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<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
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Audience Research For Rural Broadcasting:
The Radio DZLB Experience

By

Teresa Habito Stuart
AUDBIENCE RESEARCH FOR RURAL BROADCASTING:
The Radio DZLB Experience
by Teresa Habito Stuart*

Radio DZLB is a rural educational broadcasting station based at the campus of the University of the Philippines at Los Banos, located some 60 kilometres south of Manila. Since it was established in 1964 under a grant from the Agricultural Development Council, Inc. (ADC), it has been managed and operated by the UPLB College of Agriculture Department of Development Communication. It broadcasts from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. daily at a power of five kilowatts, at a frequency of 1116 kilohertz, and with an effective range of about 30 kilometres radius. This range covers the Luzon provinces of Laguna, Batangas, Quezon, Rizal, Cavite, Bulacan and parts of Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bataan, Mindoro and Marinduque.

DZLB's mission of development communication is carried out in the countryside by means of four operational strategies. These are in terms of: 1) localised and personalised programming for its predominantly rural audience; 2) maintaining close coordination and cooperation with government and private agencies or institutions; 3) encouraging audience involvement in its programmes; and 4) conducting continuous evaluation and research (Librero, 1985).

As a channel for non-formal education DZLB's role is to call attention to relevant development issues and innovations, create an awareness and an interest in these issues and new ideas. By cooperating with agencies that are directly working with the people, the station serves as a communication support in enabling people to make decisions and to participate in development programmes and activities in their communities. Aside from being

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a medium for non-formal education in the rural areas, DZLB also functions as a teaching and research laboratory for students and trainees of development communication.

Radio DZLB operates mainly on the following objectives:

1. To disseminate development information relevant to and supportive of national development. Such information include agriculture, forestry, population, nutrition, ecology, agrarian reform, health, cooperatives, food production and socio-cultural concerns.

2. To conduct broadcast communication research with the aim of developing more effective and efficient techniques of using radio as a medium of non-formal education and for disseminating information to rural as well as urban audiences.

3. To serve as a laboratory for future rural educational broadcasters through the broadcasting courses of the Department of Development Communication.

4. To serve as a training centre for rural educational broadcasters involved in the development programmes of the government.

As a rural educational broadcasting station, its audience can be categorized into three, namely, the male or female head of family who may be a farmer, laborer, fisherman or other; the rural and urban homemaker; and the youth, who may be in-school or out-of-school. Thus, the rural educational broadcast may serve the family as a unit or some specific interest group or organisation in the community. With this classification, it is easy to define the target audience for specific programmes and to get them involved in the total programme development process.
As a university-owned radio station, DZLB also caters to the information needs of the university constituents regarding its plans, programmes, activities and related developments. To a limited extent, it airs cultural and entertainment programmes for the university as well as the rural audience.

LOCALISED AND PERSONALISED PROGRAMMING

From the time Radio DZLB aired its first broadcast in August 1964, it has gained in practical and research experience in how best to tailor its programming and programmes to its target audiences within its effective area of coverage.

Audience research has confirmed for instance that a localised programme thrust, i.e., that which is designed for a specific audience with commonly articulated needs, problems and interests (not necessarily limited to a specific locale), is more effective in stimulating them to positive action. Basic to the approach is the use of the language spoken by the listeners. Hence, DZLB programmes are aired in Pilipino, the language used in its area of coverage.

Localised programming necessitates a built-in audience research mechanism which generates information from the listeners on their characteristics, interests, preferences, inclinations, level of thinking as well as on how the programmes should best answer their needs and problems and how their outlook, attitude and ways of doing things have been changed. To achieve this, DZLB personnel and students conduct regular surveys, listenership campaigns and monitoring and evaluation activities in the barrios.

This interactive mechanism built into DZLB's localised programming, i.e., between the broadcaster and the listeners makes for a personalised programme atmosphere also. When the broadcaster addresses the listeners by their first names, organisations and/or locations, she not only establishes rapport but also bestows on
them a feeling of personal and community recognition. This feeling of importance creates a multiplier effect in encouraging others to "tune in", provide feedback and become involved. Needless to say, the broadcaster also becomes more encouraged in her work because she is assured of her communication effectiveness.

A good example of the influence of localised and personalised programming is the case of the radio programme, "ORAS NG MANGGAGATAS" or "Milkman's Hour", a broadcast support to the Los Baños Milk Collection Scheme Project (LBMCSP) of the UPLB Dairy Training and Research Institute (DTRI). Through DZLB, the project has been campaigning among farmers since 1967 to milk water buffalos in the barrios of Laguna and Rizal which are then collected by project technicians. As documented by Broadcasters Taguiamon and Frio in 1972 and cited in Librero (1985):

The ORAS NG MANGGAGATAS (Milkman's Hour) radio programme has been observed to perform varied functions in the context of the small farmers' world in the barrios reached by the broadcasts ... One obvious function of the radio programme is the dissemination of technical dairy information. Thus: "Would not milking the cow adversely affect the newly born calf, (and) would the newly born calf not eat grass?" Questions like these are brought to DTRI by the technicians assigned in the barrio. The questions are answered by DTRI scientists through the radio programme. Hence, not only the farmer asking the question is benefited - other cooperators who may have the same doubts get the answer from the broadcasts.

The radio programme also serves as a bulletin board of activities of the different barrio cooperators. "I heard from the broadcast last night that there's already a milking barn in Barrio Bayog. I sincerely hope we get one for our barrio, too." Farmer cooperators are kept abreast of the developments of the project in their respective villages.

Advice and experiences on milking are also shared among farmer-cooperators through the radio programme. When farmers in the barrio heard from broadcasts that milk production was declining in another barrio, a cooperator advised through the radio: "Why is it that our production is not declining? That really depends on how the owner takes care of the buffalo." Or another cooperator would write in: "Can
you broadcast through our programme the amount of milk each cooperator produces? We would like to know the cooperator who produces the largest amount of milk."

Immediate adoption of an innovation is made possible through radio when the advice comes from a credible cooperator. For example, a Laguna farmer cooperator undergoing training at DTRI announced over the programme: "Fellow cooperators ... tomorrow when you send your products to DTRI, use ice. Put the ice in a clean plastic bag and tie it carefully then place it inside the milk container. I learned that this is the technique of our fellow cooperators in the province of Rizal that is why the milk from that area remains fresh until it reaches DTRI."

The following day, milk from Barrio Mabitac in Laguna arrived fresh - and preserved in ice.

COOPERATION WITH AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS

DZLB maintains a close working relationship with development-oriented agencies and institutions, including UPLB units, in its effort to provide a complete package of development information to its rural audience. The cooperating agencies are classified as either primary cooperators, i.e., those that are directly involved in planning, producing, broadcasting and evaluating a radio programme, and secondary cooperators, i.e., those who provide broadcast materials and those with whom DZLB coordinates its audience research and listenership campaign activities through the agencies' field staff.

Primary cooperators of DZLB have the opportunity to coordinate activities and promote smooth working relationships with one another through the monthly cooperators' meeting convened by DZLB staff. Topics discussed include station policies, the agencies' objectives, major activities, progress reports, monthly plans of action, and (formative and/or summative) programme evaluation, including an evaluation of the agencies' designated broadcasters.
AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMMES

DZLB puts efforts in making it true to its calling as "The Voice of Development" ("ANG TINIG NG KAUNLARAN") and "the people's station" by encouraging greater community participation in planning and producing programmes that support the listeners' development activities. A good case in point is the "Mothers' Club Hour", a programme that was conceived, planned and produced by a DZLB audience of rural homemakers. As related by Librero (1985):

In 1968, a group of homemakers made a unique request to Radio DZLB. At that time these homemakers had just organised themselves into a Mothers' Club under the supervision of the Comprehensive Community Health Programme (CCHP), a project of the College of Medicine, University of the Philippines. CCHP was a project designed to bring medical care to the rural areas while at the same time providing a mechanism for medical interns to experience rural service before they finally graduate from medical school.

The request personally made by Mrs Andrea Esguerra, club president, was to provide them air time over the station. We saw from this request a unique opportunity to experiment on a programme produced in cooperation with the target audience. Responding to this request, three staff members of the station met with the 43 members of the club in their village the following day to discuss the possibility of granting their request.

They presented to us their ideas, plans and arguments for a programme of their own. Of course, they knew little about radio work but the idea was very good and very appealing to us. After all, these were the kinds of people we wanted to reach all along. Now here they were asking for it.

We immediately went to work and two months later, ORAS NG MOTHERS'S CLUB (Mothers' Club Hour) went on the air. The CCHP provided the broadcast materials and a co-announcer. Members of the club guested the programme very often. To them, this was an ideal way of reaching other Mothers' Club within the area of CCHP, which were seldom reached through interpersonal channels of communication.
Initially, a DZLB (lady) staff member was assigned to co-host the programme and supervise it. Later however, the programme was turned over to CCHP and the Mothers' Club. Mrs Esguerra (known to Radio DZLB and listeners as "Aling Andeng", a polite way of addressing an elder woman by her nickname) became the co-host of the programme.

It may be interesting to point out that the members of the club themselves provided the programme's signature theme (music). Aling Andeng composed the lyrics. The song was recorded in the DZLB studio where all the members of the club participated. Amazingly, they also conducted their own listenership campaigns in the neighbouring villages. Until now the programme is still on the air and through it they were able to organise the Federation of Mothers' Clubs in the province of Laguna. (The programme is being hosted by a regular staff member of CCHP because Aling Andeng passed away two years ago.)

As this case illustrates, good working relationship among the target audience, the doctors and nurses of the CCHP and the radio staff proved to be very instrumental in the success of the project that was initiated through radio. Aside from radio's effect in terms of encouraging cooperation within the villages, there was also a more important effect. That of facilitating cooperation among different social groups. In effect, it initiated social action and changes.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH AND PROGRAMME EVALUATION

Audience research and programme evaluation rank highly in DZLB's order of priorities. The staff and students of the Department of Development Communication are committed to conduct research on the effective use of radio in community development (Gomez, 1975).

As can be surmised from preceding discussions, audience research is built into the other three operational strategies of DZLB, i.e., through localised and personalised programming, cooperation with government and private agencies and audience participation in radio programmes. Although the research methodology from the above experiences is unstructured, the
qualitative nature of information generated and documented through the years has been of immense value, along with results from formal quantitative research, in providing DZLB with an effective framework for using radio broadcasting to serve the development needs of the rural audiences.

The DZLB programme schedule as shown in Figure 1, is based largely on information from audience research. The programme line-up shows a variety of programme formats designed to cater to DZLB's specific audiences.

Radio DZLB optimizes its limited air time by providing a proper mix of educational, informational, cultural and entertainment programmes. These are presented in a variety of research-based formats, namely: drama, spots and plugs, straight talk, documentary, interview, magazine format, news, school-on-the-air, public service, radio farm forum, radiovision and musical variety and features. Programme content is mostly developmental and include topics on nutrition, health, family planning, home management, agriculture, cooperatives, ecology, forest conservation, agrarian reform, rural education, village organisation, culture and more.

It must be pointed out that DZLB's present philosophy of service through rural educational broadcasting has evolved from the cumulative influence of research and practical experience based on its four operational strategies. Thus, in defining the characteristics of rural educational broadcasting, DZLB's Dr E D Gomez (1976) stated in part:

Rural educational broadcasting is audience-oriented. What makes radio programmes interesting to the audiences is the fact that it is the audience's needs and interests that are the foci of the radio broadcasts. Why the emphasis on the audience? For one thing, there can be no total development without people development. For another, people will listen to a radio programme with a sense of purpose if they know it is they that radio
Figure 1. Radio DZLB Program Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOUR</th>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
<th>SATURDAY</th>
<th>SUNDAY</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00-1:30</td>
<td>ODDS AND ENDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-2:00</td>
<td>CRADLE OF WEALTH</td>
<td>LOVE AND MUSIC</td>
<td>CRADLE OF WEALTH</td>
<td>LOVE AND MUSIC</td>
<td>CRADLE OF WEALTH</td>
<td>LOVE AND MUSIC</td>
<td>MOTHERS' CLUB HOUR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00-2:30</td>
<td>THE COOPERATIVE</td>
<td>THE COOPERATIVE</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
<td>ONE MIND, ONE SOUL</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
<td>DYNA'S MUSICAL EXPRESS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30-3:00</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
<td>ONE MIND, ONE SOUL</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
<td>ONE MIND, ONE SOUL</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
<td>DRAMA SLOT</td>
<td>THE LAGUNA POLYTECHNIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30</td>
<td>PHILIPPINE SOUNDS</td>
<td>MOTHER'S LOVE &amp; CARE</td>
<td>PHILIPPINE SOUNDS</td>
<td>MOTHER'S LOVE &amp; CARE</td>
<td>PHILIPPINE SOUNDS</td>
<td>MOTHER'S LOVE &amp; CARE</td>
<td>COMPATRIOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-4:30</td>
<td>WOMEN'S HOUR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ECOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30-5:30</td>
<td>THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30-6:00</td>
<td>WORKING TOGETHER</td>
<td>FREE FARMING</td>
<td>WORKING TOGETHER</td>
<td>FREE FARMING</td>
<td>WORKING TOGETHER</td>
<td>FREE FARMING</td>
<td>CAMPUS NEWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00-6:30</td>
<td>PROVINCIAL NEWS</td>
<td>CULTURAL HERITAGE</td>
<td>PROVINCIAL NEWS</td>
<td>CULTURAL HERITAGE</td>
<td>PROVINCIAL NEWS</td>
<td>CULTURAL HERITAGE</td>
<td>THE YOUNGER SET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:30-7:00</td>
<td>DAIRYING IN THE VILLAGE</td>
<td>DZLB DRAMA STUDIO</td>
<td>DAIRYING IN THE VILLAGE</td>
<td>DZLB DRAMA STUDIO</td>
<td>DAIRYING IN THE VILLAGE</td>
<td>DZLB DRAMA STUDIO</td>
<td>UPLB NEWS FEATURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:00-7:30</td>
<td>SCHOOL ON-THE-AIR</td>
<td>FARM NEWS</td>
<td>SCHOOL ON-THE-AIR</td>
<td>FARM NEWS</td>
<td>SCHOOL ON-THE-AIR</td>
<td>THIS IS BISA*</td>
<td>TRY IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30-8:00</td>
<td>LIVING YOUR LIFE</td>
<td>INTERACTION ON-THE-AIR</td>
<td>LIVING YOUR LIFE</td>
<td>INTERACTION ON-THE-AIR</td>
<td>LIVING YOUR LIFE</td>
<td>LIFE IN THE VILLAGE</td>
<td>OUR FORESTS</td>
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*BISA = Barangay Integrated Service Association
programmes are talking about. By audience orientation we mean, therefore, that the audience is the basis upon which radio programmes are developed.

Rural educational broadcasting is research-based. We can only be effective broadcasters if we know our audience composition and how they are affected by our broadcasts. Research tells us the how's, why's, what's and wherefore's involved in the transfer of knowledge and its effects. Consequently, research tells us what our subsequent moves should be in order to ensure that we achieve our objectives. In other words, through research we would know the most effective way of presenting our materials to the audience, i.e., whether or not dramatic presentations are more effective than documentaries, whether or not development ideas are better presented through spots and jingles, whether or not subject matters may be more effectively presented in straight discussion, interviews, and so forth. Finally, research tells us what knowledge we should impart to our audience. The rural radio audience is more interested in information that is relevant to its needs and interests.

Rural educational broadcasting has built-in monitoring and evaluation systems. The broadcaster constantly evaluates her own performance, her impact on her listeners, her achievements against the goals of the radio institution and her institution. Ultimately, she evaluates her programme's performance against the goal of development.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH AT DZLB

The following list presents some of the audience research studies conducted by staff and students of the Department of Development Communication. As there are three divisions in the department, namely development journalism, educational communication and community broadcasting, the studies included here are those which were conducted by the community broadcasting unit specifically for DZLB. These are arranged in a descending order from 1984 and are classified according to stage of programme development based on the conceptual paradigm presented by the author in the background paper for this seminar.
DZLB Audience Research on Programme Planning


Palaypay, A. 1983. Rural folks' music preferences and music programming of Radio DZLB. BSDC research.


Nuales, C. 1979. Listening habits and programme preferences of radio DZLB listeners in three selected barrios of Laguna. BSDC research.

Corcino, T. 1978. An exploratory study on the preferences for background music of selected rural audiences. BSDC research.


Tetangco, M.H. 1966. The radio listening habits and attitudes of rural household heads of a selected Laguna barrio. BSA thesis.

Agreda, C. 1965. Availability and use of communication media by homemakers in mass media barrios. Staff research.


DZLB Audience Research for Programme Design and Development

Betia, M.E. 1984. The relative effectiveness of delivering developmental messages with and without humour to grade school children. BSDC research.

Rimas, D. 1983. Radio audiences' recall and comprehension of developmental plugs presented in four formats. BSDC research.

Quebral, N.C. 1982. CTRE Study: piloting a distance learning system for small farmers. Staff research.
Reyes, L. and Trivino, C. 1982. Pretesting of educational radio programmes for farmers. BSDC research.


Garcia, M.V. 1980. The relative effectiveness of developmental plugs with positive and negative appeal. BSDC research.


Lim, H. 1980. The impact of fear appeal and reward appeal in radio plugs designed for elementary school children. BSDC research.

Masulit, S. 1980. A descriptive study of some pretesting procedures for educational broadcast materials designed for farmers. BSDC research.


DZLB Audience Research during Programme Operation

Dolom, M. 1984. Farmers' attitude toward women as hosts of radio farm programmes. BSDC research.

Agtarap, N. 1982. Listenership study of "Hudyat ng Tagumpay" over Radio Station DZLB. BSDC research.

Beltran, M. 1982. Listenership study of "Pagatasan a Nayon" over DZLB. BSDC research.

Lapis, T. 1982. Listenership study of "Oras ng Social Laboratory" over Radio DZLB. BSDC research.

Natalio, E. 1982. Listenership study of "Nutrisyon sa Baryo" over Radio DZLB. BSDC research.


Barba, S. 1980. Attitude and programme preferences of listening group members of "Lingap ng Pangulo sa Barangay" in selected towns of Laguna. BSDC research.

Cruz, B. 1980. Socio-communication characteristics of farmer participants in the tri-media project for the dissemination of Masagana 99 rice technology. BSDC research.


Banaag, J. 1977. Listenership study of "Tinig ng CCHP" over Radio DZLB. BSDC research.


Pabale, M., Mercado, C. and Agreda, C. 1964. DZLB Listenership study after three months of operation. Staff research.
DZLB Audience Research on Programme Evaluation


Librero, F. 1968. The influence of radio in the adoption of recommended farm practices in Barrio Malang, Binan, Laguna. BSA thesis.
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