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**REPORT OF CONSULTANCY
FOR RADIO DRAMA SERIES AND RADIO SPOTS**

MALI

July 9 - July 15, 1994

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**NUTRITION COMMUNICATION PROJECT
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ABBREVIATIONS

AED	Academy for Educational Development
CNIECS	Center for Nutrition Information, Education and Communication
NCP	Nutrition Communication Project
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UNICEF	United Nation's Children's Fund

NUTRITION COMMUNICATION PROJECT (USAID/AED)

MALI

REPORT OF CONSULTANCY MISSION FOR RADIO DRAMA

SERIES AND RADIO SPOTS

(9-15 July, 1994)

BACKGROUND

The basic strategy for nutrition communication in Mali is the same as in Burkina Faso, but the project in Mali is further ahead in its use of radio. It has already broadcast a 20-episode dramatized radio series. A series of spots has also been written but they were not recorded; and no spots were broadcast in support of the drama series during its first airing.

The essential task of the Communication Consultant, Colin Fraser, who was in Mali from 9-15 July 1994, was to work with the team who had been responsible for the programs and to try to improve them before they are re-broadcast. However, it was clear from the beginning that the assignment was to have an equally important training function, that is to say, revising the programs should be a learning experience that would be useful to the team for similar work in the future.

WORKING APPROACH AND METHODS

In order to provide the best possible learning experience, the Consultant decided to use a brainstorming and workshop-type approach in which the NCP team would be encouraged to make their own critical analysis of the radio materials and their own suggestions for improvements. The Consultant's inputs would be to provide a conceptual framework and criteria for the analysis and, as necessary, some occasional guidance and opinions. Above all, however, his task would be to stimulate the group, keep it on track, and generate a relaxed atmosphere, that would be conducive to creative brainstorming towards better scripts.

When the work began, there was some confusion as to what would happen if the group decided that the series could be improved by making major changes. Would resources be available to rewrite sections of the scripts and record the drama series again? The Consultant stated that the group should assume that resources would be available, and that they should work towards creating the best drama series possible without being inhibited by the issue of resources.

SOME GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT THE RADIO DRAMA SAHELI SAMA

A close study of the scripts before reaching Mali showed some weaknesses in their dramatic structure. The first weakness was that the characters were not properly established early on in the series. Thus, right up to the end, the audience would be learning basic information about people that they needed right from the beginning if the characters were to appear authentic. Just one example: it comes as a surprise in Episode 19 to hear that Sidi owns two-thirds of the land around the village.

It soon emerged during the workshop that those developing the series had not gone through the process of inventing their characters in detail beforehand, as they should have done. For authors can only generate authentic scenes and dialogues when they have a precise knowledge of their characters, their age, their appearance, their personalities, and their foibles in the back of their mind at all times while they write.

Another weakness was that the narrations that opened each episode, although often well written, did little to orient the listener about the story so far, or about messages from previous episodes, or about new characters who were about to be introduced. Thus it would be quite easy for listeners to lose track.

Perhaps the most serious problem, however, was in the dramatic development of the story lines. The series was full of potentially good and intriguing situations. There was conflict between Sidi and Lala, (his wife), conflict between Sidi and his son Siaka, a romance between Anta (Sidi's daughter) and the health worker, the presence of a young mistress in Sidi's life, and so on. However, none of these themes was developed properly. For example, Siaka runs away from home without there being any real process leading up to that climatic event; the health worker quite suddenly asks Sidi for his daughter Anta's hand; and the conflict between Sidi and Lala about her health and nutrition while pregnant and while breastfeeding is inconsistent and does not develop a trend that would arouse increasing audience interest about how it would all end.

On other occasions, situations are not developed sufficiently for the behavior of the characters to be plausible. For example, without adequate background explanation, Siaka, a youngster of undefined age - apart from the fact that he wants to go to school - suddenly starts to provide his foster mother, Mme Camara, with detailed information about what to feed infants when they have diarrhoea. Furthermore, the language he uses is stilted, straight from a health textbook, and is delivered in large chunks. The prior information to make this even remotely credible and in character was missing; for example, that he was always hanging around the health center selling soft drinks to patients and listening in on the advice being given by the health staff.

There were also some problems in the structure and presentation of the programs which could make them difficult to follow. For example, the narrator who introduced each episode also appeared as a character within some episodes without any explanation of his role. Now were new characters properly introduced, using classical radio techniques, so that listeners could know who they were. In many scenes, someone who was not present early on suddenly enters and says something without any sound effects or exchange of greetings to announce the arrival. Right at

the end of the workshop, the principle writer for the series mentioned that he had written one episode at a time and that it had then been discussed and inhaled about with the nutrition specialists, before he went on to write the next episode. This piecemeal approach could explain why the series was lacking in plot and situation development that would create rising interest and emotional appeal for listeners. For any future efforts of this sort, the Consultant recommends that the writer(s), after being given a brief of the technical messages, draft at least five episodes as a batch before they are discussed for their technical content. And there should be a plot outline for the remaining episodes in existence at the same time.

Just as in Burkina Faso, the collaboration between the technical people (nutritionists) and the communicators had not been too satisfactory. As usual, the communicators felt that they were being asked to cram too much information and education into the series, and there was a lack of understanding of the respective roles of the communicators and the nutritionists

ACTIVITIES

The Consultant launched the workshop in the same way he had in Burkina Faso. He described in detail *The Archers - an Everyday Story of Country Folk*, the most successful development oriented soap opera of all time. He provided information about the thinking behind the series, the production techniques used, and the impact. A discussion about that *The Archers* then led to the establishment of the criteria by which the Mali series would be judged. (See Annex 1).

There were some logistical problems, however, that made the first day rather difficult. Firstly, the transport to take the group to the UNICEF buildings where the workshop was to take place failed to turn up. The work was therefore started in one meeting room in the CNEICS building, moved to another after about half an hour, and then finally moved to the UNICEF buildings around mid-morning. At that point, some of the UNICEF participants joined the group, but of course they had missed the first part of the morning.

Furthermore, there were too many people in the group. (See Annex 2 for list of participants). The participatory methodology used by the Consultant can really only function well with a maximum of ten people. Twelve people stretches it, and the fifteen that were present, but who had come in at different times - with some UNICEF participants even drifting in almost at the end of the first day - made things awkward. Had it not been for the NCP's interest in having UNICEF more involved in the Project, and assuming some of the costs, the Consultant would have insisted on a reduced number of people.

Following the sessions about *The Archers* and the establishment of the criteria that would be used to analyze the drama series, the group began to listen to the episodes one by one. The large number of people, many of whom did not know each other, made it quite difficult to get open-minded brainstorming going, and some people were initially quite defensive. However, the atmosphere slowly improved and by the end of the second day, the group was working as a team, in a constructive and creative way, even if the large number of people, nearly all with ideas to contribute, slowed the work considerably. Later in the week, quite a few of the UNICEF people were no longer able to attend, and the work proceeded faster as the group

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dwindled in size.

The first decisions reached about the series in general were:

- All credits would be moved from the beginning to the end of each episode.
- Djeliba, the griot (storyteller), would be a character in the series because of the importance of the family griot in rural society in Mali. The narrator who introduces and closes each episode would be a different person.
- All of the explanatory comments and value judgments by the narrator which often appear in the middle of episodes in the existing series would be removed. The information or opinions conveyed by the narrator would be brought out through the dialogue instead.
- The new narrator's introductions would have the following functions: a) resume briefly the story of the last episodes; b) repeat the key message from the previous episode, and c) introduce any new characters that were going to appear in the episode. The closing narration would provide a hook to get people to listen to the next week's instalment.

Many changes were agreed during the analysis and discussion of the 14 episodes that it was possible to deal with in the time available.

As a starting point, it was decided that before beginning any re-write, the characters would be described and defined as a way of ensuring greater authenticity.

Each episode would have a duration of 10-15 minutes, compared to the 6-10 minutes of the series as it is at present.

As the main dramatic thread, it was decided to concentrate on Sidi's outmoded and negative attitudes, and his conflicts with his wife and the rest of the community. Gradually, step by step, and against the grain, he would be made to change. He would admit, at first only to himself, that his wife's health while pregnant, and his lovely newborn daughter's growth and health, were new to his experience. He would also admit that the food and nutrition advice his wife had been following just might be the reason. Slowly he would progress to a full "conversion" in the penultimate episode.

Siaka's conflict with his father and his eventual flight from home because of it would be properly developed as a sub-plot. This also would be resolved at the end with Siaka returning home and being allowed by his father to go to school.

Anta's growing sentimental involvement with the health agent would also be properly developed and resolved with the announcement that they would be married.

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The existence of a young mistress in Sidi's life would be dropped.

Each plot and sub-plot would be built with the appropriate rhythm and emotional content. For example, Sidi's reaction of distress to his son's flight would be properly portrayed - it is not in the old version - thereby making the resolution and Sidi's final acceptance of his son's desire to go to school more satisfying to the audience.

All of the opening narrations will be re-written to cover the functions that it was agreed they would perform, and there would also be a closing narration for each episode with the hook to have people listen to the next.

The main changes agreed for each episode were as follow:

Episode 1 - Siaka's grievances will be presented through a dialogue with his sister, instead of his present monologue.

In Lala's last statement, she will introduce the information that she is pregnant again, adding stress to her concerns about how she feeds her family.

Episode 2 - Anta and Sidi will have a conflictual dialogue about what she is reading on nutrition. The narrators's comments interjected throughout the scene will all be eliminated and replaced with dialogue. Anta will begin to appear, through the dialogue, as an intelligent girl who is interested in nutrition issues - a foil to Sidi, her dominating and ignorant father.

Episode 3 - On the first page of the script for this episode, and to establish his credentials, Mamatou will explain to Djeliba that he knows about night blindness during pregnancy from his experience with his own wife. And on the second page, he will expand on the seriousness of night blindness, it's possible affects on the baby, etc. He will also provide information about the need for pregnant women to eat liver, green leaves, etc.

Episode 4 - This episode is basically all right. At the end, Sidi's underlying motivations will be made clearer. He will say aloud to himself that there must be a better way of curing night blindness than having to give the liver he is so fond of to his wife, so he will take Lala to the health worker for advice.

Episode 5 - The present Episodes 5 and 6 will be joined into one. Sidi will take Lala with him to the agent de santé - who is to be given the name of Brima. Brima and Lala will converse and it will be explained that Lala is four months into her pregnancy. Brima will say that it is good that she has come, and explain that women should really come to the health services for a check in their third month of pregnancy, and twice more before the birth. They will talk about what she should be eating and what will cure her night blindness. Sidi is still very negative.

Episode 6 - This will be a new episode in which the theme will be that pregnant women should not do heavy work. There will be plenty of conflict in which Sidi complains bitterly, but finally goes along grudgingly with the advice of Brima. The episode will also have a scene in which the beginning of a love affair between Brima and Anta is suggested.

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Episode 7 - The introductory narration to this episode will announce the birth of a beautiful baby girl to Lala, stressing that Lala had been for her three prenatal visits, and had followed the health worker's advice on what she should eat, repeating the liver, green leaves, etc. message again.

Episode 8 - Oumou's comment that he has not seen Lala's new daughter for three months will be changed to his not having seen her "for a long time". (The group agreed that it is not possible in an African village for someone not to see a neighbor for three months). On the second page of the present script for this episode, the language in the conversation between Lala and Oumou is pedantic. It will be re-written more as a dialogue, with short sentences and avoiding difficult words. On the last page, all of the exchange between Oumou and Lala concerning Sidi's doubts about the paternity of the baby will be cut. It will be replaced by a new scene in which Sidi will admit, possibly to Mamoutou, that he has never seen such a lovely, healthy, contented baby as his new daughter. But he does not know how to admit to Lala that she was right to follow the health worker's advice.

Episode 9 - Although it seems that the Bambara recording is less heavy and pedantic than the French version, it was agreed to make a number of changes in the part in which the health worker is delivering his lecture about the feeding of infants. It will be re-written more as a dialogue with different mothers who are present, and the advice will be given to a specific person with a child of the age for which the health agent is providing nutrition information. This personalized approach should be more effective, and will also allow pauses for the information to sink in before going on to the next age bracket.

At the end of the episode, and to re-introduce drama, there will be a new scene in which there is a conversation between Lala and another woman in the health center who comments that Lala looks worried. Lala will confirm that she is deeply worried because Siaka has disappeared. Sidi is away in another village for a couple of days, she explains, and when he returns and hears about Siaka he will be very angry and upset.

Episode 10 - This will be recast slightly to make Anta and her mother Lala jointly prepare the bouillie, with Anta the more knowledgeable of the two. At the end of the first scene in the episode, Lala will ask Anta how she knows so much about these things. "Is there something going on between you and Brima, the health worker?", she will ask teasingly. Anta's embarrassed giggle and lack of denial in response will confirm that a sentimental attachment to Brima is developing.

When Sidi appears, having returned from his trip to a neighboring village, his jealous feelings about Lala and Brima in the present version will be changed to anger that Brima, with all his advice, is disturbing the village traditions and ways of doing things.

Oumou and Lala's exchange on the third page will be broken up into more dialogue in order to shorten the lengthy and heavy interventions, and Sidi will be objecting and saying the whole thing is ridiculous.

Finally in this scene, Sidi will be told that Siaka has been missing for two days. He becomes

angry, but at the same time very distressed that his son has disappeared.

Episode 11 - The opening scene between Anta and Brima will be made warmer and more intimate, a conversation between two people who are falling in love. When they arrive at Kariba's house, there will be introductions before Brima makes his comment about the cat eating in the same bowl as the child. And he will be courteous, but at the same time firm, in making this comment, whereas in the present version he is plain rude - hardly a model for how a health worker should behave.

When Kariba asks Anta whether Brima is her boy-friend, Anta will laugh with embarrassment but will not deny it.

When Brima tells Kariba that her child must be supervised while eating and have its food in a separate bowl, he will also tell her that the child must have three bowls of food a day, plus fruit, etc. (The message about the quantity of food a child should eat was left out in the existing series).

Brima often uses French words in his interventions. These will be removed.

More attention will be paid to making sure that characters are identified when they first speak.

The sound effect of the cat will be changed for a recording of a real cat, and it seems that the actress who plays Anta will also need to be changed because her voice is too adult.

Episode 12 - This will retain the same basic content but will be recast in a number of ways. In the exchange about Siaka between Sidi and Kariba on the first page, Sidi will express his grief at the disappearance of his son. At the bottom of that same page, when Lala says that during her pregnancy she got rid of her night blindness, fatigue, etc, she will add "thanks to knowing what a pregnant women must eat." And she will briefly outline what she ate to be cured.

The exchange between Kariba and Sidi about the lake drying up will be cut. It adds nothing and Sidi's comment about the numerous gardens contradicts later episodes in which M'pia's women finally start vegetable gardens.

The recognition sequence between Brima, on the one hand, and Sira and Kariba, on the other, will be moved up from its present position on page 3 to the bottom of page 2, when they all arrive at the health center. When Sidi replies to Brima's question about Koro, Sidi's baby daughter, (at the bottom of page 2) he will say, as in the present version, "Koro se comporte à merveille" and go on to enthuse about her beauty and her health, showing enormous paternal pride.

Brima's interventions about the malnourished child will be completely re-written. The child's age will be established during a first exchange between Brima and the parents. Brima will address the parents of the child about its state of health, not Sidi, the uncle, as he does at present. Brima will be gentle and concerned, rather than abrupt and authoritarian. Phrases such as "you are going to kill this child" will be cut. Brima's whistles of surprise at the malnourished

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state of the child will be cut.

When Brima says that the child is the victim of incorrect weaning and says "Voilà l'ordonnance" (lower part of page 3), he will instead give a short explanation of what the child should have been given to eat to prevent it falling into its malnourished state.

Episode 13 - The content of the episode is all right, but there are problems with the way Siaka provides information about how to treat a child with diarrhoea. Furthermore, Siaka's voice is too adult for a child of primary- school age.

The actor who plays Siaka will be changed, and all of his textbook-style, pedantic speeches will be broken up into dialogue in so far as possible. In addition, the style will be changed so that it is clear that Siaka is passing on information that he has heard in the health center, rather than having it appear as his own knowledge.

When Siaka tells Mme Camara that his real name is Siaka, not Daouda, she will react, rather than ignoring Siaka and talking about her baby's stools as she does at present.

Episode 14 - A change of scene will be introduced at the end of the conversation between Sidi and the village chief, on the second page. At the end, Sidi will speak to himself aloud to replace the narrator and to notice the apparition's beard. Then, after Sidi's cry of alarm, he will shout, "It's a dwarf!"

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There was no time for detailed analysis of further episodes. However, some broad conclusions were reached as to how the series should continue and finish.

Episode 15, about goitre, was introduced at the request of UNICEF. At present, it is lacking technical information and is therefore pointless. If the technical information needed to give it point cannot be made available, the group believed that the episode should be dropped. However, some of the UNICEF people present expressed the opinion that there would be no problem in providing the technical information.

Episode 17 would be rewritten so that the audience knows that Siaka is listening to the conversation in the Camaras' home when Sidi arrives to collect his son. A new scene would be added at the end in which the Camaras are discussing whether Siaka should be encouraged to return to his home or not and in which they talk about their own love for the boy.

Episode 18, dealing with Sidi's child by his mistress would be dropped. The present Episode 19 would replace it as No. 18.

A new Episode 19 would be written under the working title of "Sidi's conversion." It would be mainly a conversation between Sidi and Lala in which Sidi finally communicates openly and honestly. He tells her that she was right, and that their healthy baby Koro is the proof. Despite his formal objections in the previous episode to making available any of his land for growing

vegetables and fruit, he was in fact impressed by what he heard about the village of Falani. He is now convinced that he should behave differently and support improved nutrition in his family and in the community in any way he can. He also says that if Siaka ever comes home he would allow him to go to school.

In the final episode, Siaka is home. Sidi is delighted and tells him he can go to school. Sidi makes a public statement that he will make his land available for the women to start gardens. The president of the women pays homage to the Brima and to Sidi. The announcement is made that Brima and Anta are to marry. As in the present version, there is general rejoicing and satisfaction all round, but in addition, all the conflicts and subplots are finally resolved.

When the new drafts are available, it will be important to check that the gradual process leading up to Sidi's conversion follows a logical sequence. There must be evidence, through the way he speaks and behaves, that his resistance is slowly being worn down, although the final outcome is still in doubt. If this evidence is not provided, his conversion will not be credible. In the episodes analyzed and revised by the group, the first tentative steps towards Sidi's conversion were taken. The gradual process must carefully be constructed in the later episodes.

THE SPOTS

No spots were broadcast in support of the drama series and its messages when the series was aired the first time.

The group discussed different types of spot and micro-programme, and the characteristics that they should have if they are to be effective. (See Annex 1)

The group decided to make real spots, of 20-30 second duration, rather than the longer sketch-type micro-programs to be used in Burkina Faso.

The first spot for Mali would announce the drama series and would go on air 7-10 days before the starting date for the series. It would be broadcast three times in the morning and three times in the afternoon.

The rest of the spots would consist of the nutrition messages from the series. It was agreed that, ideally, they would be in the form of songs, or more exactly, a jingle which would always be the same melody, but use different words for each spot. The group agreed to look into this possibility in terms of the financial and creative resources required. If it proved impossible, a musical jingle would still be used to identify the spots as part of a series, but the message for each would be read rather than sung.

It was agreed that the spots must be attractive and appealing and that they must have the sort of energy that good publicity spots normally have. They would not have any direct identification with the drama series through using the same music or voice, because it might be more effective to have the same message reach the public in a different form and context.

It was agreed that the spots should go on air at least six times a day. Immediately after the broadcast of a drama episode, the spot would repeat the message of that episode for two days. Thereafter during the week, and as more and more drama episodes had been broadcast, earlier spots would be repeated. Thus, by the end of the series, all of the spots would have been aired many times.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The group identified the actions required in the coming weeks and, taking into account their individual commitments, decided on the following work programme:

Activity 1:

Complete the analysis and revision of the remaining 6 episodes

Duration and Dates: 2 days, week of 18 July

Person Responsible for organizing/convening: Katerine Sissoko

Activity 2:

Draw up budget for all production and broadcasting costs and submit to AED and UNICEF

Duration and Dates: Three weeks from 25 July to 15 August 1994

Person Responsible: Katerine Sissoko

Activity 3:

Await and/or negotiate budget approvals with AED and UNICEF

Duration and Dates: 4 weeks from 15 August to 10 September 1994

Persons responsible: Katerine Sissoko
Fatoumata Maiga

Activity 4:

Modify/rewrite scripts for drama series

Duration and Dates: 4 weeks from 12 September to 15 October 1994

Person Responsible: Saïdou Toure

Activity 5:

Technical approval of nutrition messages by CНИЕCS

Duration and Dates: 2 weeks from 15-29 October 1994

Person responsible: Fatoumata Maiga

Activity 6:

Final revision of scripts

Duration and Dates: 1 week from 31 October to 5 November 1994

Person responsible: Saïdou Toure

Activity 7:

Rehearsals, recording, mixing of drama series

Duration and Dates: 4 weeks from 5 November to 3 December 1994

Person responsible: Saïdou Toure

Activity 8

Production of spots. To begin as soon as the final scripts for the drama series are complete.

Duration and Dates: 3 weeks from 4-26 November

Person responsible: Seydou Diallo (Liaison studio)

BEGINNING DATE AND DAY AND TIME OF BROADCASTS

It was agreed that broadcasting should begin as soon as the programs are ready, which would mean early December. This is a good month because it is the dry season when people have more time to listen to the radio.

Friday morning before 11:00 was agreed as being a very suitable time. Friday is a day of rest in the countryside.

STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR THE DRAMA SERIES

Interpersonal Communication Support from Health Staff

It is well known that mass media programs normally have the most impact in bringing about behavioral change when they are supported by inter-personal communication.

After some discussion on this theme, it was agreed that the Ministry of Health should ensure that all field workers (Ministry of Health and NGO staff working with the NCP) are briefed about the radio series before it goes on air, and that they are asked to do all they can to reinforce the messages during their normal work with their client populations.

To alert the health staff and NGOs in the field, it was agreed to produce and distribute a pamphlet or brochure about the radio series.

Involving other Sectors

It was agreed to try to involve the field staff of other sectors that have a strong presence in the countryside in order to help support the messages in the series. In particular, the Ministries of Agriculture, Education, and the Interior were identified as having a potentially important support role.

Thus, the Minister of Health should be asked to sign a letter addressed to the other sector Ministers mentioned above. This letter should alert them to the upcoming series, to the main nutritional problems in the country, and the need to bring about improvements. The letter should also ask specifically that each Ministry alert its own field staff to the radio series, the problems it should help to alleviate, and solicit their support. It would be hoped in this way to gain the active support of agricultural extensionists, school teachers, and local authorities. The World Bank supported National Agricultural Extension project would certainly be a channel for reaching extension agents.

Monitoring and Feedback

The group generated an interesting idea for a competition linked to each broadcast, which would also provide good possibilities for monitoring and feedback.

After the close of each episode, an announcer would pose a question to listeners about a nutrition issue dealt with in the episode, offering a prize for the first correct answer opened in the radio station or perhaps in CNECS. It seems that the postal services function quite well in Mali, though obviously listeners would need to be given a date, say three weeks ahead, when the letters would be opened. Listeners would also be asked to include any suggestions or comments they have about the series when answering the question.

It was proposed that the prizes be sought from commercial interests in Mali, and Katerine Sissoko will look into this possibility.

Towards the Final Evaluation

If the monitoring and feedback linked to the proposed weekly competition works reasonably well, it should yield a considerable quantity of information that would be useful for the final evaluation of the radio productions. However, if it does not function well, the same proposal made by the Consultant for Burkina Faso might be tried, that is to say, organize broadcasts using the Rural Radio format of "jeux radiophoniques." (Both Mali and Burkina are using this rural broadcasting format).

These special program(s) would take the form of a visit to one or more villages in the NCP area by the Rural Radio services. The actors from the series would be introduced to the villagers and then there would be a session of the "jeux radiophoniques." The "jeux" would take the form of a quiz competition about the nutrition issues covered in the drama series, with small prizes for the winners.

This, or these, radio programs would help to reinforce the messages yet again, and at the same time provide some interesting, even if preliminary, evaluation data.

SECONDARY USE OF THE DRAMA SERIES

UNICEF is interested in the possibility of group listening and this was discussed in some detail during the workshop. The phrase "club d'écoute" was being used and this called for some clarification: "Listening Club" in the classic context of rural broadcasting projects in the 1960's and 1970's were clubs created to bring members together especially to listen to broadcast programs.

The Consultant explained that from his experience, this strategy had limited potential today because of the greater availability of radio receivers, and that in addition, creating special

listening clubs with restricted numbers of members often created new elites in rural communities. Thus, non-members tended to feel alienated and were therefore likely to become dismissive of the rural radio programs. For these reasons, it was preferable today to broadcast special programs for existing groups and associations that meet regularly as part of their own agendas.

During the discussions, however, it became clear that what UNICEF had in mind was group listening to cassettes. This, of course, is totally different, and the Consultant was able to confirm from his experience that the use of cassettes in this way can be very effective. In addition, there is a need to make the maximum possible use of the radio materials, given the cost and effort that have gone in to producing them.

It was therefore agreed by the group that secondary use of the drama series through group listening to cassettes would be extremely valuable and would be promoted.

In practice, the health worker - whether from government or NGO - would use a cassette recording of an episode to introduce and enliven a meeting called to discuss nutrition with people in the community. If properly conducted, the discussion that followed the tape could provide a powerful process of awareness creation, an analysis of nutritional problems, and lead to action for change.

The Consultant proposed that some of the techniques normally used when facilitating Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) be used to guide the discussions following the cassette. In particular, the aim should be to promote reflection and analysis by asking questions to ascertain, firstly of course, whether the key message in the episode has been understood. The health worker would then ask questions to find out what the group feels and thinks about the key message in the episode; what their problems are or might be in following the advice; what the underlying causes of those problems are; and finally, to determine what might be done, individually or by the group, to address the causes of the problems, thereby introducing change.

From the organizational point of view, it was agreed that about 10 health workers selected from villages that are geographically well spread in the NCP area would be brought in for a short workshop. They would be oriented and trained in the use of the cassettes during meetings with villagers, in particular with regard to how to conduct the follow-up discussions. These people would then go back to their villages of assignment and become the coordinators for the use of the cassettes in their area. There are about 40 villages in the NCP area, so typically, each coordinator would look after about four villages.

The drama series is recorded on cassettes with four episodes per cassette. Thus, a cassette would be released for use with groups every four weeks, and the episode used with the group would have been broadcast four weeks earlier. This is a suitable time delay, the group believed.

It was also proposed by the group that, following a meeting at which a cassette had been used, it would be worth leaving the cassette in the village for other people to listen to. According to the Malian members of the group, cassette recorders are commonly found in villages. The idea was also put forward that people might be encouraged to record their comments and views on

the other side of the tape, thus providing excellent feedback - further grist for the evaluation mill.

UNICEF, it seems, would be interested in assuming the financial costs of the cassette operation. The group suggested that each of the 10 coordinators should be provided with a cassette recorder, and of course, at least ten series of five cassettes each would be required.

Finally, in discussing the issue of maximizing the use of the materials, it was agreed that attempts would be made to persuade the FM stations in the country to broadcast the series. From his experience in Latin America where the radio stations are almost all private, the Consultant believes that it could well be possible to persuade the FM station owners in Mali to broadcast the series at no cost to the NCP. Owners of private radio stations are often pleased to show that have a social conscience, and provided that the material offered to them is good and is to be given to them free, they are happy to use it. It helps fills their air time and enhances their image.

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CONCLUDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In conclusion, the consultant would like to express his thanks to the staff of the NCP in Mali for their support and help during his assignment. The logistical problems of the first day were in no way the fault of the NCP Coordinator, whose planning and organization were excellent throughout.

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CRITERIA FOR JUDGING THE DRAMA SERIES AND SPOTS

1. Audience appeal based on such elements as:

Tension

Conflict

Suspense,

Comedy

Resolution.

Balance between entertainment, information, and education

2. Credibility and audience identification with personalities and messages resulting from:

Authenticity of the characters and their behavior

Authenticity of their dialogue

Authenticity of the situations being developed

3. Probable impact of messages based on:

Number of educational messages in any one episode

Relevance of the messages to the audiences' needs as they see them and to their capacity to implement the advice

Form of presentation of the messages (dialogue, described action, lecture-type presentation)

Providing explanation of the reason for the advice given

Repetition

Credibility of the source of the message

Criteria for the Spots

Linking identity for the topic e.g. the same musical introduction.

Single message,

Simple language

Brevity

Attractive e.g. good music, good voice of speaker, punchy

Credibility e.g source of message

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE MALI WORKSHOP

* = day in attendance

Saïdou Toure	ORTM	*****
Seydou Diallo	Liaison Studio	*****
Fatoumata Maïga	CNIECS	*****
Tamboura Safiatou	"	*****
Soumbourou Saba Doucoure	"	*****
Moktar Ly	"	****
Victoria Wise	UNICEF	**
Dramane Arby	"	*****
Haïdara Hawa Toure	"	*****
Judith Donoso	"	**
Fatoumata Haïga	"	***
Francoise Guenet Birre	"	***
Jean Coursimault	"	*****
Fatoumatou Cisse	"	*****
Katerine Sissoko	NCP	*****
Ms Sylla	DNAFLA	*
Abdallah Kounta	Observer	****