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ADVERTISING

Can radio listening change people's behaviour?



Written by Omar Ngum

Monday, 27 February 2006

The centre for Innovation Against Malaria (CIAM), is currently engaged in a nationwide qualitative assessment of a radio drama series called "Bolongodala", a forum for the dissemination of key messages on malaria control and prevention.

The twenty-six episode radio series was broadcast in Mandinka over GRTS Radio, for a period of two years.

According to the Director of CIAM, Dr Ayo Palmer, the results of this study will add value to the findings of The Gambia media survey conducted in November 2004 by CIAM and its partners.

As part of the study, a six-day training of the research team members on qualitative research techniques was held at the CIAM conference room in Banjul, from 8th-14th February 2006. It was facilitated by Dr Graham Mytton, former Head of the BBC Audience Research Unit and HAWSA service, who is now an audience and market research consultant and trainer.

According to him, the assessment is aimed at gaining insights and deeper level understanding of peoples' opinions and attitudes in the fight against malaria, by using appropriate methods that are culturally relevant.

The emphasis of the training was on an innovative development research methodology, otherwise referred to as Development Market Research (DMR).

In general terms, DMR seeks to understand why people behave the way they do and tries to discover things we do not know about them, through combination of exploratory and projective techniques. Dilating on the DMR concept, Mr Mytton noted that the application of market research methods had all along been confirmed to the commercial sector. However, he said, it has recently been realised that they can also have wider application in the other sectors of development and can be useful in the design, operation and evaluation of social services and Community Development projects. This is more so as market research methods are cost effective, problem oriented and can lead to positive action.

As outlined in the research proposal, a total of twenty-four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be conducted in the six Local Government areas, with each FGD involving between six to ten women, with children under five years of age.

It will also cover both listeners and non-listeners of "Bolongodala", as well as the different language groupings across the country. In-depth interviews will also be conducted with selected grandmothers of women with children under five, with a view to determine their role in child rearing, malaria prevention and control.

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