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FINAL REPORT SUMMARY
POPULATION COMMUNICATION SERVICES
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
PROJECT LA-COS-01
ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL RADIO FOR
COSTA RICAN WOMEN

Cooperative Agreement No.:
DPE-3004-A-00-2018-00

Population Communication Services
Population Information Program
The Johns Hopkins University
624 North Broadway
Baltimore, MD 21205
USA

FINAL REPORT: ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL RADIO FOR
COSTA RICAN WOMEN PROJECT (LA-COS-01)

RESULTS: "Diálogo," a 20-minute daily radio program for low-income women, has been produced by the Centro de Orientación Familiar of Costa Rica for 14 years. In addition to nationwide radio broadcasts in family life and other subjects of interest to women, the program answers questions from listeners (by mail and through a newspaper column) and distributes brochures. Over the years, however, both the content and broadcasting techniques of "Diálogo" had not been able fully to keep pace with new opportunities and technology.

With assistance from the Johns Hopkins University Population Communication Services project (JHU/PCS), COF enhanced content, technical quality, quantity, and national recognition of "Diálogo" and laid a solid institutional base for effective program planning and evaluation in the future. New emphasis was placed on family planning and women-in-development themes. These themes are appropriate for the target audience of about 300,000 women in rural and urban marginal areas and are consistent with the government's integrated approach on family planning, population and development communication.

Program indicators and a carefully planned evaluation both confirm significant gains for "Diálogo" over the 15-month life of the project. The amount of the JHU subagreement with COF was \$39,724.

The success of COF and JHU/PCS work in this project can be measured by:

- selection of "Diálogo" as the recipient of the first Angela Acuña Brawn National Prize awarded by the National Directorate for Women and Family/Ministry of Culture for radio and television programs for women;
- transmission through five regional stations of more than twice as many "Diálogo" programs during the five quarters of project activity as compared with the previous four quarters (from 509 to 1,110);
- increase of more than one-half in letters received from listeners in early 1985 compared with 1983 (from about 30 per month to about 50) even though postage costs increased by more than 100 percent during the life of the project;

- publication of 114 letters in the press on issues raised by "Diálogo";
- publication of 5,000 copies each of four booklets on the following topics: the condom, female sexuality, natural family planning, and sharing of family household tasks. These were distributed to local organizations, the Ministry of Health, the Costa Rican Social Security Institute, the Costa Rican Demographic Association, the Family Integration Center (only the booklet on NFP) and women who wrote to COF;
- improvement in production values through voice training for announcers, equipment repair and replacement, and engineering techniques;
- improvement in format, style, content, and responsiveness to women's needs through focus group discussions and internal review procedures to evaluate themes and programs before airing; and
- training in formative evaluation and communication research techniques to strengthen COF's continuing efforts as a multi-media communication program for low-income women in Costa Rica.

PERSONNEL: The project was implemented by Sra. Marina de Solano, Director, COF; Don Carlos Peña, Technical Producer at COF; and Rodolfo Osorio Ponce, Chief of Evaluation at COF. USAID/San José, especially Betsy Murray, Population Advisor, provided valuable support.

The Project Manager at JHU/PCS was Patrick L. Coleman, Regional Program Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. Mr. Coleman conducted two program planning and technical assistance missions to the project. In addition, JHU/PCS supported six technical assistance missions: (1) JHU/PCS consultant Clara Olaya developed an evaluation plan in January 1984; (2) AED consultant Barbara Case provided assistance in radio program planning and production in March 1984; (3) JHU/PCS Media/Materials Coordinator Ann B. Jimerson trained COF staff in pretesting and assisted in organizing focus group discussions in August 1984; (4) Ms. Jimerson returned in November 1984 to provide follow-up training; (5) JHU/PCS consultant D. Lawrence Kincaid assisted COF in developing techniques for obtaining audience feedback in August 1984; and (6) Dr. Kincaid returned to Costa Rica to advise on data analysis in January 1985.

LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE:

- 1) Technical assistance should be based on a careful initial analysis of the needs of the organization involved. In this case, JHU/PCS started with an analysis which revealed that COF needed expert help in 1) production values, 2) contents selection, and 3) monitoring and evaluation techniques.
- 2) Technical assistance should address each problem with the appropriate expertise. In this case, JHU/PCS provided substantial technical assistance for a relatively small subgrant in order to meet different COF needs as fully as possible.
- 3) Audience participation is important in reviewing, evaluating, and developing messages. Focus group techniques were especially useful to alert COF staff to audience interests and to stimulate staff interest in a more participatory approach to programming.
- 4) Collaborating with other social development agencies to develop program content and to encourage feedback can generate both political and financial support. For example, the Centro de Integración Familiar of the Catholic Church helped to design one of the brochures and is using it in counselling sessions.
- 5) Encouraging other national agencies that carry out comparable IEC work to participate and join in technical assistance activities can have a spin-off effect, enhancing their capabilities at the same time. Both the Asociación Demográfica Costarricense (ADC) and the Ministry of Health were able to benefit from the advice and help given to COF in audience research and monitoring. JHU/PCS will continue to emphasize cooperation among host-country institutions in providing IEC support and assistance. This approach serves multiple purposes, building local support, strengthening more than one institution, and maximizing the impact of limited JHU/PCS resources.

PROBLEMS: This was a project in which there were remarkably few problems. The competent, experienced "Diálogo" staff responded immediately and with enthusiasm to suggestions and techniques for improvements recommended by JHU/PCS staff and consultants. The changes in format, style, program planning, and evaluation have been incorporated on a continuing basis. Goals not fully met during the project period are to increase local fund raising and to generate more and shorter letters to the press.

FINANCIAL REPORT: JHU is presently awaiting COF's final financial reconciliation report which will show the rate at which the final U.S. dollar payment was converted to local currency, and the purposes for which this final payment was expended. As of October 1, 1985, \$36,665.92 of the total project budget of \$39,742.00 has been accounted for in COF's financial reports. JHU/PCS expects that their final reconciliation report will reflect expenditures of the remaining funds to account for the total project allocation of \$39,724. An independent audit has been completed. Although no written report has been received, JHU/PCS has been advised that no major problems were identified.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES and SUPPORT: As a result of the progress made, USAID/San José will provide financial support for "Diálogo" in 1985-86, supplemented by locally generated income from sales and donations. Family Planning International Assistance will provide some new equipment.