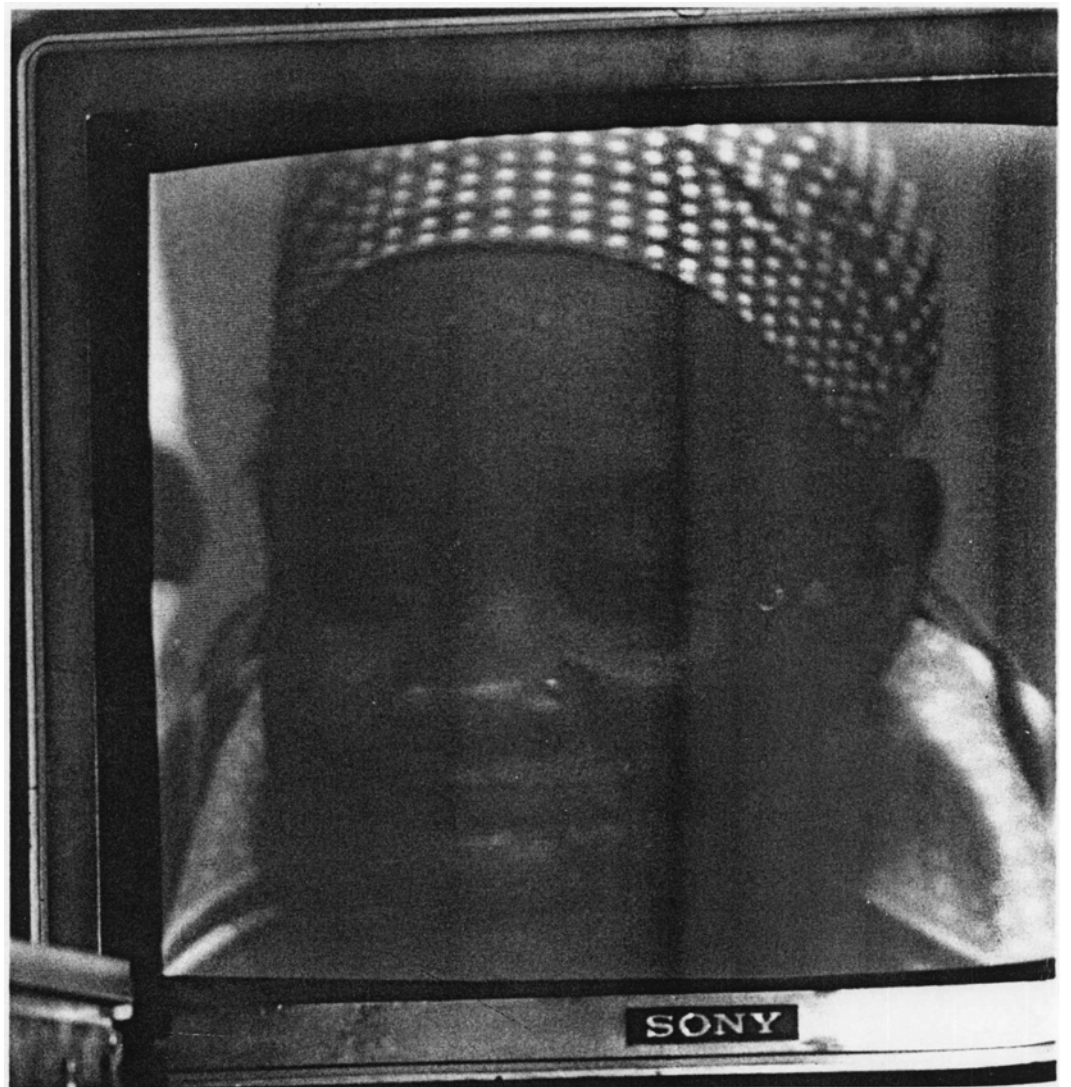


EDUCATING THROUGH TELEVISION

by Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers



During the 1980s, TV audiences have expanded tremendously in such Third World nations as the People's Republic of China, India and Mexico. The Third World countries' share of the world supply of TV sets increased from 5 per cent in 1965 to 35 per cent in 1987.

Entertainment-through television, radio and music-is one of the most effective communication strategies for reaching the public to promote family

planning and other public health issues.

However, neither private-commercial nor government TV has been utilized effectively to air programmes dealing with family planning, promoting literacy, improving nutrition, and increasing productivity. TV content in the 'Third World, as elsewhere, is dominated by such shows as "I Love Lucy", "Kojak", and "Dallas".

But pro-development or social-message TV soap operas are one bright spot in this otherwise dismal picture of unfulfilled potential.

What is this potential? It is great, indeed. During the 1980s, TV audiences have expanded tremendously in such Third World nations as the People's Republic of China, India, and Mexico. The Third World countries' share of the world population of TV sets increased from 5 per cent in 1965 to 35 per cent in 1987. TV now reaches an audience of at least 550 million of China's 1.1 billion population (50 per cent), about 80 million of India's 800 million people (10 per cent), and about 70 million of Mexico's 80 million people (87 per cent). Sharp increases in the size of the TV audience have occurred elsewhere in the Third World. These millions of new TV viewers in the Third World provide a tremendous potential for development communication.

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Not only do entertainment programmes in the Third World contribute little toward the development goals of Third World nations, but, in fact, much TV content is potentially antidevelopment. We have in mind entertainment programmes and advertising that encourage consumerism and create frustration among poor and disadvantaged viewers in reaching material goals.

Even government-operated educational TV systems do not contribute effectively toward national development goals because their programmes are perceived as dull and attract only very small audiences.

The concept of popular, interesting shows-through pro-development soap operas-originated in 1974 in Televisa, the Mexican commercial TV network. The Mexican soap operas (telenovelas) capitalized on a lesson learned accidentally from a 1969 Peruvian soap opera, "Simplemente Maria" ("Simply Maria"). This TV series told the rags-to-riches story of a migrant girl, Maria, and addressed educational-development themes such as the liberation of women, class conflict, and intermarriage between the urban-rich and the migrant-poor.

Maria achieved socio-economic success through her proficiency with a Singer sewing machine. "Simplemente Maria" achieved very high TV ratings in Peru and throughout Latin America (when it was exported in the early 1970s). The sales of Singer sewing machines increased sharply wherever "Simplemente Maria" was broadcast in Latin America, as did the number of young women who enrolled in sewing classes.

Inspired by lessons drawn from the audience effects of "Simplemente Maria", Miguel Sabido of Televisa designed six pro-development soap operas that were broadcast in Mexico from 1975 to 1981. "Ven Conmigo" ("Come with Me") in 1975-1976 promoted adult literacy, and achieved average audience ratings higher than the ratings for other soap operas on Televisa. "Ven Conmigo" was one influence leading to the enrolment of about 1 million illiterates in adult education classes, an increase of 63 per cent over the previous year. Another pro-

development soap opera, "Acompaname" ("Come Along with Me"), was designed to promote family planning in Mexico during 1977-1978. "Acompaname" achieved high audience ratings and, along with other factors, convinced half a million Mexicans to visit government family planning health clinics in order to adopt contraceptives, an increase of 32 per cent over the previous year. Other pro-development soap operas in Mexico dealt with child-rearing, female equality, and national history. Population Communications International, a nonprofit organization headquartered in New York City, played a key role in the diffusion of the Mexican soap opera experience to India resulting in "Hum Log" ("We People"), India's first long-running pro-development soap opera.

This TV series promoted such socially desirable behaviours as more equal status for women, family harmony, national integration, and smaller family size. "Hum Log's" 156 episodes were broadcast on Indian national network TV for 17 months in 1984-1985, and received spectacular audience ratings (up to 90 per cent). Most "Hum Log" viewers reported learning positive attitudes and behaviours about family harmony, an equal status for women, national integration, 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 series, providing viewers with appropriate guides to action. Each epilogue of approximately 30 to 50 seconds was a concentrated educational message, drawing out the key lessons for behaviour change. This idea of explicitly stating the educational lessons from each episode of an entertainment episode originated in Mexico in the late 1970s, and has since been utilized in India and elsewhere. "Hum Log's" audience success persuaded Kenya to broadcast its first family planning TV soap opera, "Tushauriane" ("Let's Discuss"), in 1987. "Tushauriane" is broadcast in Swahili, the lingua franca of Kenya, and is the most popular TV programme on Kenyan TV.

Mexico's Miguel Sabido is producing another family planning soap opera with an AIDS sub-theme, "Sangre Joven"

("Young Blood"), to be broadcast in several Latin American nations. The epilogue at the end of each episode will be delivered by a well-known national figure in each country, an individual as well known as Ashok Kumar.

In Enugu, Nigeria, the Nigeria TV Authority (NTA), in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's Population Communication Services (JHUIPCS) integrated family planning themes in the drama segments of an existing TV variety show, "In a Lighter Mood". Broadcast over 39 episodes for 14 months during 1986-1987, the family planning drama promoted the benefits of child spacing, methods of contraception, and the small family size norm.

Despite the successes, the entertainment-education strategy is much more effective in creating knowledge of an issue than in changing behaviour regarding that issue.

Twice during each episode, Enugu's only family planning clinic was advertised, encouraging residents to seek help and service there. Point-of-referral data were gathered at this family planning clinic in Enugu. A 147 per cent increase occurred in the number of adopters of family planning over the 14 months since the broadcasts began, and 60 per cent of all adopters reported the TV programme as their main source of referral to the clinic.

Egypt's "Ana Zananna" was a humorous TV series of 14 one-minute TV mini-dramas, which provided family planning information to a nationwide TV audience in Egypt (90 per cent of Egyptian households have TV sets). Broadcast repeatedly during 1988, each episode of "Ana Zananna" was a self-contained melodramatic TV spot. On average, 5 mini-dramas were broadcast on Egyptian TV each day; each of the 14 mini-dramas was broadcast once every 3 days (in one year, each mini-drama was broadcast about 100 times). A research evaluation showed the "Ana Zananna"

campaign to have been very effective. A survey found that close to 100 per cent of the respondents had seen the series, 98 per cent comprehended their family planning messages, and 74 per cent could recall the specific phrases used by Zananna, the lead character, on the TV series. Respondents correctly identified the positive and negative characters, they liked the mini-drama episodes, and the respondents found the TV series educational.

In 1988, Turkish TV broadcast a three-part family planning TV serial entitled, "Sparrows Don't Migrate". The TV serial was produced through the efforts of the Turkish Family Health and Planning Foundation, Turkish Radio and TV

(TRT), and JHU/PCS. "Sparrows Don't Migrate" provided family planning information through melodrama. The TV serial was watched by about 20 million Turks, about 60 per cent of all adult TV viewers in Turkey. A research evaluation of "Sparrows Don't Migrate" shows that the viewers liked the TV serial and comprehended the family planning messages correctly.

The entertainment-education strategy in radio

Several countries have used radio to incorporate educational messages in entertainment formats like talk shows, soap operas, comedies, and music.

Costa Rica's "Dialogo"

Begun in 1970, "Dialogo" ("Dialogue") is

a daily 10-minute talk radio programme, which promotes sex education in Costa Rica, a country which in the 1970s had one of the world's highest population growth rates. "Dialogo" features a dialogue between the hundreds of individuals who write to the radio programme with personal questions and the programme's experts about sex education, supplemented by dramatized life stories of women, couples, and large families. About 40 per cent of Costa Rica's adults listen to "Dialogo", and its listenership is higher in rural, low-income, and poorly educated Costa Rican households. Research on the effects of "Dialogo" in the late 1970s showed that the listeners of this radio programme displayed more positive attitudes toward family planning and were more likely to adopt measures to limit families.

Indonesia's "Butir Butir Pasir di Laut"

Begun in 1977, "Butir Butir Pasir di Laut" ("Grains of Sand in the Sea") is a popular family planning radio soap opera in Indonesia, a country of 180 million people, which adds 3.5 million people annually. By 1989, some 3,500 episodes of this radio soap opera had been broadcast, through the efforts of the national family planning agency, Radio Republic Indonesia and Richardson-Merrell, marketers of Vicks products in Indonesia and commercial sponsors of this programme. Listeners' letters to "Butir Butir Pasir di Laut" indicate that the radio programme is well-liked and provides useful information on family planning issues. The sales of Vicks products increased sharply in Indonesia, attributed in large part to the popularity of this programme.

Elaine Perkins' "Naseberry Street" in Jamaica

Since 1985, Elaine Perkins, Jamaica's undisputed leader of radio drama, writes and produces the family planning radio soap opera, "Naseberry Street", which is sponsored by Jamaica's Family Planning Association. "Naseberry Street" reaches

an audience of about 1 million, 40 per cent of Jamaica's total population. Research on "Naseberry Street" conducted in 1986, and again two years later in 1988, shows the radio soap opera is effective in promoting the adoption of family planning in Jamaica.

Kenya's "Ushikwapo Shikimana"

Begun in 1987, "Ushikwapo Shikimana" ("Hold on to He Who Holds You") is a popular family planning radio soap opera in Kenya, a country of 21 million people, with an annual population growth rate of 4.1 per cent. This 219-episode radio drama which will end in late 1989 revolves around the home of Mzee Gogo, a traditional Kenyan man who has four wives, and several children and grandchildren. Research suggests that "Ushikwapo Shikimana" has an estimated 5 million regular listeners, most of whom comprehend the family planning messages in the radio drama.

The entertainment-education strategy in music

One of the most effective means of reaching the public, especially the teenagers, is to convey educational messages through popular music.

Gem Myers and the Fab Five: Reggae Music for Sexual Responsibility in Jamaica

For four years, 1982 through 1986, the Jamaican National Family Planning Board ran an integrated family planning communication campaign, which included songs about sexual responsibility, radio and TV commercials, and newspaper, billboard, and cinema advertisements. 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 reggae group in Jamaica. This song became very popular with teenage Jamaican audiences. A 1986 research evaluation showed that about 90 per cent of the respondents recalled the sexual responsibility messages in "You Got to be a Woman".

Tatiana and Johnny: Rock Music for Teenage Sexual Abstinence

Early pregnancy is a major social problem in many Third World nations, especially in Latin America. The main targets for contraceptive messages, pre-teens and teenagers, however, are difficult to reach through conventional communication channels. In 1986, a unique communication project was launched in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries: A rock music video, which 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 was also a top-rated song in 11 other Latin American countries.

JHU/PCS provided the impetus for this entertainment-education project. Tatiana, a 16-year-old singer from Mexico, and Johnny, a 17-year-old Puerto Rican singer, performed "When We Are Together": The teenage singers told their teenage audience not to have sex, a much more effective strategy than having the message emanate from parents. Radio and TV stations could play the song without paying a broadcast fee if they accompanied the music with an announcement of the address and

Irma Lozano, Adriana Roel and Marga Lopez in a scene from "Caminemos"; the first Mexican family planning and sex education soap opera produced for teenagers and their parents.



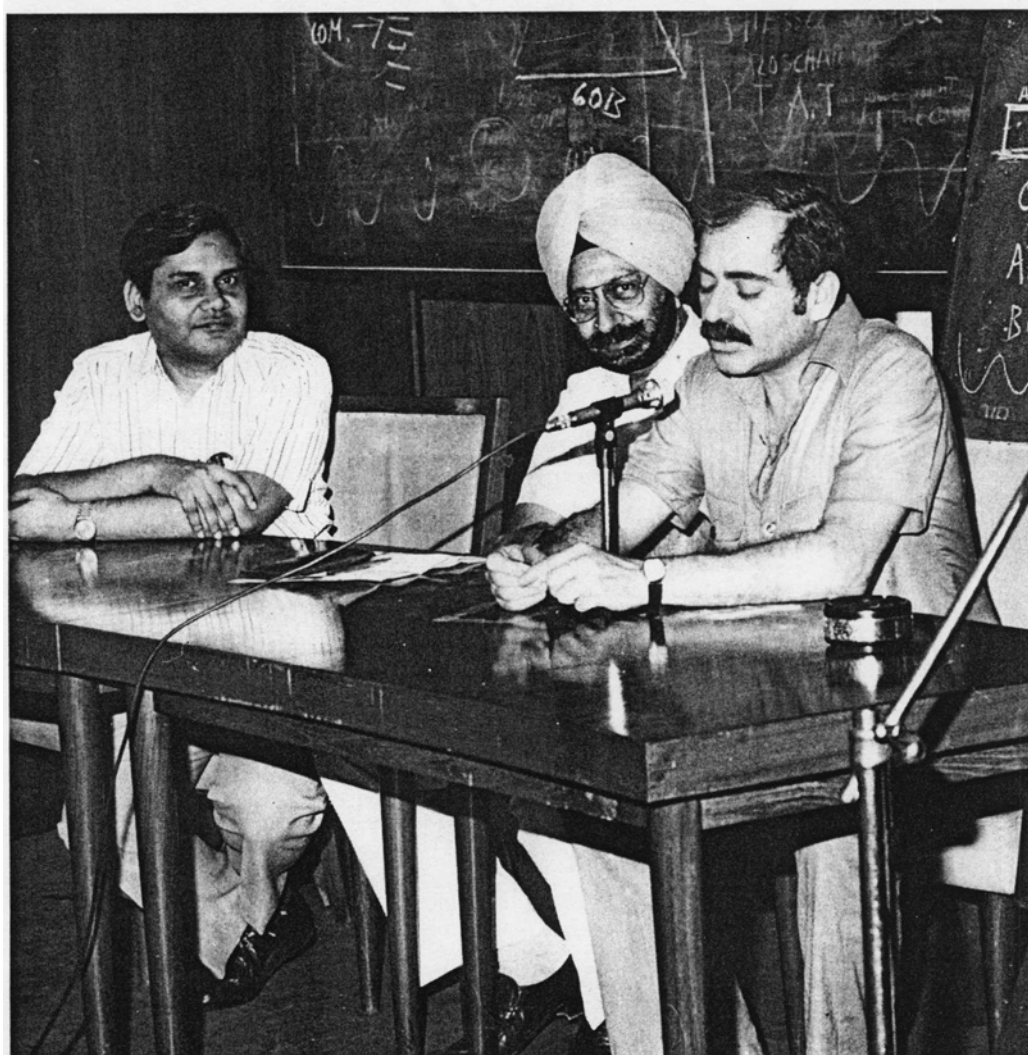
telephone number of a local family planning clinic that offered contraceptive services to teenagers. This localization helped channel the teenage audiences' knowledge and attitudes into action. In Mexico alone, Tatiana's album featuring "Cuando Estemos Juntos" sold over 500,000 copies. An evaluation research in Mexico showed that the song encouraged teenagers to talk more freely about teenage sex, reinforced teenagers who already had decided to use

restraint, sensitized younger viewers to the importance of the topic, and disseminated information about contraception.

Lea Salonga and Menudo: Promoting Sexual Responsibility among Filipino Teenagers

Building on the prior experience of Tatiana and Johnny in Latin America, JHU/PCS, in 1988, launched a popular music campaign in the Philippines to promote sexual responsibility among young Filipino adults. The first song, "That Situation", was sung by a 16-year-old Filipino artist, Lea Salonga, and the well-known Puerto Rico-based rock group, Menudo. Within a month, "That Situation" was number one on the

Miguel Sabido, producer of the family planning soap operas in Mexico, addressing a group of family planning and broadcasting leaders in India.



popular music charts of the Metro Manila and Cebu City radio stations in the Philippines. A second song by Lea Salonga and ex-Menudo singer Charlie Masso, "I Still Believe", instantly became the number one song on the popular music charts in the Philippines. As in the case of Tatiana and Johnny's song in Mexico, JHU/PCS's multi-media efforts to promote sexual responsibility among

songs and how highly they valued the intended messages.

In 1989, JHU/PCS officials were in Nigeria producing two popular music videos titled "Choices" and "Wait for Me" Sung by King Sunny Ade, a famous singer of West African music, and Onyeka Onwenu, a popular singer, these two songs promote sexual responsibility among Nigerians.

Entertainment-education communications strategies are most successful when public health officials, broadcast media officials, development planners, religious organizations, commercial sponsors, and other involved parties work collectively.

teenagers 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, and the institutional component linked the songs and their messages to a telephone hotline, where young adults received information, counselling, and referrals about their problems. In addition, TV spots, centred around "That Situation" and "I Still Believe", showed teenage crisis situations associated with premarital sex and unwanted pregnancy, encouraging the teenagers to "Dial-a-Friend" for counselling.

Trained professional counsellors manned four telephone hotlines which averaged over 1,000 telephone calls a week. A research evaluation of the effects of "That Situation" and "I Still Believe" showed that these songs positively influenced knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to sexual responsibility among Filipino teenagers. Lea Salonga and members of the Menudo group received several thousand letters from Filipino teenagers conveying how much they liked the two

What are some of the lessons learned about entertainment educational efforts to promote family planning in the Third World?

1. The mixture of entertainment and education can attract large audiences and earn high profits from advertising and/or sales. Education is ordinarily a cost, and often it is a huge and expensive drain on the national treasury.

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 in Latin America, the popularity of "Simplemente Maria" led to the spectacular sales of Singer sewing machines, and the popularity of "Cuando Estemos Juntos" led to record-breaking sales of Tatiana's music album.

2. Entertainment-education communication cannot make the educational content too blatant or hard-sell, or else the audience will reject such messages. 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.

3. Despite the successes, the entertainment-education strategy is much more effective in creating knowledge of an educational issue than it is in changing overt behaviour regarding "the issue. Typically, we expect an entertainment-education message like rock music or a soap opera to inform a considerable portion of the intended audience about the educational issue, such as family planning, female equality, adult literacy, or AIDS prevention. Only a very small per cent of the target audience (perhaps only 1 or 2 per cent) will change their overt behaviour, for example, by adopting a family planning method.

4. 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. The rock songs promoting sexual responsibility among teenagers in Mexico and in the Philippines were accompanied by print and broadcast advertisements, personal appearances by singers, label buttons urging "Say No to Sex," posters, and a telephone ("Dial-A-Friend") hotline. These attempts at behaviour change consisted of a co-ordinated communication campaign, rather than just a song featuring lyrics with an educational message.

5. Entertainment educational strategy has the advantage of repetition. 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 impact. A TV soap opera that is broadcast for one (or half hour per day, five days a week, for a year or more, represents massive exposure for a regular viewer of the programme. Similarly, a super-hit song like "Cuando Estemos Juntos" was played by a typical Mexican radio station about 15 times per day for the three or four months of the song's greatest popularity!

6. Use of the entertainment-education strategy can "fail by succeeding" if an

adequate infrastructure for providing services does not accompany the mass media messages. In Mexico in 1976, an episode of the telenovela "Ven Conmigo" announced the location of a government warehouse in Mexico City where free literacy booklets were available. Unfortunately, the demand exceeded the ability of the warehouse staff to provide the literacy booklets, and a huge traffic jam resulted. Similarly, when the Mexican telenovela "Acompañame" was rebroadcast in Peru in 1979, it still contained the telephone numbers and street addresses of family planning clinics in Mexico City. The result was puzzlement and frustration on the part of this telenovela's audience in Peru.

7. A great deal of personal contact by an external organization with national leaders over several years is usually necessary to successfully transfer the entertainment-education mass media strategy. For example, David Poindexter, President of Population Communications International, shuttled for several years between New York, Mexico, New Delhi, and Nairobi before "Hum Log" and "Tushauriane" saw the light of day. This extensive personal contact must be maintained for the entertainment education strategy to take hold. Officials of JHU/PCS helped transfer the idea of "Cuando Estemos Juntos" from Mexico to the Philippines as "I Still Believe", and worked closely with Filipino officials in the launching and maintenance of this popular music campaign.

8. 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 collectively.

For example, the success of "Acompañame" can be attributed to the co-operation between Mexican government officials, family planning organizations, the Catholic Church, Televisa, and the development infrastructure. 0

NOTES:

1. This article draws upon (1) D. Lawrence Kincaid, Jose Ruben Jara Elias, Patrick Coleman, and Frank Segura (1988), *Getting the Message: The Communication for Young People Project*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Agency for International Development, AID Evaluation Special Study 56; (2) Everett M. Rogers, Subashis Aikat, Soonbum Chang, Patricia Poppe, and Pradeep Sopory (1989), *Proceedings from the Conference on Entertainment-Education for Social Change*, Los Angeles, CA, University of Southern California, Annenberg School of Communications, 29 March to 1 April 1989; (3) Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers (1989), 'Pro-Social TV for Development in India,' in Ronald E. Rice and Charles Atkin (eds, *Public Communication Campaigns*, second edition, Newbury Park, CA, Sage; and (4) Arvind Singhal (in preparation), *Entertainment-Education Communication Strategies for Development*, Ph.D. thesis, Los Angeles, CA, University of Southern California, Annenberg School of Communications. *Entertainment-Education Communications Strategies for Family Planning* by Arvind Singhal and Everett M. Rogers, Annenberg School of Communications, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-0281, U.S.A. Telephone: (213) 743-6273.