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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
DIVISION: Social Development

FINAL REPORT

PROJECT TITLE : Development of Effective Mass media for Rural Communities
in Africa.

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Background and justification :

In 1971, ECA Symposium on Rural Development was held in response to ECA resolution 197 (IX) which requested the Executive Secretary, among other things, "to promote co-operation of work of the Economic Commission for Africa, The United Nations Specialized Agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other Organizations operating or sponsoring rural development programmes in Africa, in order to secure the maximum impact of those programmes on the economic and social progress of the region". The resolution also called for the examination of policies, machinery and action on agricultural extension, mass media, rural co-operation, social welfare and community development, rural health and science and technology, and how these can reinforce each other in the development of communities in Africa.

Since 1971 considerable work has been done by the Commission to improve and promote the use of the mass media in member States as an effective aid to national development effort.

In 1974, the ECA published a monograph on Development Education entitled: Rural Development Through Mass Media (E/CN.14/SWSA/10). In 1977 it also organized and sponsored a Workshop on the Problems of Effective Use of Radio Forum/Clubs in Rural Africa. Following upon these efforts, the ECA obtained bilateral financial assistance from the Government of the Netherlands for the appointment of short term consultants and experts to execute the project Development of Effective Mass Media for Rural Communications.

Objectives of the project :

To study how social, institutional and technical changes could be effected within rural communities through a rational utilization of the mass media.

Immediate objectives :

To determine the mass media used in various African countries and the extent of their coverage, the extent to which local languages are used, the involvement of rural population in the development process, the availability of competent staff for rural-oriented programme production management and evaluation and to make recommendations regarding staff training requirements for planning management and direction, production, dissemination and evaluation of rural development oriented sound broadcast programmes.

Project Plan :

The project was to be carried out by consultants and experts appointed by ECA to travel to 12 African Countries to conduct seminars, distribution questionnaires and make direct observations on actual broadcasting practices.

Project activities :

The project document entitled "Project Submission Data for Assistance under Bilateral Technical Agreements with the Government of the Netherlands" proposed the implementation of the "Development of Effective Mass Media for Rural Communities in Africa Project" in two phases.

Phase I was scheduled to start in November 1979 and to be completed by April 1980. This phase comprised two main parts, namely :

- 1) Study by 12 country experts of selected African countries (based on geographic and linguistic considerations) on :
 - a) the various types of mass media used and the extent of their coverage;
 - b) the extent to which development-oriented programmes were produced and disseminated in local languages;
 - c) the existing arrangements as well as improvements necessary for employing various types of mass media so as to involve the population, particularly the rural population, more actively in the development activities of the country;

- d) the availability of competent staff for rural-oriented programme production, management and evaluation; and
- e) staff training requirements for management, production, dissemination and evaluation of development-oriented programmes.

- 2) Preparation of the report of Phase I and submission of Phase II Plan proposing a programme of training in selected African Countries.

Phase II was scheduled to be carried out from May 1980 to July 1980. It was to involve on-the-spot training by 12 country experts of senior mass media personnel, who were in turn expected to train their subordinates in accordance with approved training programmes. This training programme was supposed to have provided the basis for the preparation of a similar project at a later date to cover the other African countries.

Several requirements for carrying out this project were indicated. Such basic requirement was the availability of one external funding. The Netherlands Government agreed to finance this project by contributing \$107,277.00. This amount was used, inter alia, to hire consultants and secretarial services and provide travel and miscellaneous expenses. The ECA provided the necessary Secretariat support services.

Results :

The project was initiated in December 1980 when three ECA consultants visited 12 African countries namely: Botswana, Cameroon, Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Upper Volta. These countries were selected to manifest both the geographic and linguistic diversity of the region.

In the course of the execution of the project the two main parts of Phase I were renamed Phase I and Phase II respectively, and the original Phase II was renamed Phase III.

Phase I - Field Study of mass media practices in six English-speaking and six French-speaking African countries.

Phase II - Preparation of the Report of Phase I and planning for Phase III.

Phase III - Implementation of the training programmes in countries studied under Phase I.

The implementation of Phase I consisted of the distribution of questionnaires to members of broadcasting organizations who conduct rural broadcasting, agricultural extension workers, health and nutrition workers and some media institutions and analysis of these. Also, on-the-spot observations were made in addition to open interviews with key representatives of organizations indicated in the Field Report whose day-to-day activities affect the lives of rural people.

The study was designed to investigate the following : 1) the mass media used in various African countries and the extent of its coverage, 2) the extent to which local languages are used, 3) the involvement of rural population in the development process; 4) the availability of competent staff. The study was finally to make recommendations on the staff training requirements for planning management and direction, production, dissemination and evaluation of rural development oriented sound broadcast programmes.

The following findings emerged from the study :

- 1) Rural broadcasting has a unique role to play in mobilizing and motivating rural Africa to take an active role in the development process;
- 2) rural broadcasting has succeeded in reaching the majority of its target groups;
- 3) national languages were judiciously used; and
- 4) broadcasting skills could be improved and adequate equipment, supplied to reach the target groups in a mass effective manner

Phase II of the project was completed when reports on Phase I were submitted in January and April 1981.

Phase III consisted of conducting seminars for high-ranking broadcasters ranging from Assistant Directors of Broadcasting, Heads of Programmes, Controllers of Programmes, to Production Assistants in the countries studied under Phase I.

The project was thus completed with the termination of Phase III.

Conclusions and recommendations :

The following conclusions and recommendations have been derived from the Terminal Report of the Consultants; a copy of which would be sent to you in due course. Rural broadcasting, in particular the radio, is an effective means of motivating African rural communities to take part in concerted development action. Where it exists, it has reached the majority of its target groups. However, much improvement is needed, inter alia, along the following lines: skill in broadcasting, co-ordination of efforts, the design of programmes to provide the listeners with knowledge they can understand and use and the monitoring of impact of programmes on listeners.

There is a need for the establishment of a Central Direction Committee comprising the various public groups to direct the organizers of rural development oriented broadcasts as well as the proper transport facilities for those covering rural assignments.

The consultants also recommended that the study and the seminar be extended to the other parts of the region when funds become available.

The Social Development Division, along with all those involved with this project, would like to express their deep appreciation to the Netherlands Government for having made this project a reality.

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA
AS AN EXECUTING AGENCY

STATEMENT ON PROJECT EXECUTED
FOR PERIOD As at 30 June 1982

DONOR : Netherlands

PROJECT TITLE : Development of effective mass media for rural communities in Africa

PROJECT NUMBER :

ECA ACCOUNT NUMBER : DARAFOK03

Budget Line	Description	Funds allocated for 1980/81	unliquidated Obligations	Disbursements	Total Expenditures	Unencumbered Balance
		107,277.00				
1100	Project Personnel		9,834.94	52,757.85	62,592.79	
1300	Admin. Support		---	8,870.20	8,870.20	
1500	Travel		3,998.76	14,010.99	18,009.75	
4200	Office Equipment		---	1,710.88	1,710.88	
5300	Sundry		---	220.30	220.30	
9900	Programme Support		---	13,174.42	13,174.42	
	Total	107,277.00	13,833.70	90,744.64	104,578.34	2,698.66