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TRIP REPORT:

COUNTRY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

TO MEXICO

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Dates of In-Country Work:
October 18-November 6, 1984

Population Communication Services
Population Information Program
The Johns Hopkins University
624 North Broadway
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FEMAP/Monterrey Trip and Research
Activities Report

In accordance with Request for Services (Cooperative Agreement No. DPE-3004-A-00-2018-00) to pretest FEMAP radio spots in four Mexican cities, I went to Monterrey on October 18, 1984.

1. On October 18, 19 and 20 four Focus Group Sessions were held with male and female participants, evaluating agreed upon radio spots which I had previously organized and transferred for adequate use in Monterrey.
2. Altogether nine radio spots were pretested with urban and peri-urban low socioeconomic groups : one male group, 22 to 37 years of age; three female groups, two with women from 26 to 35, one with women 16 to 25, all married or living in union.
3. Aside from research activities, discussions were held with local social workers working for Prosuperación Familiar Neoleonesa de Monterrey to assess different aspects of local conditions and traditions.
4. On Sunday afternoon, October 21, 1984, I traveled back to Mexico City, after collecting local data (see 3.)
5. Analysis/interpretation of collected data, as well as report writing, were carried out from October 22 to October 26, and from October 29 to November 6, 1984.
6. Summarized Findings, with recommendations, are enclosed.


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Enclosures



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I N T R O D U C T I O N

Within FEMAP's Family Planning Promotion activities a series of radio spots on family planning were developed in Ciudad Juárez and most of them already broadcast in that city. Appropriateness of campaign for other Mexican cities has to be determined through qualitative (motivational) research, before local radio stations are supplied with the material (messages) available.

In Monterrey, nine radio spots were pretested with urban and peri-urban low socioeconomic groups, using focus group discussions. Altogether four FGD were carried out in October 1984 with male and female contraceptive users of two age levels (one male group: 22 to 37; three female groups: 16 to 25, 26 to 35). The four FGD brought together 30 participants (7 male, 23 female) from different, low income areas in Monterrey.

Areas explored included credibility, degree of acceptance and interest in messages, appropriateness of production



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values to local manner of speech, etc., understanding and perceptions related to each concept, compatibility with perceived needs, favorable or unfavorable connotations, etc.

Of the nine spots tested, six are mainly targeted at females, three aim at involving male population in active family planning measures.

"Female" oriented spots center on "Doña Rosita", positioned as a cheerful, happily married woman who is planning her family and who acts as a sort of "informal" Promotora within her community. Male communication strategy centers on advise related to vasectomy, family planning in general and low cost of services at the FEMAP clinic.

Together with César Saldívar it was decided not to test spots which in Ciudad Juárez had clearly proven to be too controversial (except for the male spots), or too "local", or with very clearcut informative value. Therefore, spots on postponement of first child, address of clinic in Ciudad Juarez, and on what to do if one pill is forgotten, were left out - the latter because it can safely be assumed that this kind of information is always well received by women, no matter in what city.

The need to reduce number of spots tested arose mainly because an excessive amount of material hampers development of adequate group dynamics.



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Themes tested included :

- Spot 1 - Doña Rosita explains her cheerfulness to neighbor
- Spot 2 - Doña Rosita explains why she decided to plan her family
- Spot 3 - Rosita explains spacing to neighbor still wanting another child and recommends "Promotora"
- Spot 4 - Rosita talks to neighbor who has just undergone tubal ligation
- Spot 5 - Rosita and husband talk about family planning (husband invites her to movies, she accepts, always has time)
- Spot 6 - Neighbor asks whether tubal ligation is possible when a woman is not pregnant
- Spot 7 - Juan recommends Femap clinic on grounds of inexpensive delivery services, also tells neighbor to inquire about family planning
- Spot 8 - Juan gives advice on vasectomy, offering himself as testimony
- Spot 9 - Neighbor declares that he has decided to be vasectomized.

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SUMMARIZED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I OVERALL EVALUATION

1. A radio campaign on family planning is considered - both by men and women - as useful, although rural areas need such a campaign much more than urban settings such as Monterrey, where "everybody" is aware of the need of planning the family.

2. Women insist that TV campaigns are watched with much more attention than anything broadcasted through radio. In spite of very low income and deplorable housing conditions almost all participants had a TV set. In fact, for most women watching TV seems to be their main "bright spot" in their lives, since husbands practically never take them out.

3. TV in Monterrey has transmitted family planning spots of which women are still well aware and which convey, according to them, almost the same message as "Doña Rosita". The TV character, "Doña Clotilde" is admired-envied by her neighbors since she goes out with her husband while others are burdened by too many children. Seeing "Doña Clotilde" and her husband on the screen is obviously more stimulating than a radio spot.

3. The "Promotoras", on the other hand, welcome any communication effort, since they hope for motivating effects which will make their own work easier.

In all female groups the presence of a few promotoras was managed in such a way that they exerted very little influence on other participants.



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The Promotoras hope also that through intensive radio or, better still, TV promotion they will be less exposed to abuse from angry husbands, who refuse to let their wives be "influenced" by Promotoras.

4. Men, in fact, show a peculiar dichotomy of attitudes : family planning is always approved as a general concept, but subject to a number of special provisions as far as personal behavior is concerned.

5. As far as the "female" spots are concerned, they remain somewhat distant in spite of the general approval stated above. For "other" women such a campaign may be useful, for one's own wife "outside influences" are not too welcome. And as far as the "male" spots are concerned, reactions are totally negative.

6. In spite of TV predominance, "Doña Rosita" is easy to assimilate as a character with positive traits, since she becomes associated with "Doña Clotilde" whose physical attributes are visually known: young, good-looking. However, Clotilde's advantage over Rosita is that she has managed to keep her husband in love with her so that he treats her as "if they were still engaged" ("la trata como si fueran novios", "la apapacha").

Being cherished by their partner is something which women miss acutely (especially younger women : several participants were 16 or 17, had married at 13, had one or more children already), since there is such a radical and sudden change in Mexican men's attitude before and after marriage.

The spot where Rosita is with her husband does not generate the "fiancée-fantasies" of the Clotilde-spot. There-

fore, Clotilde is positioned at a greater advantage.

7. On the other hand, most messages given by Rosita are felt to be relevant, important and adapted to reality. Women are certain that men ought to be reminded much more frequently of family planning measures, since their involvement is minimal. Even when they give their consent to family planning measures by the wife, their own attitude remains aloof.

8. Production values have to be adapted to local culture. The manner of speech of Ciudad Juarez is well recognized, but distracts attention from message.

Other very important changes refer to longer and more defined rhetoric pauses between character dialogue, also pauses after key concepts or words so that they are easier to assimilate. Messages often were difficult to grasp, spots had to be repeated several times and even read slowly by the moderator, since dialogue of characters was too fast to be really understood.

Jingles are felt to be pleasant and are as adequate in Monterrey as in Ciudad Juárez.

II SPECIFIC EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUAL STORYBOARDS

SPOT 1 Doña Rosita explains her cheerfulness to neighbor, relates it to family planning and a happy marital life.

1. Message is hard to understand since characters talk too fast. Rhetoric pauses are necessary (for instance, after "siempre de buenas", "decidimos planificar la familia").

2. Once understood, message of being in agreement with one's husband is the main motivator. Cheerfulness is less understood than the need to obtain the husband's consent, since he easily becomes suspicious if wife takes contraceptives without his knowledge. Continuous fights are the result: "Why haven't you become pregnant again? You are taking something!"

3. The neighbor's curiosity is well accepted. It is the right of a "comadre" ("godmother") to be informed even of intimate details, it shows, furthermore, that both women trust each other.

4. Primary message being "not to do anything behind one's husband back", most young participants agree wholeheartedly. Many are afraid of their husband's anger; one participant, being only fifteen and already with one child, had accepted the DIU without his knowledge and had to bear almost daily accusations and suspicious questioning. She considered "confessing" since her guilt feelings were becoming stronger and stronger, had not done so yet because her fear of his violent reactions were even greater than her guilt feelings.

5. Men agree that a wife has no right to take any contraceptive measure unless he consents. In this case, the harmonious family life (portrayed by the spot) is credible.

6. Once locally produced, spot seems to be an adequate introduction to the new character, in spite of "lopsided" comprehension of messages.

SPOT 2 Rosita is asked why she decided to plan her family.

1. Spot is persuasive and likely to be better understood than the first one. The first message acts as a "facilitator"



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for the second one.

2. Message is understood as related to financial hardship; lack of money is one of the main causes of conflict within marriage, is also directly related to lack of good mood.

3. Characters are already well recognized, their concerns are convincing.

4. Execution requires changes, so as to adapt to local customs. See Overall Evaluation.

SPOT 3 Rosita explains spacing to neighbor still wanting another child. Services of "Promotoras" are recommended.

1. Two messages are understood:
 - a) looking for the promotoras
 - b) spacing.

2. The first one, being more informative, is better understood, has priority over the second one. The concept that family planning does not only mean "stopping altogether" is somewhat difficult to understand in view of extremely severe cultural/educational limitations of the young female participants. The repressive atmosphere in which most of them live (many of them live in the house of the mother-in-law, are subject to her dictates as well as to the husbands') seem to inhibit even their capacity to think.

3. Promotoras are extremely pleased. Their role in the community is "officially" recognized : "It is high time that we also get some publicity".

4. Spacing concept could perhaps be modified so that



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the "Promotora"-recommendation does not monopolize attention. It seems - given the cultural and intellectual limitations - that these two concepts are too much to grasp in one single spot. Messages should be either separated (two spots), or simplified, so that spacing does not lag behind the practical, concrete message of looking for a promotora.

SPOT 4 Rosita talks to neighbor who has just undergone tubal ligation

1. Message of rapid procedure is understood, rest of copy is difficult to grasp since characters talk too much, too fast : "I don't know what they mean that 'so many people are not well informed'..."

2. Sterilization concept raises severe doubts. Apparently, experiences from other women already operated are acting as inhibitors. The husband's initial acceptance has been shown not to last. After one or two years they begin to demand another child, blame the wife for having talked them into tubal ligation, produce guilt feelings in the wife and/or fears that he will leave her.

3. General credibility as far as speed of recovery is concerned is low, since overnight hospitalization at the IMSS seems to be the rule.

4. Additional fears arise with relation to anesthesia (spinal blockage, see Ciudad Juarez report).

5. Once execution is modified (local production, elimination of unnecessary phrases - perhaps "ya ve cuantas cosas le dicen a uno.." - ,spaced dialogue), spot can be useful to correct ideas about long hospitalization, may also counterbalance certain fears about later health hazards.



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SPOT 5 Rosita's husband invites her to movies, she accepts, explains her cheerfulness and relates it to small number of children.

1. Two messages come across :

- a) willingness of husband to take wife to movies
- b) Rosita's good mood.

2. Promotoras also understand the implicit message of "keeping young and attractive" by having few children, since they use also this argument to convince non-contraceptive users.

3. Young women are heavily conditioned, influenced, by their social/cultural environment, believe that the advantage of having few children is that they can devote more time to "serving my husband better", to cleaning and cooking and washing.

4. Movies are a rare event. If the husband consents to take the wife out, children are taken along, cannot be kept quiet in the movies. Going out means visiting relatives or going to the park.

5. Women welcome that a man participates in the spot, also men find this acceptable. The idea of having time to go out is motivating. Sexual implications - such as in Ciudad Juarez - did not appear.

6. Women hope that men will "learn" to pay more attention to the wife. From male reactions it seems that their self-image is favorably influenced, although real behavior is something else. Family planning as the underlying cause of all this is very well accepted.

7. With local production, spot can be broadcast as is, although a different "free time" activity should be considered.



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SPOT 6 Rosita gives advice on tubal ligation even if a woman is not pregnant.

1. Message is well understood, has good informative value for female participants, since in fact there is lack of knowledge about when tubal ligation can be performed.

2. Male audience remains aloof as far as the moment of operation is concerned, but opposes sterilization on general principles. Every woman has a certain "built-in" quota of children she can conceive, after that she does not become pregnant anymore, anyway. No need to "go against nature"

3. When women know that tubal ligation is possible without delivery, main concern relates to the belief that after operation a 40-day rest period is necessary, just as after delivery.

4. It seems necessary to address this problem in the final version of the spot.

SPOT 7 Don Juan recommends clinic (Femap) on account of low cost delivery. Advises family planning.

1. For female audience three messages seem evident:

- a) low cost of delivery, even free delivery
- b) men do worry about financial aspect of child-birth, are capable to talking to each other about such matters
- c) wife already has a great number of children.

2. Men mainly grasp the "low-cost" aspect, believe that "other men" will feel inclined to have even more children since it doesn't "cost them anything". Message will therefore backfire.

3. Women believe that the family planning advice will not be heeded by men, they refuse personal involvement even



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if they give their consent. On the other hand, they hope that through consistent communication efforts men will pay "some attention" to spots featuring male characters.

4. Just as was found in Ciudad Juarez, lack of foresight is a typical trait. If cost of delivery is taken care of (immediate problem), the rest is forgotten until the next emergency arises.

5. Spot should be broadcasted with male characters, once reassurance of low-cost (often interpreted as "free") delivery is eliminated, and once production/execution has been adapted.

SPOT 8 Advice on vasectomy; testimony by Don Juan.
SPOT 9 Male character declares he has decided to be vasectomized.

1. Reactions are identical, in both spots, to those found in Ciudad Juarez, among men as well as among women.

2. Extremely negative male attitudes related to fear of loss of sexual potency; group ridicule; marriage breakup; loss of "superiority" over wife, etc.

3. Consequences are social, physical and psychological ; all are severe, the most serious is probably the opinion of "cuates" ("cronies"), who imply homosexuality in a vasectomized man.

4. None of the two spots has credibility. To be "happy" is unbelievable.

5. Women know exactly how men react to these spots/ messages : "Maybe you can catch them when they are dead drunk. Never otherwise".

Knowledge of women about male reactions shows that



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subject has been discussed frequently before, and that these reactions have been extremely strong and violent.

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

1. Local adaptation/execution of all radio spots is necessary.
2. Spots with clearcut informative value, such as what to do when one pill is forgotten, can be broadcasted although they were not tested, information is well received.
3. Spots should be broadcasted for longer periods, impact on semi-rural groups should be assessed later.
4. Spot 1 can be broadcasted as is (with local adaptation), also Spot 2
5. Spot 3 should, if possible, be separated into two spots : one recommending promotoras, one explaining spacing concept. If not, spacing concept should be simplified.
6. Spot 4 raises fears about anesthesia, but can be launched since it corrects and counterbalances ideas about long hospitalization.
7. Spot 5 should include different leisure activity.
8. Spot 6 should imply or include message on lack of need to keep 40-day rest period.
9. Spot 7 should eliminate mention of low-cost delivery services at family planning clinics.
10. Spots 8 and 9 are too controversial to be useful.