

PD-AAY-306

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DPE-3004-A-2018-00

FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNICATION
COUNTRY PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION MISSION
TO HONDURAS

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Dates of In-Country Work:
January 23-26, 1984

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this visit to Honduras was to assist the organizations with which The Johns Hopkins University Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) project has subagreements in the development of evaluation plans as required by JHU/PCS.

The Ministry of Health was found to be very aware of why research is important in the development and evaluation of communication activities. The Project for Mass Communication in Child Healthcare (PROCOMSI) group has worked with both the Academy for Educational Development and Stanford University's Institute for Communication Research. The group has developed a very good system for evaluating IEC activities.

The Asociación Hondureña de Planificación de Familia (ASHONPLAFA) has had some experience in evaluating programs and establishing evaluation plans but very little practical experience in communication research. I worked with the Evaluation Chief and other staff members in establishing an outline of the types of communication research activities they should carry out to assist in the design and implementation of the JHU/PCS subagreement.

The Instituto Hondureño de Seguridad Social (IHSS) formed their work group on the day I first met with them. This restricted me to a rather brief meeting with them. We discussed the types of evaluation activities they need to carry out and I provided them an outline stating these general guidelines. This group needs particular assistance if an effective evaluation plan is to be developed.

The chief findings of my mission to Honduras were:

- 1) the baseline research data can and should be shared by the three institutions;
- 2) the Ministry of Health with the PROCOMSI group and the operations research consultants should be able to give both IHSS and ASHONPLAFA local technical assistance in the development of the evaluation plans; and

- 3) an evaluation workshop should be set up for all Honduran institutions collaborating with JHU/PCS, to exchange ideas and improve evaluation strategies and implementation for agencies not experienced in this area. (After a visit to Costa Rica, it appeared that COF, with which JHU also has a subagreement, should attend as well.)

TRIP REPORT

This is a description of the activities carried out by Clara Ines Olaya, Communications Consultant, during the period of January 23 - 26, 1984, in connection with the development of evaluation plans required in the subagreements between the Asociación Hondureña de Planificación de Familia (ASHONPLAFA), Instituto Hondureño de Seguridad Social (IHSS), the Honduran Ministry of Health (MOH), and The Johns Hopkins University Population Communication Services project (JHU/PCS).

This report will be divided in three parts corresponding to the institutions visited.

ASHONPLAFA

On January 23, 1984 Mr. Patrick Coleman, JHU/PCS Regional Coordinator, and I met briefly with Mr. Alejandro Flores Aguilar, Executive Director of ASHONPLAFA as a way of introduction; then we met with Alejandro Trujillo, Coordinator; Juanita Martínez, Chief of Information and Education; Nelly Funes, Chief of the CBD Program; Margarita Suazo, Chief of Evaluation; and Emiliano Flores, Communications expert recently hired for the program.

The group met to discuss future work plans for the production of materials for a mass media campaign. Ms. Rose Schneider from Development Associates was also present at the meeting, since one of the main points discussed was the way in which the campaigns would support the CBD program. Several questions were raised regarding the location of the pilot program, the concerns regarding competition and overlapping with the Ministry of Health's program, and the integration of activities within ASHONPLAFA's sections.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Coleman left the meeting and the rest of the morning was spent discussing the evaluation component of the campaign. We identified some initial activities that each member of the group would carry out to get the process started. Each person would make a tentative list of the problems that block the enrollment of active users of CBD, based on personal experiences and available information. The list was to be given to Margarita Suazo the following day. In the afternoon, Mrs. Suazo and Mr. Flores met with

me to discuss the general evaluation strategy. We also met on the mornings of January 24 and 26, by request of Ms. Schneider to discuss communication strategies with leaders. What follows is a synopsis of the process and activities we agreed upon.

Objectives of the Evaluation

1. To identify information about the target population regarding practices, attitudes and beliefs concerning family planning in order to support the CBD program.
2. To measure the impact of the mass media campaign on family planning practices.
3. To provide useful information for the planning, testing, design, and production of radio programs and printed materials.

Activities Proposed

1. Organization of a committee in ASHONPLAFA in coordination with the CBD program to identify basic main points for the campaign.
2. Definition of location for pilot program.
3. Preparation of audience profile based on the following information:
 - a) Previous studies and documents available in Honduras such as Thomas Cook's studies in nutrition education; Ministry of Health's and AED's program; Aragon y Asociados' studies of users, etc.
 - b) Systematization of information obtained through personal contact with field workers in the pilot area according to the program needs.
 - c) Gathering of field information with segments of target population regarding:

- Contraceptive distribution and availability and quality of services according to population needs
- Population literacy level
- Population media habits
- Knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs held by population regarding points previously identified
- Barriers perceived by population regarding contraception

This field investigation will serve not only as a tool to provide qualitative information for the planning, design, and production of the mass media campaigns but also as a comparison base for the impact of the mass media in possible future changes.

4. Analysis of information and preparation of report for materials production.
5. Pre-testing of materials
 - a) Understanding of messages (radio and printed materials)
 - b) Suitability of content and formats to target population needs
6. Report of results of the pre-testing for changes in materials.
7. Impact evaluation of the campaign in family planning practices among the target population.

IHSS

On January 25, 1984, María del Carmen Miranda, the USAID Population Adviser; Dr. Samuel Dickerman, Chief of the Medical Services; and I met to

discuss the evaluation plan for their new population communications service program. One of the objectives of the meeting was to identify the people that would be in charge of the program and would participate in the materials production workshop that was scheduled for February 5-23, 1984.

Dr. Dickerman told us that the IHSS Chief of Public Relations, the journalist Lic. Guzmán, was going to be in charge of the program under his supervision and the certified nurse María de Jesús Mojica from Servicios Médicos was going to work on curriculum, content, and audience needs identification. A third person from Recursos Humanos was supposed to complete the team, but he had left his job so they had to wait for a new person to join the group.

Dr. Dickerman introduced us to María de Jesús Mojica and he proceeded to explain that they had plans to identify, for their IHSS internal program, the different levels of personnel at the institutions in Tegucigalpa so they could establish a better internal communication system. He said that one of the main problems was their lack of knowledge about family planning programs.

We then briefly discussed the evaluation part of the program. What follows is an outline of the points we covered in this rather fast meeting. A copy of the outline was requested by Dr. Dickerman and the following morning I left it with Mrs. María del Carmen Miranda.

Evaluation Objectives

To identify pertinent information to plan, design, test and produce appropriate materials to inform and educate the target population.

To measure the impact of the campaign on the family planning knowledge and practices of the target population.

Activities Proposed

1. Identification of target population
 - a) IHSS personnel
 - b) Beneficiaries of IHSS services
2. Identification of information and behavioral changes by the target population
3. Identification of potential obstacles
4. Compilation and analysis of previous studies and literature that would increase the knowledge about the target population
5. Gathering of information through informal conversations, interviews and questionnaires with IHSS personnel who have been in contact with the target population
6. Design and application of a baseline investigation in order to determine attitudes, beliefs and practices of the target population

This baseline investigation will later serve as a comparative instrument to measure the changes that occurred after the mass media campaign. Information about traditional and other channels of communication will be gathered. Regarding other channels, in this case the radio, information about preferred channels, hours, formats and themes will be researched. Regarding print media, the level of literacy and the use that the target population makes of these channels of information sources should also be studied.

7. Analysis of the above information
8. Recommendations for campaign production

9. Materials pre-testing

Once the materials are produced, a pre-test should be carried out to adjust them to the needs and perceptions of the target population. The objectives are:

- a) Visual and audio understanding of the messages
- b) Message acceptance (content and formats adapted to tastes and needs of target group)

Results will be measured in tests such as discussion groups and interviews with questionnaires with the audience(s). An analysis of the results will provide an opportunity to revise the audio and visual materials.

10. Media evaluation

There will be a periodical monitoring of:

- a) Messages broadcast
- b) Frequency with which the target population hears the programs
- c) Knowledge about messages
- d) Changes of knowledge, attitudes, and practices about family planning themes

Observations

The IHSS group was formed the very morning of my visit so we had very little time to meet and discuss the points mentioned. I consider this group to be the one in need of most assistance, since it is not totally integrated and has the double task of reaching professionals internally in the institution, as well as an illiterate audience.

MINISTERIO DE SALUD

In the afternoons of January 24 and 25, 1984, Mr. Ignacio Mata and I met to discuss the evaluation plans for their family planning component. As we talked it became clear that they had developed a comprehensive, yet simple methodology of objectives identification, information gathering, audience attitudes, knowledge and practices regarding specific objectives, material testing, and measurement of final impact. Although this methodology has been applied in other health areas, it is also applicable to the family planning component.

Mr. Mata explained to me the three message campaigns they had launched with three low key topics touching the health and economic aspects of family planning. They were investigating the reaction this type of campaign was provoking among not only the target audience but also among decision makers. Newspaper articles, church sermons, and radio commentaries had started to appear in the last days. They did not have a total picture yet of the impact of such programs.

Mr. Mata mentioned an investigation being carried out by MOH consultants on the MOH logistics. By April, Mr. Mata expects to have all this information together to start a baseline investigation. They will start in the Danlí, Olancho and Santa Rosa de Copán regions.

PROCOMSI has also been assisted by Mr. Dennis Foote and Karl Kendall in their evaluation component. It is too early to know how they will develop the evaluation component of the family planning part of PROCOMSI.

Observations

The PROCOMSI group of the Ministry of Health seems to be the most integrated, dynamic, and productive of the institutions visited in Honduras regarding the evaluation process. They have developed a flexible system which I think will be very helpful for the other groups to know more about.

It is my suggestion that a 3 to 4 day workshop be organized as soon as possible where the "how to" of objective identification, data gathering, and material production based on findings is demonstrated to the other Honduran

institutions. I think this will be a good way of sharing skills, breaking the distance within sections and institutions, and getting on with the task sooner and faster. I would also recommend that the evaluators involved in the JHU/PCS Costa Rican project be invited to this meeting.

Conclusions and Recommendations

I was able to meet with the people responsible for carrying out evaluation and research activities in the three organizations. I found two groups (ASHONPLAFA and IHSS) to be generally unaware of how to conduct communication research and its value for communication programs. The exception is the PROCOSI group of the Honduran Ministry of Health.

It will be necessary for JHU/PCS to follow up on my visit with additional technical assistance for ASHONPLAFA and IHSS. It is possible that the PROCOSI staff may be able to guide and assist these organizations in the development of their evaluation plans and activities.

The Ministry of Health in general, with its operations research consultants, should be able to gather a great deal of baseline data which can be shared by the three institutions. They may also assist ASHONPLAFA and IHSS in the development of separate research instruments.

LIST OF CONTACTS MADE IN HONDURAS

ASHONPLAFA

Alejandro Flores Aguilar	Executive Director
Alejandro Trujillo	Coordinator
Juanita Martínez	Chief of Information and Education
Nelly Funes	Chief of CBD Program
Margarita Suazo	Chief of Evaluation
Emiliano Flores	Communications Specialist
Rose Schneider	Development Associates

IHSS

Dr. Samuel Dickerman	Chief of Medical Services
María de Jesús Mojica	Medical Services

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Ignacio Mata	Advisor, PROCOSI
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USAID

Dr. María del Carmen Miranda	Population Advisor
Tom Park	Population Officer