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TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ASSIGNMENT
FOR THE PRODUCTION
OF A "RAPID" TELEVISION PROGRAM
IN LIBERIA

Prepared by: Philippe Langlois, consultant

Dates of in-country work: September 13-19 1984

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Preparation work for the production of a population awareness television program based on the messages of the Liberia RAPID presentation is well under way.

Current plans are to have the program produced in-country by Medex International Corporation (Medex), a private firm, with the collaboration of the Liberian Broadcasting System (LBS). Johns Hopkins/Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) will fund the project. A draft copy of a Subagreement is going through the normal approval process. Consultant Philippe Langlois returned to Liberia in September 1984 to secure the input of key Liberian organizations into the project, and to assess the need for educational print material based on the TV program.

A production meeting was held in Monrovia to consult all the interested parties, and to discuss a synopsis of the program which was prepared by JHU/PCS. JHU/PCS will now provide a complete draft script based on the original synopsis and the added input of the participants. The script will then be finalized in Liberia by a local writer.

The consultant met with LBS officials to investigate the possibility of LBS handling the post-broadcast evaluation of the program. They seemed quite agreeable to the idea. As a result, a letter will be sent to the Director General of LBS, requesting that his agency do the evaluation.

Also, following an assessment of the need for population awareness print material among Liberian ministries and agencies, it is recommended that JHU/PCS fund the production of a flip-book and a self-learning leaflet based on the RAPID television program.

The materials would be written, designed and printed in the United States. However, all the interested parties in Liberia will be asked to contribute their ideas before anything goes to press.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

FP	-	Family Planning
FPAL	-	Family Planning Association of Liberia
JHU/PCS	-	Johns Hopkins University/Population Communication Services
LBS	-	Liberian Broadcasting System
MCH	-	Maternal and Child Health
MOE	-	Ministry of Education
MOHSW	-	Ministry of Health and Social Welfare
MOPEA	-	Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs
RAPID	-	Resources for the Awareness of Population Impact on Development

Introduction

Preparation work for the production of a population awareness television program based on the messages of the Liberia RAPID presentation is well under way.

The project was suggested by USAID/Monrovia representatives and Liberian Government officials who felt the RAPID presentations deserved a wider audience. Although RAPID presentations have been made in many countries, this is the first time a simplified program for a general audience has been attempted.

Current plans are to have the television program produced in-country by Medex International Corporation (Medex), a private advertising and public relations firm, with the collaboration (technical and personnel assistance, free air time) of the Liberian Broadcasting System (LBS). Johns Hopkins/Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) will fund the project; the estimated in-country expenditures will be \$14,120, including the cost of a post-broadcast evaluation. A Subagreement has been drafted and is going through the normal approval process.

A treatment/synopsis of the television program content was prepared by JHU/PCS to get the project under way. Consultant Philippe Langlois returned to Liberia from September 13-19 1984 to:

- 1) obtain the input of key Liberian organizations into the television program
- 2) discuss administrative matters with Medex and LBS
- 3) investigate the need among ministries and agencies for educational print material based on the television program

1. "RAPID" TELEVISION PROGRAM

a. Production meeting

A production meeting was organized to consult all the parties interested in the project, and specifically to discuss the program synopsis. The one-day meeting was held at a local hotel and brought together representatives of Medex, LBS, the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MOPEA), the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW), The Family Planning Association of Liberia (FPAL), USAID, JHU/PCS and two in-country consultants.

The topics treated in the television program include the effects of certain population factors - high demographic growth, food production, education, job opportunities, urbanization, health - on the social and economic development of Liberia. The program will also focus at some length on the availability of Family Planning services.

The participants declared themselves generally in agreement with the approach and the contents of the synopsis. In the course of the meeting, they also made many valuable suggestions to simplify the content even more, to improve the logic of the structure, and to visualize many of the ideas of the program.

As detailed in the project proposal and the Subagreement, JHU/PCS will produce a draft script based on the original synopsis and the input of the participants, by the end of October 1984. The script will then be finalized in Liberia by a local writer to adapt it to the local context, vocabulary and speech patterns.

b. Subagreement

The consultant and the president of Medex, Mrs. Weade Kobbah-Wureh, met on several occasions to discuss the terms of a draft version of the Subagreement between JHU and Medex. They were deemed quite acceptable by Medex. A few adjustments were made in the budget; the honoraria for the project director were increased slightly to better reflect the number of days she will have to spend on the project, and provisions were made for the services of a still photographer on shooting locations. The total amount of the budget remains the same.

Mrs. Wureh signed three copies of the tentative Subagreement. The workplan calls for a six months production schedule, with start-up in Liberia towards the end of November 1984. A copy of the Subagreement was also submitted to USAID/Monrovia for comments and suggestions.

c. Evaluation

The consultant met with two LBS officials, Mr. Eustace Smith, Assistant Director General for Broadcasting, and Dr. Jerome Boikai, Assistant Director General for Research, Planning and Development, to discuss the possibility of LBS handling the post-broadcast evaluation of the program. They seemed quite agreeable to the idea.

It was mentioned to them that JHU/PCS could not pay salaries or honoraria for the survey, but could allocate sums for direct expenses such as gas, travel allowances for the survey takers, paper, stencils and other supplies, printing of the report, etc.

A letter will be sent to Dr. Peter Naigow, Director General of LBS, requesting that his agency do the survey, and asking him to provide an estimate of the direct costs as well as a short proposal outlining the design, the sampling frame, and sample questions for the questionnaire.

It is believed that LBS is the Liberian organization best suited to handle this part of the project. Should an agreement been reached, it will be possible to proceed almost immediately with the design of the questionnaire and other preparatory work since the required sums will be transferred directly from Medex's budget to LBS.

2. "RAPID" PRINT MATERIAL

It was suggested in certain quarters that educational print material based on the RAPID television program could be useful to reach people outside the television viewing area, and to ensure a follow-up to this population awareness effort.

A number of ministries and agencies - MOPEA, MOHSW, FPAL, and the Ministry of Education (MOE) - were contacted to investigate their immediate needs in such materials. While all showed some interest (many wanted FP posters), the MOE was more specific in identifying its needs.

Mrs. Barbie Stewart of the Ministry's Student Personnel Services suggested that a self-learning leaflet on population would fit very well into the curriculum of the Health Education program at the High School level. The illustrated leaflet would contain the essential of the RAPID story, self-testing questions, topics for classroom discussions or for essays, etc. It would be used in the Family Life Education component of the program which is still in its infancy, and which is in dire need of learning and teaching materials. It is estimated that there are currently 56,000 high school students in Liberia.

A RAPID flip book should also be produced. It would be used by the Ministry's instructors (there are approximately 50, according to Mrs. Stewart) who visit the classrooms and who are also trainers of teachers in Health Education matters. As the teachers are trained, they could themselves become users of the flip books.

Mrs. Joyce Sherman of the MCH/FP services of the Ministry of Health also mentioned that a flip book would be a useful reference source in the libraries of Nursing, Midwifery and Medicine schools. In time, perhaps other Liberian organizations will also find some use for these materials.

The flip book should contain the same messages as the TV program, be abundantly illustrated, and produced relatively inexpensively (i.e. ordinary paper and no fancy etzel-type presentation).

In anticipation of a flip book and other materials, the television program budget has already been modified to include the services of a still photographer whose pictures will serve as the basic illustrations.

Recommendation

It is recommended that JHU/PCS fund the production of a flip-book and a self-learning leaflet based on the RAPID television program.

The materials would be written, designed and printed in the United States. However, all the interested parties in Liberia would be shown draft copies of the texts and mock-ups of the art work, and asked to contribute their ideas before anything goes to press.

It is suggested to start with a modest initial run - perhaps a few hundred copies of the flip chart and 10,000 copies of the self-learning leaflet - to test the usefulness and effectiveness of these teaching aids. It is to be hoped that everything will be ready by September 1985 for the start of the next school year. It would also allow to take advantage of the initial interest created by the broadcast of the programs.

LIST OF CONTACTS

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Monrovia
local mailing address:c/o U.S. Embassy
P.O. Box 1445
Monrovia Liberia
Tel: 262038, 262043, 262883

USA mailing address: APO New York 09155

John Pielmeier, Deputy Mission Director
Dr. Nancy Pielmeier, Health and Population Officer

Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs (MOPEA)
P.O. Box 9016
Monrovia

M. Abel Massalee, Director - Population Division

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW)
Maternal and Child Health/Family Planning Services
P. O. Box 9009
Monrovia
Tel: 224221

Mrs. Joyce Sherman, M.P.H.

Ministry of Education (MOE)
P.O. Box 9012
Monrovia
Tel: 222654

Mrs. Barbie Stewart,
Coordinator Health/Special Education Division
Personnel Services

Family Planning Association of Liberia (FPAL)
P.O. Box 938
Monrovia, Liberia
Tel: 262008, 262243

Gabriel M. Hina, IEC Program Officer
Mrs. Lois Clarke Nyema, National Program Coordinator

Liberian Broadcasting System (LBS)

P.O.Box 594
Monrovia (Paynesville)
Tel: 271146, 271250, 271425

Mr. Eustace Smith, Assistant Director General - Broadcasting
Dr. Jerome Boikai, Assistant Director General - Research, Planning and
Development
Ms. Justina Gibson, program producer

Medex International Corporation (Medex)

E. J. Roye Building
Ashmun Street
P. O. Box 146
Monrovia
Tel: 224411

Mrs. Weade Kobbah-Wureh
President

Mr. Won-Ldy Paye
Director
Trow Trow Artist Workshop
P. O. Box 2230, Monrovia

Andrew Voros
c/o Peace Corps/Liberia
P. O. Box 707
Monrovia