

Bringing Health Messages To Rural Populations Challenge

The inaccessibility of much of Madagascar's population to health education and information is a major challenge — over three-quarters of people live in rural areas, and only six percent of all households have a television. Among young women, aged 15 to 24, approximately two-thirds have no access to any form of mass media.



Photo: David MacAfee

Bringing the message to the villages in Madagascar.

Project Cinémobile is effectively targeting and bringing health messages to remote rural areas.

on malaria prevention. *Cinémobile* facilitators engage the audience with a mix of lively discussions, games, and demonstrations. The program also produces soap operas which address issues of responsible sexual behavior, condom use, STI treatment, and living with HIV/AIDS. The series was carefully filmed to ensure that each episode stands alone. This is important for rural audiences who will watch programs intermittently and also establishes an incentive for people to attend multiple presentations.

Results

The popularity of the *Cinémobile* is evident in event attendance figures. Each *Cinémobile* team draws an average crowd of 750 to 1000 per night and conducts around 20 presentations per month. One “*Sûr’Eau, Sûr’e*” presentation gathered a record audience of approximately 10,000. During the project’s duration, beginning in June 2000 to the end of 2002, 684 presentations were conducted in five provinces and reached a total of approximately 1,060,000 people. Research in other countries demonstrates a link between *Cinémobile* presentations and preventive sexual behavior. A community-based study conducted in Rwanda in 1998 found that males who had attended a *Cinémobile* presentation reported significantly higher condom use (32%) than those who had never attended (14%).

Initiative

USAID funded creative methods to bring health messages to rural parts of Madagascar where they are needed most. Mobile video units (*Cinémobiles*) are used to deliver health messages to rural and other vulnerable communities in an entertaining, interactive format.

Each *Cinémobile* team consists of three well-trained young men and women, audio-visual equipment, and an all-terrain vehicle. The teams tour the country and screen one of following three films — “*Bakapilesy*,” on the subject of condom use, negotiation, and prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STI); “*Sûr’Eau, Sûr’e*,” on safe drinking water practices; and “*Matory Am-Pilaminana*,”