AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20523

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INPUT SHEET

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Batch 51

1. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION
A. PRIMARY: TEMPORARY
B. SECONDARY:

2. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Diffusion of information through radio and supporting media; phase II,final report

3. AUTHOR(S)
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4. DOCUMENT DATE	5. NUMBER OF PAGES	6. ARC NUMBER
1964	12p.	ARC EC001.5.T693

7. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS
AIR

8. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES *(Sponsoring Organization, Publishers, Availability)*

9. ABSTRACT
(COMMUNICATION R & D)

10. CONTROL NUMBER	11. PRICE OF DOCUMENT
PN-AAD-080	
12. DESCRIPTORS	13. PROJECT NUMBER
	14. CONTRACT NUMBER: Repas-18 Res.
	15. TYPE OF DOCUMENT

AID 590-1 (4-74)

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DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION THROUGH RADIO AND SUPPORTING MEDIA

REPORT OF FOLLOW-UP INTERVIEWS

PHASE II FINAL REPORT

Submitted to

The Agency for International Development

by

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April 1964

Contract # AID/la-27 (repas-18)

DIFFUSION OF INFORMATION THROUGH RADIO AND SUPPORTING MEDIA

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This report deals with the second phase of a study of the relative effectiveness of various communications media. The purpose of the second phase was to follow-up earlier results to determine whether the immediate impact made by an information campaign would persist over a period of several months.

In the first phase of the study, radio and other communications media were compared in an attempt to determine the circumstances under which various communications media were most effective in inducing participation in several public health practices. An experiment was conducted in three towns of approximately 100 families each in the northern highlands of Ecuador. In one town, radios were distributed to the householders and only radio broadcasts were used to motivate the townspeople and to convey information. In another town, non-radio media were used, consisting of motion pictures, slides, posters, bulletins, personal demonstrations, and photographic exhibits. In the third town, radios were distributed and both radio and the other media were employed. Three other towns in the region served as controls; in these towns relatively little effort was made to communicate with the townspeople. All towns selected were similar to each other in various demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

The people in all three experimental towns were urged to participate in four new practices -- to build latrines, to build smokeless stoves, to prepare and preserve marmalade from a locally available berry, and to be vaccinated against smallpox. They were required to

pay various sums of money in order to participate in each of the practices. They were charged 40 sucres for the materials to build a latrine, 20 sucres for stove materials, and 10 sucres for marmalade materials.[1/] Vaccination was free. All informational materials were prepared and disseminated by the project staff. Radio programs were broadcast over transmitters belonging to the project and audio-visual programs utilized mobile equipment. After a two-month information/motivation campaign, the number of households or persons who participated in each of the four practices was counted. Each householder (or suitable substitute) was interviewed in an attempt to determine the perceived influence of the media, the economic, social, and psychological characteristics which distinguished participants from non-participants, and the specific reasons stated for participation or non-participation.

SUMMARY OF FIRST PHASE RESULTS

In general, it was found that when the degree of participation in the three active practices (latrines, stoves, marmalade) was measured by effort per household -- that is, when degree of participation is measured by a common monetary denominator composed of cash outlay plus the cash value of labor -- the three towns participated to virtually the same extent, and the control towns participated at approximately one-third the level of the experimental towns. However, although total effort was the same in each of the experimental towns, the distribution of the effort varied markedly. The Radio Town built the greatest number of stoves and had the largest number of marmalade participants, but it built the fewest latrines. Conversely, the Audio-Visual Town built the largest number of latrines and had the smallest number of stove and marmalade participants.

[1/] 20 sucres equal approximately one U. S. dollar.

The Mixed Town fell between the two others for all active practices -- it built fewer latrines than the Audio-Visual Town but more than the Radio Town, and it built fewer stoves and made less marmalade than the Radio Town, but more than the Audio-Visual Town. Almost the same percentages of people were vaccinated in the Audio-Visual and Radio Towns and a somewhat larger percentage was vaccinated in the Mixed Town. A complete report of procedures and results of the campaign and the subsequent interviewing can be found in Communication and Motivation in Community Development: An Experiment.[2/]

SECOND PHASE -- PROCEDURE

Field efforts in the second phase consisted of two sets of interviews conducted approximately three and nine months after the conclusion of the information/motivation campaign. These follow-up interviews were conducted with householders in all towns, experimental and control. Interviews were also held with six leaders in each town. In the first follow-up interview, approximately two thirds of the householders were successfully interviewed. In the second follow-up interview, only those householders who had participated in the practices during or after the campaign were interviewed. The number of interviewees is shown in Table 1, p. 4. The interview schedules used have been presented in a previous report.[3/]

[2/] Spector, P., Torres, A., Lichtenstein, S., & Preston, H. O. Communication and motivation in community development: an experiment. Washington, D. C. Institute for International Services, November 1963. Report of Phase I.

[3/] Phase II Progress Report submitted to the Agency for International Development February 1964.

Table 1

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWS IN PHASE II

	Control Town	A-V Town	Mixed Town	Radio Town
First Interview	48	65	65	63
Second Interview	42	45	55	58

Table 2

HOUSEHOLDS PARTICIPATING IN ACTIVE PRACTICES AT EACH STAGE OF PROJECT
EXPRESSED AS PER CENT OF TOTAL PARTICIPATION IN EACH TOWN

	Latrine Construction				Stove Construction				Marmalade Preparation			
	Towns				Towns				Towns			
	Control	A-V	Mixed	Radio	Control	A-V	Mixed	Radio	Control	A-V	Mixed	Radio
End of campaign	12	85	77	78	20	50	63	82	60	65	84	93
3 mos. after	23	4	5	5	30	2	6	4	40	6	4	2
9 mos. after	65	11	18	17	50	48	31	14	0	29	12	5

SECOND PHASE -- RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The basic follow-up results are shown in Table 2, p. 4. At the time of the first follow-up interview -- three months after the conclusion of the campaign -- very little additional participation was found in the experimental towns with respect to the active practices, namely latrines, stoves, and marmalade.[4/] Figures on additional vaccinations are not shown because a large but unknown proportion consists of vaccinations given to persons from the surrounding farms and rural communities. Furthermore, it is not known whether the townspeople had equal opportunities to be vaccinated.

At the time of the second interview, approximately nine months after the conclusion of the campaign and six months after the first follow-up interview, a moderate and similar increase was found in the number of latrines in all three experimental towns. A substantial increase was found in the Control Towns, although the total number in the Control Towns still remains considerably below that of the experimental towns (see footnote # 4).

There were marked increases in the number of stoves in all three towns with thre greatest percentage increase in the Audio-Visual Town and the least in the Radio Town. In the Audio-Visual Town, half of all the stoves were made after the campaign. In the Mixed Town 37% of all stoves were made afterwards. The Radio Town made only 18% of its stoves after the campaign. A similar relationship among the towns was found regarding the making of marmalade, although the increase in the number of

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[4/] Although the project did not carry on active campaigning after the conclusion of its formal efforts, the Instituto Campesino and the local Municipio continued to provide some materials, instructions and encouragement to the Control Towns so that it is not possible to determine whether the additional participation in the Control Towns resulted from such official support, from personal communication between the Control Towns and the experimental towns, or from other factors.

households which made marmalade was relatively small as compared to the increase in the households that made stoves. Assuming that there were no differential influences after the campaigns, it appears that the long-term effects of the original non-radio campaigns were more widespread than were those of the radio campaign with respect to the stove and marmalade practices.

The householders were asked whether they were using the latrines and stoves that they had made and whether they had made marmalade again. As can be seen from the results presented in Table 3, p. 7, most of the latrines and stoves that were finished were reported to be in use. In general, similar percentages of unused latrines and stoves were reported in all experimental towns. Most people who were not using their latrines or stoves reported that the equipment was out-of-order or that they did not know how to use them.

The results on marmalade preparation may throw some additional light on the effectiveness of radio as a medium of instruction. Although relatively few persons in the Audio-Visual Town made marmalade in the first place, proportionately more of them continued to make it than in either of the other two towns. Only two households in the Audio-Visual Town which had made marmalade did not make it at least once again. In sharp contrast to this, in the Radio Town, where the greatest number of people had initially made marmalade, less than a third made it after the first time. Less than half of the households in the Mixed Town made marmalade after the first time. This finding is consistent with previous results which found that radio was less effective in instructing people to prepare marmalade than the other media.[5/] It would appear that the people who had learned to make superior marmalade continued to

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5/ In the first phase the quality of the marmalade produced in the Radio Town usually was lower than that produced in the other towns.

Table 3

PERCENTAGE OF PRACTICES IN USE AFTER CAMPAIGN

	Control Town	A-V Town	Mixed Town	Radio Town
Latrines				
Finished*	59	69	77	61
Being used**	70	83	88	82
Not being used**	30	17	12	18
Stoves				
Finished*	85	83	85	91
Being used**	76	86	75	86
Not being used**	24	14	25	14
Marmalade				
Total number of households	10	17	25	42
Made once only***	20	12	60	69
Made more than once***	80	88	40	31

* percent of total started and finished.

** percent of finished.

*** percent of total households.

make it again and that those who had made an inferior grade failed to continue. One might also conjecture that in the Mixed Town, where both radio instruction and live demonstrations were available, the people who had relied on radio may have been the ones who failed to continue, in contrast to those who had relied on the other media for instruction in marmalade making.

Another item of information throws light on the relative effectiveness of radio as an instructional medium. In the first post-campaign interview, the largest percentage of people who reported that they had problems with stoves was found in the Radio Town. Sixty-four percent of the people who built stoves reported that they had problems with them, whereas 48% of the stove builders reported problems in the Mixed Town and only 33% reported problems in the Audio-Visual Town. Again one might conjecture that those people who relied on the radio for their instruction for stove building -- both in the Radio Town and in the Mixed Town -- has more difficulties than those who relied on other communications means.

Most of the people who had been vaccinated against smallpox in both the experimental and Control Towns reported that they would like to be vaccinated against diseases other than smallpox (see Table 4, p. 9). Larger percentages of persons who were indifferent to further vaccination were found in the Audio-Visual and Control Towns than in the Radio and Mixed Towns. These figures are consistent with the original findings in the first phase. At that time it had been found that proportionately more people had been vaccinated in the Radio and Mixed Towns than in the Audio-Visual Town. Insofar as this difference can be attributed to the relatively greater appeal of radio concerning vaccination, it appears that radio's greater power in this regard persisted over a nine-month period.

Table 4

EXTENT OF CONTINUED INTEREST IN VACCINATION

	Control Town	A-V Town	Mixed Town	Radio Town
% of respondents vaccinated during campaign	52	53	66	68
% of those vaccinated who would like to be vaccinated against diseases other than smallpox	85	81	92	91

LEADER INTERVIEWS

Six persons who were judged to be leaders in each of the experimental towns and in the Control Towns were interviewed approximately nine months after the campaigns in an attempt to gain insights concerning factors that might have influenced the results. The leaders were asked who they thought the influential persons in each town were and whether these people actively influenced others for or against any of the practices. They were also asked what roles they themselves had played in influencing others to participate or not in the practices. Finally, they were asked to judge whether any political influences might have affected participation in their towns.

It is impossible, of course, to draw firm conclusions from so few cases unless there is overwhelming agreement about any particular topic. In general, the leaders reported that neighbors actively influenced people to participate in all three towns. Opinions varied with regard to the influence of leaders. Whereas in the Mixed Town, the six respondents agreed that the priest actively influenced the people to participate, opinion was divided between a teacher and the mayor as the key person in the Radio Town, and between a teacher and the sheriff in the Audio-Visual Town. In the opinions of the leaders in each of the towns, politics had little or no influence for or against any of the practices.

All the leaders who were interviewed in the experimental towns, with one exception, reported that they had influenced people positively to participate in the practices. Unfortunately it was not possible to obtain an accurate estimate of the number of persons whom they believed they had influenced.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

We may conclude that most of the people who participated initially continued to use the innovations they had adopted nine months after the termination of active campaigning. There is some evidence that radio had less widespread or long-term effects than other media inasmuch as fewer people proportionately adopted innovations after the campaign in the Radio Town than in other towns. The results also tend to confirm the finding of the first phase -- that radio was less effective as a medium of instruction than the other media.