have been made with the cooperation of the Health Education and General Education scriptwriters to incorporate some units on the subject.
- f. Assisted as an observer at the April 6-7 teacher contract meeting in Jorkna.

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3. Traveled to different areas of Nepal to field test materials and radio units, each trip spanning 4-5 days.

4. General Comments on Activities

In the opinion of this Advisor the ~~aforementioned~~ activities carried on during the 20 months' tour of duty, far exceeds the responsibilities entrusted as outlined in the Project Paper. There is still much to be done, particularly in the forthcoming critical period of revision.

5. Evidence of Progress

Looking back to the improvident beginnings in late 1979, what has been achieved thus far is quite laudable.

The most obvious evidence of progress is the fact that it has been possible to keep up with the expanding schedule of broadcasts. It is of great satisfaction to this advisor that not one script writer ever failed to produce even when faced with having to "carry the ball" because of a missing SIM.

Another indication of progress is the sense of discrimination that some of the writers have developed. They are now able to recognize a poor recording themselves and interested enough to request a new recording.

In the last meeting held in mid May to discuss the latest field research report great eagerness was expressed at the prospect of an opportunity to "do better the next time". Plans were enthusiastically made for revamping their productions and improving the magazine portion of the program.

It is to be hoped that in the forthcoming period of revision that same spirit will prevail.

Special Problems and Issues

Recording Studio

- a. By far the most critical problem faced by this Advisor has been not having the long and still awaited recording studio. The very basic training of a radio production staff requires the constant use of a studio, more so in the case of this project which necessitated in-service training of personnel. The use of Radio Nepal's studios has been steadfastly denied.

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The and facilities, from the beginning were loaned on a restricted scale until more recently when studio time was expanded to 15 hours per week. This problem, by far, has been the worst devitalizing factor. The delay in the construction of the project studio now means that the training of staff in the best use of the equipment and studio will be difficult.

b. Work Counterpart

Usually a qualified and capable national counterpart for an advisor is high on the list of priorities in a project. The prime responsibility of an advisor is to train that counterpart to ensure the smooth flowing and continuation of the work after the ~~departure of the advisor.~~ It is with and through his counterpart that an advisor accomplishes the goals.

This advisor has not had a counterpart and has been placed in the awkward position of dealing directly with the staff and later through a production coordinator. However, this coordinator, taxed beyond his capacity and lacking managerial skills, has been of little help.

c. The assignment of two additional producer has been ineffective because of their part time status and because only one has the required background, and aptitude for the work. These two persons were sent to Malaysia for training with the condition that they be assigned full time to the project. Therefore, the need for trained producers still prevails.

d. The need for at least one competent professional writer continues to be a key problem. The magazine section of the programs, if it is to be acceptable to the teachers, needs the pen of a competent writer or two.

e. Project Administration

It is unfortunate that the administrative arm of the project is so lacking in managerial skills. Without the proper buy-stop in this concern the work of the advisors has been made more difficult.

f. Staff Selection and Development

The selection of the writing staff should have been done with greater care. And only knowledgeable and experienced primary teachers, well versed in the Nepali language should have been assigned.

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Since the technical advisors were charged with the responsibility of training, it is felt that they should have been granted the opportunity as requested to speak with the candidates prior to assignment. In any case, an interest in radio education, certainly some writing ability and a willingness to learn new skills should have been a basis for hiring. Staff evaluation should have been considered at three months. Many difficulties encountered could have been avoided if these specifications had been considered. A higher quality of work would certainly have been more possible.

7. General Observations and Recommendations

a. Staff Development - Writers

- The final product of the project can only be as good as the responsible persons want to make it. Staff evaluations and upgrading is recommended. It is important that the project continue to staff only those individuals who show a genuine feeling for what they are doing.
- An outside source of competent professional writers for the magazine portion should still be considered.
- It is further recommended that all writers be required to visit a primary level school and observe a teacher in action. The ideal school for this would be the SOS village, a model school with high caliber teachers. This should be a tremendous help to the writers in developing more useful and meaningful exercises.

b. Scripts and Self-Instructional Materials

- Writing teams should collaborate more closely in integrating their materials. An absolute complementation of the two components of a unit should be achieved. It had already been suggested that "characters" illustrated in the script be given names and "life" in the radio portion.
- Scriptwriters have been shown how to time-measure scripts. It is suggested that they be held to this and to the two pre-recording rehearsals.

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- The scriptwriters should be encouraged to develop their scripts along the new formats and production techniques recently discussed. (For expediency most writers had reverted to the one-voice lecture style. This should be discouraged.)
- A two weeks ahead in production schedule should be established and strictly held to. This allows for corrections, editing and all around better production, particularly when demonstration inserts need to be pre-recorded.

c. Staff Development - Producers

- The producer in charge of instructional unit production must be encouraged to meet on a regular basis with the scriptwriters. He must plan ahead for rehearsals, pre-timing, musicalization and insert pre-recordings.
- At least two additional trained and hopefully experienced radio producer should be added to the staff on a full time basis. The production of a one hour program is a serious undertaking which requires planning, rehearsal, timing, and complete devotion to the task. Part time persons with divided interests are ineffectual.

Radio Program

This portion of the broadcast is in dire need of rehabilitation. After 8 1/2 months, the listeners still express displeasure with the contents.

It is recommended that one proven writer and one producer be assigned to work solely on this; that content be screened for relevancy and variety; and that production should be of high caliber. One of the last suggestions made to the project administrator was that the writer assigned be placed on a production schedule so that a backlog of articles can be built up and that pre-recordings be started as soon as possible for future editing. This would allow for correct time durations to prevent running overtime on its transmission and the impending cut-off by Radio Nepal.