Everett M. Rogers and Arvind Singhal (1990). New Perspectives on Health Communication: The Academic Perspective. In Charles Atkins and Elaine Arkin (eds.), Mass Communication and Public Health (pp. 176-181), Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

The Academic Perspective

EVERETT M. ROGERS
ARVIND SINGHAL

Researchers have recently examined a promising approach to health promotion that emphasizes an entertaining style of presentation. The entertainment-education strategy amounts to intentionally inserting educational content in entertainment messages, whether in radio, television, print, or popular music. This strategy thus combines two forms of mass media—entertainment and information campaigns—that are treated mainly in a discrete fashion in previous chapters of the present book. Our present review of uses of the entertainment-education strategy centers mainly on the Third World nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia, where this strategy has been utilized exclusively in development programs in recent years. We shall draw a series of general lessons from these experiences, concentrating on health-related campaigns.

st; the commitment
f the journalist.
conference, espe-
their dedication to
to speak of their
st journalists, who
nselves full justice
care deeply about
shers, and who are
ing of stories that
d their marketing

ne common theme
nalists, the educa-
d thy nose! Know
ossess the soul of
roducer, you may
himself.

proach to health
presentation. The
ally inserting ed-
in radio, televi-
nes two forms of
—that are treated
he present book.
ucation strategy
erica, Africa, and
in development
eral lessons from
npaigns.

Combining Entertainment with Education

A time-honored and seldom-questioned classification of media messages is whether they are educational or entertaining in nature. There is not complete agreement on what to call the entertainment-education communication strategy that has been utilized in recent years. Various alternatives, such as "pro-development," "enter-education," and "edutainment" have been proposed (Rogers, Aikat, Chang, Poppe, & Sopory, 1989). Everyone agrees, however, that the key idea is to combine entertainment and education so as to obtain certain advantages of each.

Entertainment-Education via Television

The conception of entertainment-education television soap operas originated in 1974 with Televisa, the Mexican commercial television network. These soap operas were the idea of Miguel Sabido, an internationally acclaimed Mexican theater director and a writer-producer-director at Televisa. Sabido designed seven entertainment-education soap operas that were broadcast in Mexico from 1975 to 1982. *Acompáñame* ("Accompany Me") promoted family planning in Mexico during 1977-1978, achieved high audience ratings, and, along with other factors, convinced half a million Mexicans to visit government family-planning health clinics (Televisa's Institute of Communication Research, 1981). Sabido's other soap operas in Mexico dealt with female equality, child rearing, and sex education for teenagers.

The Mexican soap opera experience inspired India to broadcast *Hum Log* ("We People"), a 1984-1985 television series addressing such social issues as gender inequality, health, alcoholism, and family planning (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Most *Hum Log* viewers reported learning positive attitudes and behaviors about an equal status for women, national integration, health, and smaller family-size norms. At the close of each episode, a famous actor in Hindi films, Ashok Kumar, briefly summarized that episode in the television series, providing viewers with appropriate guides to action. Each epilogue of approximately 30 to 50 seconds was a concentrated educational message, drawing out key lessons for behavior change.

Hum Log's audience success persuaded Kenya to broadcast its first family planning television soap opera, *Tushauriane* ("Let's Discuss"), from 1987 to 1989. In 1990, Mexico's Miguel Sabido is producing another family-planning soap opera (with an AIDS-prevention and

drug-abuse subtheme) *Sangre Joven* ("Young Blood"), to be broadcast in six Latin American nations and on Spanish-language television in the United States (Singhal, 1990).

In Enugu, Nigeria, the Nigeria Television Authority (NTA), in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS), integrated family-planning themes in the drama segments of an existing television variety show, *In a Lighter Mood*. Thirty-nine episodes were broadcast for 14 months during 1986-1987. The family-planning television segments promoted the benefits of child spacing, modern methods of contraception, and small family-size norms (Winnard, Rimon, & Convisser, 1987). Twice during each episode, Enugu's only family-planning clinic was advertised, encouraging residents to seek help in family-planning matters.

Point-of-referral data were gathered at the only family-planning clinic in Enugu. A 147% increase occurred in the number of adopters of family planning over the 14 months after the broadcasts began, and 60% of all new adopters reported the television program as their source of referral to the clinic.

In Egypt, *Ana Zananna* ("I'm Persistent"), a humorous television series consisting of 14 television minidramas (each one minute long), provided education about family-planning methods to a nationwide television audience in Egypt. Broadcast over 100 times (almost like an advertising spot) in 1988, each episode of *Ana Zananna* was a self-contained melodramatic television spot. A research evaluation showed the *Ana Zananna* family-planning campaign to be very effective. In 1988, Turkish Television broadcast a similar family-planning television miniseries, *Sparrows Don't Migrate*, which was watched by about 20 million Turks.

Entertainment-Education via Radio and Music

In recent years, a number of pioneering efforts has been made in radio to break down the arbitrary dichotomy of entertainment versus education. From 1985 to 1989, Elaine Perkins wrote and produced a family-planning radio soap opera, *Naseberry Street*, for the Jamaican Family Planning Association. *Naseberry Street* reached an audience of about one million, 40% of Jamaica's population. Evaluation research showed that the radio soap opera is highly effective in promoting the

adoption of family planning in Jamaica (Stone, 1988). Similar efforts utilizing an entertainment-education strategy in radio have occurred in Indonesia, Kenya, and Costa Rica.

One of the most effective means of reaching the public, especially teenagers, is to convey educational messages through popular music. From 1982 to 1986, the Jamaican National Family Planning Board ran an integrated family-planning communication campaign that included songs about sexual responsibility. One of the key slogans of this family-planning campaign was "Before you be a mother, you got to be a woman." This slogan was the chorus of a song that was sung to a catchy reggae beat by Gem Myers and the Fab Five, a popular music group in Jamaica. This song became very popular with the teenage Jamaican audience. A 1986 evaluation showed that about 90% of the respondents recalled the sexual responsibility message in "You got to be a woman" (*Population Reports*, 1986).

In 1986, Johns Hopkins University's Population Communication Services (JHU/PCS) launched a unique communication project in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries: A rock music video that promoted sexual abstinence and contraception, entitled *Cuando Estemos Juntos* ("When We Are Together"). This song was number one on the pop music charts within six weeks of its release in Mexico, and soon it was also a top-rated song in 11 other Latin American countries. Tatiana, a 16-year old singer from Mexico, and Johnny, a 17-year old Puerto Rican singer, performed *Cuando Estemos Juntos*. The teenage singers told their teenage audience not to have sex. Radio and television stations could play the song without paying a broadcast fee if they accompanied the music with an announcement of the address and telephone number of a local family-planning clinic that offered contraceptive services to teenagers (Kincaid, Jara, Coleman, & Segura, 1988).

In 1988, a similar rock music campaign was launched by JHU/PCS officials in the Philippines to promote sexual responsibility among Filipino teenagers. As in the case of Tatiana and Johnny's song in Mexico, JHU/PCS's multimedia efforts in the Philippines had two components: commercial and institutional. The commercial component attempted to establish each song as a commercial hit with a social message. The institutional component linked the song's message to a telephone hotline, where young adults received information, counseling, and referrals about their problems.

Lessons Learned About the Entertainment-Education Strategy

Here we draw a series of general lessons from the use of entertainment-education strategy in Third World countries, concentrating on health-related campaigns.

The mixture of entertainment and educational message content can serve to attract large audiences to the media and thus earn high profits from advertising and/or sales (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). Education is ordinarily a cost, and often it is a huge and expensive drain on the national exchequer. In comparison, the entertainment-education strategy provides an opportunity for an educational message to pay for itself, and often to yield a profit. For example, the popularity of *Cuando Estemos Juntos* led to record-breaking sales of Tatiana's music album.

The entertainment-education communication cannot make the educational content too blatant or hard-sell, or else the audience will reject such messages (Singhal & Rogers, 1989). How much education should be included in an entertainment-education message? No hard-and-fast rule is available, but experiences to date suggest that overemphasized educational content can turn off the intended audience.

The effects of using the entertainment-education strategy are increased when the entertainment-education strategy is accompanied by supplementary messages to form an integrated communication campaign (Rogers & Singhal, 1989). The rock songs promoting sexual responsibility among teenagers in Mexico and in the Philippines were accompanied by print and broadcast advertisements, personal appearances by the singers, label buttons urging "Say No to Sex," posters, and a telephone ("Dial-A Friend") hotline. These attempts at behavior change consisted of a coordinated communication campaign, rather than just a song featuring lyrics with an educational message.

The repetition of the educational content in an entertainment-educational message is important in achieving its desired educational effects (Rogers & Singhal, 1989). Compared to the results of most communication research on a single message (which typically finds only minimal effects), studies of the effects of entertainment-education messages show they have considerable effects. Why? One reason is repetition. A television soap opera is typically broadcast for one hour per day, five days a week, for a year or more. Similarly, a hit song like *Cuando Estemos Juntos* was played by a typical Mexican radio station about 15 times *per day* for the 3 or 4 months of the song's greatest

popularity! On the other hand, a single-shot dedicated episode of prime-time program is likely to have little impact.

Entertainment-education communication strategies are most successful when public health officials, broadcast media officials, development planners, religious organizations, commercial sponsors, and other involved parties work collaboratively. Such a collaboration creates consensus between participating organizations and facilitates coordination of the public service infrastructure. For example, the success of *Acompáñame* can be attributed to the cooperation among Mexican government officials, family-planning organizations, the Catholic Church, Televisa (the Mexican national television network), and the infrastructure of government clinics (Singhal, 1990).

Also, several champions in a nation must become interested in an entertainment-education mass medium and put the weight of their position behind the idea for the idea to be carried forward into action (Rogers & Singhal, 1989). So ultimately the success of an entertainment-education project depends on committed leadership.