

Radio Broadcasting Formats Adapted to Food Security Issues

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Introduction

Food is a basic right for all human beings. Food security is the term used to describe the need to guarantee the right to food, which all populations have, a need for.

Access to information and communication technologies is becoming increasingly important to tackle the problems of poverty and food insecurity. In 1990 it was estimated in Africa that for every 1,000 inhabitants there were 12 newspapers, 52 television sets, 14 telephone lines, 5 mobile telephones, 7.5 personal computers and 200 radio receivers.

Given the small number of media as well as their difficult access (newspapers and television), radio at present is the only mass medium capable of raising awareness, informing and mobilizing rural populations. Rural radio has existed in Africa for about forty years, and it has undergone a great deal of evolution, which over the past decade has drawn it closer to its listeners. The concepts of local radio, community radio and more recently proximity radio are all striving to express such closeness. However, rural radio has factors which legitimate it, including the use of local languages, information based on the needs of communities and on their cultural values, and finally a variety of topics which integrate all areas and sectors of economic, social and cultural development. Rural radio is thus an appropriate technology to tackle the problems of food security, poverty reduction, environmental protection and other concerns characterizing the African rural setting.

The radio broadcasting programs and formats used to deal with the problems concerning food security will be the topic of my presentation. In this presentation, I intend to follow up on the reflections carried out in February 2001 at the workshop on rural radio. I also wish to discuss the role and general perspectives of radio broadcasters as well as their important contribution to enabling decision makers to direct, decide on and correct development plans, food security policies and investments according to the basic needs of populations. Finally, this presentation intends to use the following observation as its point of departure: little space is given to information on plant production, consumption and nutrition, to the marketing of agricultural products, the management of food aid, areas and groups characterized by a high food risk, the promotion and processing of local grains, the production and marketing of livestock, animal products and of dish products.

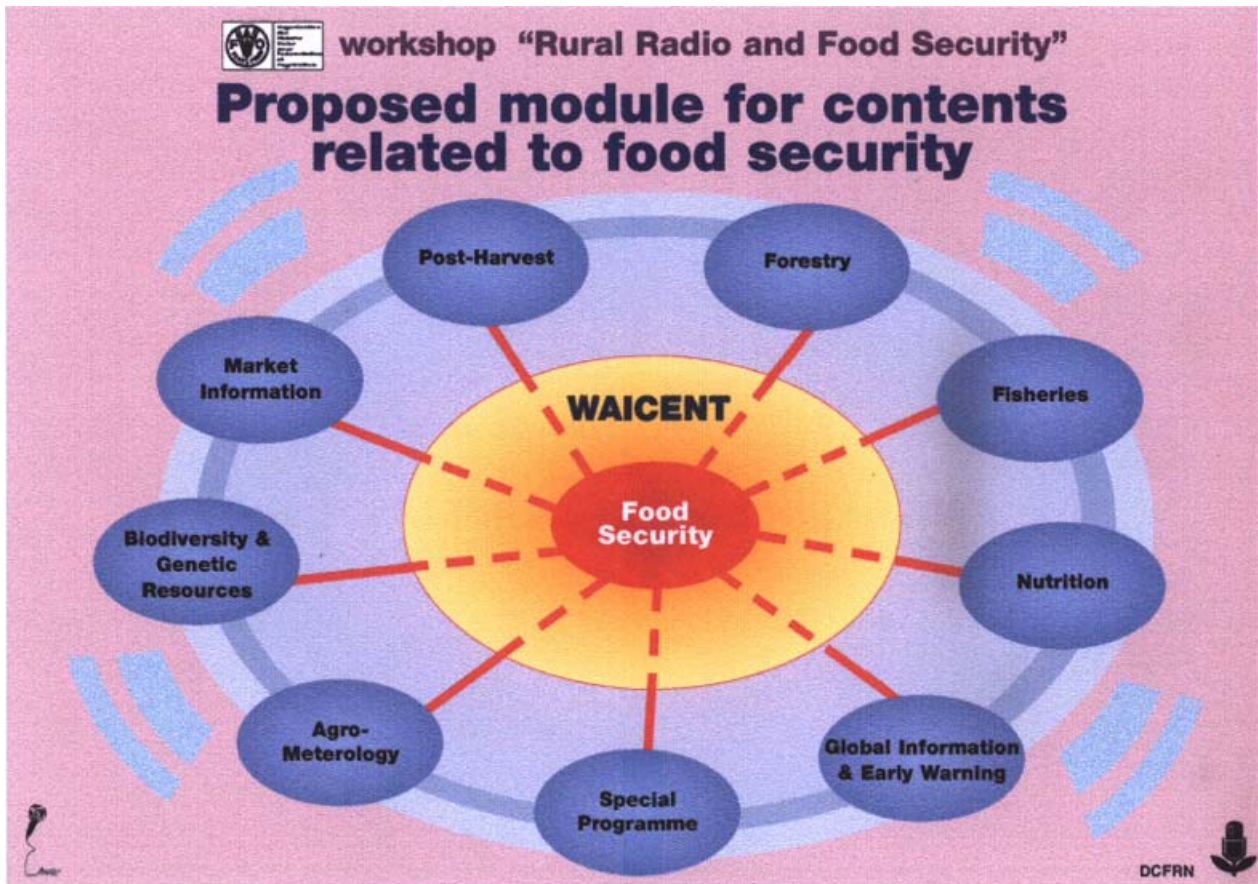
The notion of food security is indeed complex; and in a gradual non-exhaustive approach which is to be completed as we go along, we have kept 10 basic modules, which you had organized into a hierarchy according to the needs of your listeners. As to radio broadcasting formats, there are many of them if one considers public broadcasting, radio

plays and sketches, magazines, surveys, discussions-debates, quick information updates, micro-programs, interviews, documentaries etc. But which rural radio formats are the most suitable, the most appropriate when addressing questions related to food security?

I. Food Security: A Modular Approach

Although food security is an integrated concept revolving around four areas, namely the availability of food, the stability of supplies, access to such supplies and a correct biological use of foods, for educational and pedagogical purposes, we have decided to break down the area of food security into eleven practical sectors:

- 1- Food security
- 2- Agrometeorology
- 3- Biodiversity and genetic resources
- 4- Nutrition
- 5- Post-harvest operations
- 6- Early warning
- 7- The market information system
- 8- Forestry
- 9- Fisheries
- 10-Special Food Security Program
- 11-The World Agricultural Information Center (WAICENT)



It is important to assign another function to these eleven training modules, that of being information sources.

II. The Main Radio Broadcasting Formats

1- The Notions of Information Gathering and Processing

The social function of the press, whether it is written or audiovisual, consists in ensuring communication within a society, a function which it shares with other social institutions but which it fulfils in an original way. Such a social function may be summarized from an etymological point with the verb "to inform"; if journalism is broken down into two (2) stages, namely gaining information and informing, two concepts then emerge:

- Research/or gathering of information
- And the processing of information.

These two aspects of journalism require the knowledge of:

- Radio broadcasting formats
- Information sources

2- Information Gathering Techniques

To collect information entails gaining information and collecting the intelligence elements that will be necessary to put the program together.

The techniques generally used are also journalistic formats which serve to forge the information; there are four of them (4);

- Interview
- Report
- Account
- Investigation

The interview is the most widely used information gathering technique, and the type of interview is determined by a number of in-the-field situations, which we will see later.

III. The Main Different Formats in Rural Radio

1. Public Radio Broadcasting or the Radio Game Show

Games broadcast on the radio are an element of radio broadcasting animation. However, they also preceded animation, which means that they are as old as radio itself.

The components of the game in audiovisual media have greatly evolved, whether it is television where the spectacular visual effect prevails, or the radio, where quick replies, verbal humour and suspense are most important.

1.1. Why Radio Game Shows?

The first reason is without a doubt, keeping the audience rating to promote the station using entertainment, competition and advertising.

The second reason consists in meeting certain listeners' needs. Such needs are generally entertainment needs. They are met by leveraging on two psychological mechanisms: emulation and identification.

The listener will participate in the answers and questions himself, and will win or lose according to the aptitude of the candidate who is playing. He will be happy or sad, and at the same time will evaluate his knowledge on this or that subject. In other words, we are dealing with a non-passive listener.

Support must be given to educational activities; awareness must be raised as to the need for new actions and a reminder role must be played. In summary, radio game shows may help to evaluate the impact of previous programs (indicative and non-scientific evaluation). The anchorman must be able to combine the playful skills of a game show host and the teaching skills of an educator.

However, the number one goal of radio game shows is entertainment.

1.2. The Different Types of Radio Game Shows

The most common radio game shows are as follows:

- **Column games**, which are the components of daily or weekly animation. An example of such games would be to take a music passage, playing it for listeners and asking them to find the name of the composer or singer;
- **Games based on knowledge** consist in giving the right answer to one or more questions related to verified and established questions. The interest of this type of game depends on the subjects discussed and the way in which the questions are posed. However, care must be taken to avoid playing teacher, as one hears in radio campaigns;
- **Games based on ability** appeal to the listeners' ability to reason, to their imagination and culture (for example, identifying the root of a word in a speech or in a piece of music) ;
- **Sound games**. Their point of departure is a recording; the listener must identify the nature of such a recording. One example of this is the sound effects which listeners must discover and identify.

1.3. But How Is a Radio Game Show Made?

a) *The Questions*

First of all, there must be a subject to disseminate, a theme to raise the awareness of people to, a topic in relation to which one wishes to evaluate people's degree of knowledge. Then, a riddle must be announced as the first question, and a second question must be developed to confirm the participants' insight into the technical subject of the program.

Finally, participants must be asked to incite others to follow their example with a poem, a song, or a brilliant oral presentation.

b) *The Participants*

The village community represents the participants in this format of public broadcast. Everyone participates; each one tries his luck. After the riddle, six (6) candidates stay on; after the second question, four (4) stay on; and for the third question, two (2) stay on.

c) *The Jury*

The jury is comprised by the members representing the village community (the teacher, the village chief and the community development agent).

d) *The Musicians*

One or more musicians to animate the program.

e) *The Prizes*

Prizes to reward the best.

f) *The Spectators*

Spectators to participate in and support the best candidates.

g) *The Host*

A very good host and a good sound system.

2. Magazines

Like a magazine in a printed periodical, a radio magazine always includes different topics; it is made up by different elements that may be related to each other or separate.

Here we will consider the purpose of the magazine and the constitutive elements as being part of the balance of the radio broadcast. Such elements are:

- The interview
- Chats of all sorts
- Short discussions
- Reports
- Music.

In relation to this question of balance, we must bear in mind that unlike the documentary, the magazine always aims at having a variety of subjects rather than dealing with them in depth.

A radio magazine does not always penetrate the depths of the issues it presents, because the different elements must be brief. It arouses the interest of the listeners and provides them with entertainment and information at once.

2.1. The Elements of the Magazine

The two main elements of the magazine are music (popular) and words. Let us begin by looking at the second element, which is words. The spoken part of a magazine may be of two types, according to its function: a) The narrator or moderator, b) The information issues or entertainment. Let us examine in greater detail these two forms of speech, bearing in mind that for the moment, we are concerned with the form and the function of the magazine, rather than its contents.

a) *The Narrator*

All the different topics of information or entertainment of the magazine are related to each other by the narrator. This is why he is often called the narrator link. In his narration, he will try to create a link between a previous topic and the one that follows. He is the guide throughout the program. To vary things, at times there are two alternating narrators holding a conversation to link up the various topics.

b) *The topics of information*

They are the flesh of the magazine. The content may be presented in different ways, using the different radio forms that we have already looked at or that we will see,

examples: interviews, current events, miscellaneous information, reports, excerpts from exposés or speeches.

2.2. The Contents of the Magazine

Almost anything goes for a magazine program: politics, economic or agricultural issues, information on health and education, cultural elements, social events and services.

Without going into detail and into background information, listeners may be provided with an information service on different subjects: weather forecast, traffic conditions, train departures, pharmacies on duty, week-end popular dances, etc., while a documentary program tries to provide a sound and agreeable basis of information on the subject which it is addressing. The radio magazine provides general information on what is going on at that time, or on certain aspects of a given area of interest.

2.3. Music

A radio magazine always uses music. Popular airs are used to capture the attention of listeners and to keep them from turning off the radio or switching to a purely entertaining program. To hold the audience captive, the spoken parts must be short (3 to 5 minutes). Music breaks the monotony, arouses and reawakens interest. Music and spoken parts must be equally balanced.

2.4. The Types of Radio Magazines

There are different types of radio magazines, which may be grouped together, to a certain extent:

- a) News magazine
- b) Magazine on a specific subject
- c) Magazine for a special audience
- d) Variety magazine.

These programs could be called differently. A terminology must be created, so that we know what we are talking about.

The newsmagazine addresses current events and concerns history in general.

The magazine on a specific subject deals with a specific subject: science, health, food security, music, etc. It is generally intended for a general as well as a specific audience. In this latter case, it is the same as the type 3 magazine.

Example: a program entitled "*Progress of agriculture today* " may be addressed to a general audience but also to farmers. However, a program entitled "*truck farmers cooperative* " is addressed to farmers.

Another example: "*Your health* " is destined to us all, but the "*Doctor's special*" can only be intended for health care professionals, which does not mean that it would not be interesting to us all.

The magazine for a special audience is simply what the name suggests. "*The consumer's fifteen minutes* ", "*The driver and the law* ", "*Gardeners' weekly* ", "*Identification of livestock*", "*Children's magazine* "and "*Women's hour* ". The titles of all these programs indicate that they are addressed to a special audience.

The variety magazine is generally aimed at providing fragments of news, entertainment, different news items, and eccentric information on people or places that are out of the ordinary. Its educational content is poor, though it may have a long-term effect in raising the level of information or of general interest.

Let us now look at these different types of magazines in greater detail.

a) *The News Magazine*

There is no limit to the subjects that can be included in a magazine, provided that they are news. The term news speaks for itself, for a piece of news refers to anything that happened recently or that is happening now, or that will happen in the near future. This has to be relatively new for the listener. A piece of news might be a report on the last

speech of the president on Parliament's permanent session. Or it may be the excerpt of a meeting or an event that took place on the previous day; an interview with a foreign politician who is visiting the country, the comment of a member of Parliament or a minister, a recently passed bill... It could also be information on a new medication or on new products, a report on social or sports events; a preview of meetings scheduled for that very day or overall information on prices that day. Its duration will be 15 to 45 minutes.

b) *The Magazine on a Specific Subject*

This sort of magazine may also be a news magazine in the sense that it provides news reports on the special subject which it addresses. A magazine entitled « Science » will talk to us about new trends and discoveries, new techniques (recent) conferences... However, the piece of news does not necessarily have to be extremely current, as was the case with the daily or weekly general newsmagazine. The news item will refer to a current event rather than last minute news although it may also be such; (modern health) doctors may talk about their work, give advice, but they can also talk about the past. The special on Africa may deal with the history of Africa as well as the present. In this sense, a magazine on a specific subject with this title will address the subject (Africa), but it will present all sorts of aspects of this subject (economic, geographical, cultural, trade, food, and sport). Since it is a magazine on a specific subject, the variety of topics that it covers is not very important; the criteria according to which they will be dealt with will obviously depend on their relationship with the subject. We can also examine this sort of magazine according to a different approach. The subject may be very general, political or cultural. In this case, the specific feature of the program will lie in the fact that it addresses politics or culture from a special point of view; thus it can only deal with world political events insofar as they are related to African affairs, or foreign events. A magazine that discusses culture is cultural. However, it may be confined to a simple goal in linking culture to development, or it may address culture according to its subdivisions: theatre - singing - customs... Its duration will vary between 15 and 45 minutes.

c) *The Magazine for a Special Audience*

It may also contain news that are not general but selected because they are of interest to a specific audience, for example a government announcement on a new training course for farmers is of course of a general interest, but it is evidently of a specific interest to farmers and their children. If the program is for women, young people, farmers or urban workers, it will focus on the subjects, whether or not they are news, that are interesting to the special target group. If the program is exclusively composed of news, it will then be simply a magazine for a special audience. If it contains discussions on day-care centre, for example, on vegetable gardens, new ways of cooking or women's careers, it is a special magazine.

The special women's magazine has the purpose of providing a general education and calls women to change their attitude. The series of audience, which the program targets, is limited exclusively by the broadcasting time available for a restricted audience. There

may be programs on urban workers, women and young farmers; however, your program can be even more specialized when targeting even more specific audiences.

Infant care	Your baby's diet
Rural women	Cuisine for rural women
Women in cities	Family budget
Women and sports	Women and literacy
Women and careers	Career and family

Its duration will vary from 15 to 45 minutes.

d) The Variety Magazine

Two sorts of sounds may be used to capture people's attention: music or sound effects. It should not be loud but intrigue the listener, entice him to listen to what is going on. Both methods may be effective.

- **Music:** Any old music theme won't do. It has to have both a psychological value and a close relationship with the subject. Sound on its own is not a selection criterion. This is why one's attention must focus on the thematic and psychological meaning.
- **Sound effects:** The same rules apply here. The continuation of the program must mention the nature of the sound as a characterizing element. Sound effects may introduce an interview. The sounds of daily life, of people at the market...

In a variety magazine, the emphasis is placed on entertainment. Although useful information and educational issues may be included, the spoken part of a variety magazine has entertainment as its main purpose. It is very informal, very personal, casual and often superficial. Its main goal is to entertain the listener. For this reason, it is probably less applicable by educators whose aim is strictly educational, especially in developing countries, where broadcasting time is precious. Its duration will vary 15 to 45 minutes.

3. The Radio Survey

The radio survey has many things in common with the magazine.

The main difference between them lies in the fact that the magazine tends to deal with two or more subjects in a single program, while the survey is generally confined to an individual theme to which the program is entirely devoted.

The aim of the survey is to communicate ideas or information through a certain number of voices collected in the studio or outside of it and presented directly in form of an interview or a debate. These elements may be complemented by real-life recordings (of human voices, machine noises, music) and they are all combined into a logical sequence supported by the narration of one presenter, or more, to ensure the "links" with the studio.

Being limited to a single theme, the survey may tackle the subject (and capture the listener) on a larger front and from different points of views compared to the magazine, as a result of which it goes into greater depth.

However, the survey associated with the magazine, is based on frequent variations whose purpose is to capture the attention of the listener. Once again, the difference lies in the presentation, which varies according to the change of subject. The subsequent parts (expositions, interviews, discussions) each time focus on a different subject, while the survey may use the same sort of basic structure (exposition/interview; interview/exposition) to contribute constantly new developments to a given theme.

3.1. How to Develop an Investigation

One must have a sound general culture, along with the constant will to document oneself and to be up to date on things.

Where does one derive documentation from?

- From books, through monographs, by talking to people, because they have a memory, as well as on the Internet (Web).

3.2. Drafting

Some think that drafting is the most important thing to do. But that's not true, because as far as the form of the magazine is concerned, work is also important. In order to be clear, anything superfluous must be eliminated. However, drafting work does not only consist in removing anything that is bad. Sometimes good parts too have to be eliminated, and two good pieces put together in order to be concise. Drafting also means deciding where to place the different elements, and in which order. Indeed, the very object pursued by your investigation will determine the order of things and how they are to be drafted.

3.3. The Components of the Investigation

- **Interviews:** They must be short, and sometimes they must be divided. Questions must be brief and simple. Questions must be asked one at a time.
- **News elements:** They should not be an imposition.
- **Effects:** They should be used moderately, for their role is to give the radio a supplementary dimension and to create an emphasis.
- **Music:** same observation as for current events. Music should only be used to create the atmosphere.

The narration or link allows for the continuity of the account and an easy transition between the different parts: two to three (2 to 3) minutes for a quarter of an hour (1/4), four to five (4 to 5) minutes for half (1/2) an hour.

3.4. The interview

Everyone who lives in a society needs some minimum information about others, their acts, their plans and their intentions, for they are also their neighbours, their colleagues, their enemies. They are also their family, the people who live in their neighbourhood and their village, and why not, even the region or nation to which they belong. In a word, the people who live in a society perform a perpetual investigation, which is more or less clumsy, more or less systematic, and more or less important. Indeed, how could they react, speak or make any gestures at all without having a minimum knowledge of the environment in which they live, the society around them? One needs only to look at a child and listen to him carefully to become convinced of this. His conversation is filled with questions, with endless why's and how's. He spends his time asking questions to adults and to his small peers, when they know more than he does.

The interview does not consist in doing what the small child would do, for it has specific objectives; it is a technique that requires a lot of work in order to be mastered.

a) The Objectives of the Interview

An interview has different objectives.

One may settle for collecting facts or opinions. The interlocutor is the direct witness of an event. One asks him to describe the event and at the same time express his personal opinion on the subject, along with his reactions in terms of his acts or words. For example: a fire breakout (causes - rescue).

The purpose of the interview may also be to inform and motivate. To inform here consists of providing information that the interlocutor does not have, and whose possession will enable him to better process his opinions or be up to date with other people: it means making him aware. Motivating by the interview consists of having the interlocutor better understand the meaning or the importance of the facts in question, so that he can take a correct stand in relation to such facts. Many times events seem so far removed from us, when instead a better understanding of them makes them closer to us in unexpected way. For example: a new law on interest rates has just come out. It is published on the official bulletin, but the text is difficult and some citizens give up, after reading the first few lines. An interview would be helpful to motivate the public to read the text.

The purpose of the interview may be an evaluation, for example tests and exams in a concise form to evaluate the skills of a worker, the difficulties of children in school, etc.

The interview may have as its purpose to solve a problem between two parties involved in a dialogue and to prepare a solution to be made on a joint basis.

b) Different types of interviews

	Not guided	Semi-guided	Guided
Control			X
Verification		X	X
Greater insight	X	X	
Exploration	X		

b.1) Guided Interview

An interview is said to be guided when the subject, the subsequent topics, and the questions to be posed are determined beforehand by the person conducting the interview. The interviewer must collect as much information as possible to avoid the mistake of becoming too engaged in the conversation. The guided interview may be performed with the aid of a questionnaire established beforehand (preferably an interview guide or a framework). This approach has the advantage of presenting the interviewees with questions, which are worded in the same way.

What should be the quality of the questions within the framework of a guided interview?

Questions should be formulated clearly using readily understandable terms. Numerous journalists and investigators think that what is clear to them is clear to others. In this case they are under an illusion which they should try to fight against. The wise approach is to say that one is never too clear.

They must elicit accurate answers, according to the goal of the interview. There are two types of questions:

- **Closed-ended questions:** the interviewee chooses between yes or no without being able to say (yes, but) or (no, but); it should be noted that closed-ended questions are authoritarian, at least they seem such to a public not accustomed to investigations or interviews (all identification questions in a survey).
- **Open-ended questions:** softer and first of all enable the interviewee to better express himself, according to his way of speaking.

b.2) The Non-Guided Interview

As the name suggests, it is an interview that does not imply a specific direction. The interviewer leaves the interviewee the freedom to create the framework within which he wishes to express himself. He is never outside the scope of the subject; he may develop his information and opinions as he pleases, according to whatever form and order he

chooses. The interviewer poses few questions. The interview should not depart from its objective.

For example: it is not a good idea to let a social worker discuss the family and work when the interview should be on the increase in beer prices. The interviewer's skill consists in keeping the interview on track and blocking the interviewee when he goes round in circles. He should reformulate the aspirations, judgments and feelings of the interviewee in terms, which lead to new statements, new judgments, and new feelings on new facts. He should put the interviewee in the position to specify what he is thinking.

b.3) The Centred or Semi-Guided Interview

It is neither guided nor discussed. The interviewer has an interview guide containing a number of questions on the topics to be explored.

It has as a distinctive feature for its method of alternation between the moments in which the interviewer steps in to guide the individual, question him and ask him to specify certain points, and non-guided moments in which the interviewer supports the individual and tries to get him to question himself on the issues to be tackled.

Guided: ten (10) questions

Half-guided: four or five (4/5) questions

Guided: Framework (10 questions) on floods.

Semi-guided: Questions-Answers

The farmer who has just lost his millet harvest because of the drought.

4- The Micro-Program

The radio message used in educational campaigns composed of a number of elements, which together contribute to presenting in a persuasive manner an idea or an indication to action. This message is characterized by its very short duration, and the fact that its programming is repetitive; it is generally part of a series of messages of the same type, devoted to the same subject and entailing some common sound or verbal elements. The conception of its programming draws direct inspiration from the methods used for commercials. The first use of a micro-program goes back to 1966, when Pierre Billard was asked to launch a campaign of notions on development; Benin and Mali in 1967; Chad in 1968; Burkina in 1970; Gabon in 1971-72, and Burundi in 1979.

Composition of the micro-program

They are programs, which last between two (2) and three (3) minutes, and are characterized by their brevity. Its ideal duration is around 1 minute 30 seconds. The purpose of the micro-program is to raise the awareness of the listeners to a series of issues considered as priorities by the organizers of educational campaigns. Such

awareness is based on the repetition of short programs, which are broadcast according to a scattered program. It is interjected into the other programs of the day - appealing in its form - hence its attractive role. Its language should strike the imagination of the listener in order to sustain his attention (lively and brisk language) ; it is broadcast several times at different hours, and the purpose of such repetition is to reach out to the whole audience in order for the topics broadcast or discussed to be retained. The micro-program is made in the form of:

- Music ("jingle")
- A slogan or a saying or a proverb
- Music ("jingle")
- A comment
- A testimony or an interview
- Music ("jingle")
- A slogan or a saying or a proverb
- Music ("jingle").

5- Chat-Discussion

It allows for the expression of several opinions on a given subject.

It gathers around the microphone (out-doors or in the studio), a number of people who are invited to defend their points of view on a topical matter or on a topical subject.

The role of the radio presenter is to explain to the participants the rules of the format, which calls for mutual respect between participants and a very civil attitude.

The radio presenter must see to it that the time allotted to each person is fair, and that the discussion is not monopolized by one or two people.

The introduction and conclusion of the chat-discussion must be carefully prepared as well as the animation of the debate.

In conclusion,

To these five main formats, I would like to add other formats that one might consider as minor, not so much because of their audience ratings, but because they are expensive in terms of their production; I am referring to radio serials /sketches and events. All five formats referred to in the previous paragraphs are adapted to the processing of information on food security. However, the following radio broadcasting formats may be specified for each food security contents module.

- **Food security**

News magazine

Magazine on a specific subject

Magazine for a special audience

Micro-program
Quick news update
Public broadcast

- **Agrometeorology**

Bulletin (current events)
Semi-guided interview
Quick news update
Magazine on a specific subject

- **Market prices**

Quick news update
Chat-discussion
Magazine on a specific subject
News magazine
Micro-program
Radio investigation

- **Early warning**

Quick news update
Guided interview
Report

- **Nutrition**

Micro-program
Magazine on a specific subject
News magazine
Magazine for special audiences
Semi-guided interview
Public broadcast
Radio investigation

- **Post-harvest operations**

Micro-program
News magazine
Magazine on a specific subject
Public broadcast
Radio investigation

- **Biodiversity and genetic resources**

Public broadcast
Magazine on a specific subject
News magazine
Non-guided interview

- **Special Food Security Program**

Public broadcast
Guided and semi-guided interviews
Magazine on a specific subject
News magazine
Micro-program
Chat/discussion

- **Fisheries**

Magazine for special audience
News magazine
Magazine on a specific subject
Micro-program
Public broadcast
Chat/Discussion
Radio investigation

- **Forestry**

Magazine for special audience
News magazine
Magazine on a specific subject
Micro-program
Public broadcast
Chat/Discussion
Radio investigation

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