

# Radio Manual

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## PREFACE

This manual was developed to explain how to plan, present and produce radio programs in various dialects. Quechuas using it have gained more experience and knowledge in the field over the years. During this time of growth, they now hold their own local radio programs workshops. They have even developed their own materials in Quechua to share with others. In March of 2000, about 50 of them formed "The National Association of Quechua Christian Broadcasters of Peru."

The material presented here is basic and fundamental. It is designed to train indigenous speakers. It will teach them how to reach their people through the medium of radio. An experienced media trainer should present the material to them. Anything new can then be fully explained to the student. The technical part will help orient the individual to audio equipment. He will learn about the equipment he will find at the local radio station. With this basic knowledge an individual can start planning and producing programs. In the process, more experience and knowledge in the field will be gained.

The Topics for Discussion, listed on page seven, are very important. There are experienced people in the field who have accomplished these goals, using radio. When they lead the discussion on topics in which they have experience, they become very effective. An informal talk can give even new participants an opportunity to express themselves. This also demonstrates how people can learn by sharing their expertise with others.

The manual can be copied and given to each student, except for the pages labeled Notes for Instructors. These pages are to be given to instructors. It provides them a general orientation of the workshop course, the materials and key areas of focus.

This material has been translated into English with the hope that it will be useful to a media trainer in carrying out radio programs workshops in other countries, languages and cultures.

Al Shannon





## NOTES FOR INSTRUCTORS

### HOW TO PREPARE

For first-time participants without formal training, the course should be five days long. If they have had some experience, it could be shorter. Never read the manual to the students. Have different students stand up and read the material out loud. Then ask them to comment on what they just read. This is very important if you want them to really learn and absorb the material. Most people that we train in third world countries use the national language as a second language. Therefore they must read new material in their second language. This often results in their concentration being on reading well and not on comprehension.

Half the time should be spent in teaching theory. The other half should be “hands-on” training. First they should practice using equipment. Then they should practice planning and recording spots and programs with other students. You can see an sample of the equipment explained at the end of this manual.

Every participant should write and record his own spot following the themes in the manual. Every participant should be involved with others to produce a 15 or 30 minute program. They should record it for others to listen to, critique it and make suggestions. (Follow the Suggested Program Formats on page five.)

When recording spots, set up a cassette recorder with a mike and headphones. Then choose three people at a time from the class. One should be designated as the recordist. The second should take the part of the director. The third person should read or act out his spot. The director’s first role is to adjust the mike. Then he must remind the speaker not to move and to speak correctly into the mike.

The recordist’s first role is to have the person rehearse his part. Then he sets the recording levels. When everyone is ready, he gives the signal to start. He either drops his arm or moves his hand. Then he rotates each one until all three have done each part. When they are finished, he chooses three more and do the same. This way everyone in the class learns the correct way to do a recording.

Do not spend much time on the facts in the manual for the moment. They can refer to that later on. It is very important that they discuss the different ways to use radio. Radio should be seen as a tool to accomplish a desired result. (See “Topics for Discussion” page seven) A radio program should never be an end in itself. They must see that it is a means to an end. Have the participants write down the answers to questions, like the questions below. Then have a discussion about them.

- Why am I doing this program?
- What do I want to accomplish?
- Who do I want to reach, who is my target audience?
- How and where do I start?
- What is the best mix or format to reach this audience?
- How do I know when I am accomplishing my goals?

Once again, the goal is to stimulate a class discussion through questions. The discussion should encourage the participants to come up with the answers. They understand their culture and know the best way to reach their people in each of these areas. (Also see questions under “Planning,” page one.)

It is important to get your students thinking creatively. If they feel called to this ministry but lack finances, they can start by praying. They should ask God to lead and provide the funding. First, they can choose their target audience. Then find out which stations cover that area and talk with those station managers. They can start by planning what their spots or programs will include. Then they can writing out scripts for each one. They could possibly begin with a daily or weekly spot. These are easy to produce and do not cost as much as a program. Good, powerful spots can sometimes accomplish your goals better than a lengthy program.

If students have access to a recorder they can start recording their programs. Stress the point that they should always record their programs on cassettes. They should not do a live program in a studio.

Finally, here is another very important thing to stress. Never use the Lord's time and money to criticize another brother or church over the radio. This only divides the body of Christ and will be fatal to your program. Radio should be a tool to bring the body of Christ together. It should build it up and encourage it in its mission.

## **GETTING STARTED**

Greet all participants. Then have them fill out registration forms. Include all the pertinent data that you would like to have. You will need to know their experience and how to contact them for follow-up.

Give participants a brief rundown on the course, including goals and objectives. Then have each participant share personally for about five minutes. Have them share their name, location and experience.

Give a manual to each participant. Explain the content of each section before having them read the material. Take turns having participants explain what they are reading. Answer the questions listed in the manual to make sure they understand the concepts presented. Remember to include explanations and examples from your personal experience. Proceed with each section as time permits.

## RADIO BROADCASTING

### PLANNING - For teams / program producers / local sponsors

**PURPOSE-AIM** – Why do you want a radio program? What do you want it to do?

**GOALS/OBJECTIVES** – “What are the objectives?” In a language program context, radio should become a tool to accomplish language program goals. It should never be an end in itself. Before investing time and money to produce a radio program, think it through. Ask yourself, “Is it to inform, educate, entertain or change attitudes?”

Then one needs to ask, “Who is the audience?” Are they adults, children, bilinguals, monolinguals, Catholics, or evangelicals? What are the interests and felt needs of the target audience? How do they live and think?

**STRATEGY** - “How are you going to reach your goals and objectives?” Once you have decided what you want to accomplish, you need to formulate a radio strategy. You need to have short and long-range plans. You need to investigate which kind of transmission is best to reach your intended audience. Is it AM, FM or SW? What frequencies are best? What radio stations in the area can provide this service? What will the cost be? What economic, material and human resources are in place and what more is needed?

You will also need strategy on how you are going to “get” your audience. More importantly, how will you encourage them to keep listening. Make a plan for getting feedback from them.

**PROGRAMMING** - The ideal program responds to the interests and felt needs of the audience. Think of the content of your program. Will it include culture, health, literacy, news, music, Scripture reading, etc.?

Which presentations and formats will communicate the message most effectively? Is your aim, for example, to raise the prestige of the language and culture? If so, what kind of presentation will best accomplish that purpose? “Spots” are an excellent way to advertise the program and gain an audience. Try thirty-second spots, ten times a day, preceding your “once-a-week” program. Remember, spots are economical, too.

**COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS** - What other materials do you need for follow-up to make your programs more effective? Perhaps you will need books, literature, posters, spots, gifts, etc. If you are promoting literacy or have a “read-along” program segment, what printed materials are needed? How will people get them? Perhaps hymnbooks should be available. Listeners can learn songs that are used on the program and sing along. Perhaps the radio program could be tied into a video show or content.

**EVALUATION** - You will want to be sure that your programs are achieving the set goals. Therefore, you must develop some methods for evaluating their effectiveness. You need to have feedback! For example, who is listening to the program? How many? How would you evaluate their level of interest? What do they think about the topics? Are there changes they would like to have? Evaluations can be accomplished in many ways. Visit villages or the radio station. Engage in correspondence, polls or the sale of Scripture materials.

## **COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES - Information for program producers / announcers**

1. **Know** what you want to communicate and why. Decide the best way to do it. What results do you want to see accomplished among the listeners?
2. **Choose** the medium that is most appropriate to communicate that message. Mediums could include reading, teaching, preaching or drama.
3. **Consider** the audience and their frame of reference. What is their cultural background? How do they feel about themselves? What do they need to know? Are they open to receive that information? Will it be beneficial for them? What are their interests and felt needs?
4. **Practice** the virtues of good communication: Speak the truth. Be warm and personal, precise and clear.
5. **Eliminate** from the program all criticism and prejudice that could be offensive or cause divisions. Otherwise you might lose your audience. Be positive, not negative!
6. **Affirm** your audience. Encourage and build them up with love.
7. **Involve** your audience.

## **BROADCASTING CONCEPTS**

1. The listener controls the radio. He can turn it on or off. That is why you not only need to acquire an audience, but also know how to maintain one.
2. Radio is one-time communication. The message needs to be clear, simple and precise for a one-time hearing. Don't be afraid to repeat the information in different ways.
3. Radio is one-way communication. There is no listener dialog. Therefore, consider the listeners' thoughts and reactions and meet them where they are. Design your programs so they feel you understand them. Talk to them. Convince them you are aware that they are out there listening.
4. Radio is audio only. It is not like TV or video. Radio only stimulates the audience with the speakers expressive words, music or sound effects. Radio must create an image and stimulate the imagination to validate its message.

## BROADCASTING PRINCIPLES

1. Our minds can only receive a limited amount of information at one time. Therefore, limit the details and the number of concepts presented in any given program. Be as brief and concise as the rules of the language will allow. Do not overwhelm or overload the listener with unnecessary details or too many topics.
2. No message can be understood faster than the mind can process and understand. Do not race through a program to save time. Speak naturally, as if talking with another person.
3. The quality of your voice's tone influences how the message is received and interpreted. Match the quality of your tone to the intention, importance, and dynamics of the message.
4. Speak to a person, throughout the entire program, even when the selected target is a group. Always keep the individual person in mind.
5. Do not allow anything to impede the reception of the message. There is always the possibility of distractions during the transmission or reception of a message. Distractions can be technical, mechanical, semantic or some interruption. It can come from outside things over which you have no control. Make sure you can not possibly cause a distraction. Watch your own movements. Do not make any noise or comment that will detract from the message.

## PROGRAMMING PRINCIPLES

1. **Focus on People** - A program is interesting if it has an effect on the life of the listener. Talk about his culture, language, history, village, or someone he knows. Describe an activity that interests him. Make people feel a part of what is going on and draw them into becoming involved. Facts alone are boring. Resist relying on a list of figures, abstract facts or theories. That will almost guarantee that loss of interest in programs, now and in the future.
2. **Include Conflict** - Challenge and struggle stimulates. A program is interesting if it includes conflicts between people, interests, ideas or concepts. It doesn't have to be violent or a case of life or death. It can be about differences, struggles, unresolved problems, questions or challenges.
3. **Get Excited !!** - Create interest and involve the audience. A program is interesting if the speakers show real passion and excitement for their subject. If the narrator, interviewer or actors are not involved in the program, you can't expect the listener to feel involved, animated or enthused.
4. **Keep It Simple** - Avoid confusion. The program material needs to be adapted a level the audience will understand. Adjust words, speed of the speaker's presentation and the number of concepts to their level.
5. **Use Your Imagination** - Make it come alive! A program is interesting if it sounds as if it is happening, even as you speak. Try to visualize the situation. This not only helps the presentation, but it also helps the listener understand. So, imagine the situation and describe it.
6. **Bring in Variety** - Change demands attention. A program is interesting if it has variety. Change keeps programs from becoming routine, boring and unattractive. Change the format, presentation,

speakers voices, and the technology. Use sound effects, re-verb, equalization. It will encourage the mind to continue to focus on the message.

## **\*\*ANNOUNCER GUIDELINES**

1. **Attitude** – Always be thinking of the listener. Radio is talking, sharing and speaking person-to-person—not just saying what YOU want to say.
2. **Animation** – You are an actor. You need to act in order to compensate for the fact that there are no gestures, facial expressions or motions in the words you are speaking. Project your voice and use appropriate intonation that fits the context of the message.
3. **Script reading** – Speak to the listener, don't just read information. Speak with authority to enhance credibility. Only sound like you are reading when the text allows reading, as in Scriptures. Otherwise, talk to the listener.
4. **Listening** – Listen to yourself and evaluate yourself. Does your voice sound natural or artificial? Listen to the program. Does it keep the listener in mind? Compare your program with others. Does it maintain a high quality? Is the technical quality excellent? Analyze your answers to these questions and learn from your errors. Only by the art of critiquing yourself and your programs can you improve your broadcasts.
5. **Critique from others** – Accept all kinds of critiques or criticism from others because you learn even more from others than from self-evaluation. No one is perfect, but the ideal is to assume the role of learner. Some of what you hear will not be positive, but you can always learn something from it. However, remember, you won't please all the people all the time, so stay balanced when analyzing the critiques.

## PROGRAM PRODUCTION

### SUGGESTED STYLES FOR SCRIPTS

1. **Narrative** – Use one voice. Aim for a casual and normal way of speaking rather than pulpit type preaching.
2. **Dialog** – Use a natural setting of two people talking. Lead into a discussion, statement and comment style. This style is credible and natural to the target audience.
3. **Question and Answer** – Use care in choosing your speakers. Special attention should be given to the way questions are asked, for naturalness and progression. It's a very good way to deal with difficult matters. It can make otherwise heavy information more interesting.
4. **Modified Drama** – Use lots of voices to give more interest and variety . You need to make sure each one has practiced his or her part. It is good to use mixed voices where possible and suitable. Each part should be dramatized rather than read in a stiff manner.
5. **Ethnic Chants and Music** – Use these for storytelling. They have proven to be an effective way to share truth that could not be readily expressed through a sermon format. You need to keep a close check on content to ensure teaching is truth.
6. **Poetic** – Poetry is especially effective with the Muslim community. It is similar to the above chants but in a rhyme form. It has great appeal to the otherwise disinterested audience.
7. **Testimonies** – Carefully select believers who can give concise true life stories. They can have a tremendous impact because of the person's story of the life-change. In some cultures it is considered inappropriate to identify the person.
8. **Storytelling with Sound Effects** – This is very effective if sound effects are readily understood and sound real. The storyteller keeps the listener in mind and tells rather than reads the story. This is especially good for children's programs.
9. **Songs** – Thematic teaching through the use of songs has proven very helpful. It causes the listener to think on the message rather than dwelling on the music. Be careful when selecting existing songs. Make sure they are biblical in their teaching.
10. **Read-a-longs** – As a motivational tool read-a-longs can increase reading skills. A reader on cassette needs to pause at punctuation marks and use expression. Special attention needs to be given to the pace of the reader. Bear in mind those who will be reading along. Time needs to be allowed for finding pages, turning pages, etc. If drawings or pictures are used in the printed materials, time should be allowed for viewing them. Attention should be drawn to the illustration. This is especially true when introducing new materials and if the users are new readers.

## SUGGESTED PROGRAM FORMATS (Example of a typical 30-minute program)

1. **Opening** – (30 sec.) Announcing the name of the program with background music is the usual opening. It should be something you always use and is known by your audience. It's your program identity and should be something original. It's you calling the people to listen.
2. **Greeting** – (1 min.) This is where you identify yourself with the audience. Make them feel you know them and are one of them.
3. **Music** – (3 min.) Music is a very important part of a program and should be culturally relevant to your audience. It should be an uplifting song and encourage them towards worship. It is also a good way to spread the Word of God. Songs could be used two or three times during the program.
4. **Scripture reading** – (3 min.) This should be well thought through before reading. It should be clearly presented with proper tones to make it come alive.
5. **Scripture meditation** – (5 min.) This should follow the reading and be well planned. It should not relate to a particular religion or point of view. You do not want to alienate your listeners. It should help people grasp something of the nature of God, his truth and his love for the audience. The meditation should answer questions of who, when, where, what, why and how. It should be a thought that the listeners can relate to and apply to their lives..
6. **Interview** – (5 min.) An interview could be with a village authority or spiritual leader. It should be someone who is known in the community or who represents some of your audience. It can be an opportunity for someone to share their faith. It can allow you to commend a person for something special. You could even say something that would support your program.
7. **News or Announcements** – (3 min.) News should always be of interest to your audience. Your news should be confined to local news only and be a public service. Remember, if you do it for one church or denomination, you should do it for each one represented by your audience.
8. **Publicity** – (3 min.) Only include news of local events that are of interest to the public. You could include video showings or the sale of cassettes, books and Scripture.
9. **Book readings** – (5 min.) Readings should be of interest to the listener. They should be done well to encourage others to want to read. Readings can be accompanied by a time of lots of questions and answers to make sure the audience understands what has been read.
10. **Fill** – If you have any time left over, use this time to highlight key aspects of the program.
11. **Close** – (1 min.) Closing is the culmination of your program. This should be a time to sum up key aspects of your program. Review the facts you want your audience to remember. It should always end with your listeners wanting to hear more, so let them know when they can hear you again.

## SOUND EFFECTS AND MUSIC

1. Sound effects speak for themselves. The narration doesn't have to mention them. Too many sound effects can confuse or upset the listener. Used them to accelerate actions, provide dramatic effect, minimize words and create the desired atmosphere. The sound effects should be recognized by the

listeners. When mixed with a narration, they should be in the background. They are to reinforce the narration, not cover it up.

2. Music can reinforce the narration and provide the desired atmosphere. It can also be used as a bridge between readings or actions. Short musical pieces, placed at the right spots, can reinforce the script. Music is frequently used only in the background. It is not used as a way to increase the emotions.

## **SPOTS**

A spot is a short message under 60 seconds that is to be played over and over on a radio station “every hour” of the day. It is designed to grab the attention of an audience to share information. They can be very effective, easy to produce and cost little to put on the air. Spots are very convincing and can be used in the following ways:

1. To let listeners know what time of day your program will be on the air. Include how often it will be on the air. Tell them what it will be about.
2. To promote literacy, the sale of books and Scripture and other literature.
3. To communicate a fact or truth of Scripture.
4. To encourage people and raise their self-esteem. Strive to give them pride and dignity in their language and culture.
5. To sell and advertise materials and products.
6. To advise listeners about special local events.
7. To cause people to think about what they believe and why.

## **LIVE OR PRERECORDED**

Live programming is exciting and immediate. However, the novice producer will find it helpful to prerecord his program as often as possible. There are several reasons for this:

1. The programs will be better quality because the producer can eliminate errors through editing. The best producers, or even the most prepared and experienced announcers can make serious errors. Most commonly pronunciation and diction errors. They can become distracted or lose their train of thought.
2. Prerecording allows for a higher quality mixing of music, sound effects and other program elements. Music and sound serve to stress major points and fill in dry places.
3. Sometimes unnecessary points or unrelated comments are made by guests. These can distract from the message. It is easier to edit out the errors. For instance, a live program may end before each guest or the speaker has finished speaking.
4. Prerecording allows the producer to review the various parts of the program. In the process weak portions can be improved and strengthened. It also allows you to accurately time a program through

editing.

5. It may be easier to prerecord a program during the day or evening rather than do it live at the time of broadcast.
6. A prerecorded program does not have unexpected interruptions or technical problems. It avoids problems caused by a sudden illness of the host or guest. Unexpected illnesses can cause a person to arrive late at the radio station.
7. Prerecorded programs can be put on other stations. They can even be played at a later date. Then copies can be made for others. The material or program portions can also be reused in other programs.
8. In the long run, prerecorded programs are better prepared and thus make for fewer errors.

## **TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

### **USING RADIO FOR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:**

1. Literacy promotion
2. Bible teaching
3. Evangelizing
4. Raising language and culture esteem
5. Distribution and sales of Scriptures and materials
6. Evaluating the effectiveness of your programming
7. Gaining an audience and keeping it.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF BROADCASTING TECHNOLOGY

### SOUND

1. **What is sound?** – The sensation produced in the ear due to a vibrating object that moves air that create sound waves.
2. **Necessary elements:**
  - An object that vibrates, such as the vocal cords or a speaker cone.
  - A carrier like air, water or radio waves.
  - A receiver, like the ear or microphone.
3. **Sound waves** – Sound travels in waves.
  - A wave is one complete cycle, like waves and troughs in an ocean wave.
  - A complete cycle is measured in Hertz (cycles per second)
4. **Frequency** – The speed or number of times per second that something vibrates or passes through one cycle or wave.
  - Audio sound waves have a speed of 20 to 20,000 cycles per second and it is expressed as 20 Hz to 20 KHz
5. **Amplitude** – The intensity, volume or power of sound is measured in decibels. (Up or down)
  - Silence as perceived by the human ear is 0 dB.
  - From 0 dB, sound volume is measured up or down in positive or negative dBs.
6. **Wavelength** – The size or length of a wave. For example: A frequency of 220 Hz has a wavelength of 5 ft.
7. **What happens to a sound wave once it is produced?**
  - It can be absorbed by a substance or body so that it can't be heard.
  - It can be reflected by a surface, like an echo.
  - It can be refracted or changed by the material that it passes through.
8. **Harmonics** – Several levels of the basic fundamental frequency and control tone and pitch.

### AM–FM–SW

**AM (Amplitude Modulation)** is the product produced when the carrier wave of the transmitter is combined with the audio signal. (Voice or music) This process changes the amplitude of the carrier wave according to the audio signal. The frequency range of the AM band is from 540Khz to 1,700Khz. This band is usually confined to the local area during the day, but at night time it can cover long distances.

**FM (Frequency Modulation)** is the product produced when the carrier wave of the transmitter is mixed in a special way with the audio signal. (Voice or music) This process changes the frequency of the carrier wave according to the audio signal. The frequency range of the FM band is 88 Mhz to 108

Mhz. Because of the high frequencies of this band, its propagation is limited to local areas. (Line of sight)

**SW (Short Wave)** A short wave transmitter produces an AM signal, but at higher frequencies than the AM band. There are many SW bands (groups of frequencies) which range in frequency from 1.7 Mhz to 50 Mhz. These bands of frequencies are used to transmit over long distances and around the world.

## **THE HUMAN VOICE**

The human voice produces sound waves through the vocal cords in the throat. These vibrating sound waves are formed by the mouth to produce the desired sound. The voice is as important as a microphone or the recording equipment and needs proper care.

When speaking into a microphone you must control your voice and not shout. Your voice must sound natural and be clear with good tones. One must also control his breathing and not breathe during a sentence or phrase. This is better controlled when one is standing instead of sitting.

## **RECORDING STUDIO AND EQUIPMENT USE – General information – Tips**

### **Microphones**

1. For radio broadcasting or recording one must use a good quality microphone. The best choice is a directional microphone. It is best because it captures only your voice and not the surrounding ambiance.
2. It should be a microphone that is suited for your voice, so that you sound natural.
3. The microphone must be placed close to the mouth without hearing undesirable mouth sounds. One should not be able to hear breathing, lips smacking or other sounds.
4. It is best to place the microphone to the side of the mouth. You will avoid bursts of air created when placed directly in front of the mouth. The material inside vibrates when sound waves hit it. Bursts of air make the vibrating material create popping sounds.
5. One must be careful not to cause noisy studio sounds. Avoid movements of the table, rustling of papers or the squeak of a chair. A microphone will reproduce these sounds as noise.
6. One must never touch the microphone when in use. Most microphones echo the noise of rubbing hands or fingers on its surface.
7. Never use the switch on the microphone when in use. This will cause a loud noise.

## Types of microphones

1. Dynamic and Ceramic – These are the best for broadcasting and recording.
2. There are three types of microphones: Directional, bi-directional and omni-directional. The directional microphone is the best for recording one voice. The omni-directional microphone is good for recording large groups.

***Don't forget: the human ear can distinguish between the voice and noise, but the microphone cannot!***

## Tape recorders

It is essential to have a good quality tape recorder and tapes when recording. They should be kept and maintained properly.

1. The most important aspect of maintaining tape machines is to keep the recording and playback heads and the drive rollers clean. This must be done on a regular basis with a little alcohol on cotton on the end of a small wooden stick. (Q-tab)
2. It is always best to have the recorder turned on and the recording in place, and use the pause key to start. That way you will have a quick start without a click of the switch.
3. Before recording or playing the tape machine, the volume level should be set to the correct position so that it isn't too weak or too strong when turned on.
4. The tape machine must be placed far enough from the microphone so it won't pick up the sound of the machine or the clicks of the switches.
5. All cassettes and tapes should be stored in their boxes in a dry place when not in use.

## Mixers

A mixer is an electronic device that permits the connection of diverse microphones, recorders, or players, each with its own volume control, and mix them into one output.

1. When recording or preparing a radio program, you need a good quality mixer. A good mixer will also raise the volume level of weaker microphones to the same level as other equipment connected.
2. Since microphones have different impedances than other equipment, a mixer blends those differences into the proper impedance for the output, and at the same time, permits the raising and lowering the individual volume level of each microphone.
3. Before using a mixer you need to adjust or equalize each channel or microphone to the correct level according to the output (dB) meter.
4. In order to have good and sufficient modulation, try to maintain the needle of the dB or output meter

for each channel around 0 dB or between the red and black line. If the needle goes any higher than that, it can produce distortion.

5. When recording, one should use earphones to monitor the output of the mixer to make sure the output is clean and free of distortion.

## **MAKESHIFT STUDIOS AND REMOTE RECORDINGS**

Have you ever wanted to do some professional, clean recordings that you could feel proud about? Recordings that weren't filled with unwanted sounds? Sounds like dogs barking, chickens crowing or kids screaming, nor hums, echoes or reverberations. You may think it is impossible in a remote location like a village situation, but really, it isn't. There are a number of reasons why you should think of setting up a provisional studio and do recordings in a remote location:

1. Because that's where the people live and work and are available to record and check your work.
2. It is not ideal to bring most indigenous peoples out of their environment for long periods of time.
3. You do not have funds to rent a room or purchase permanent materials.
4. You can also get community and church leadership involved in the recording process.
5. It is a great place for recording village sounds like animals, rippling water, music and people doing things. These make excellent sound effects or background to give life to your recordings.

You can be a pro at this, right where you are. You might ask where, or how do I begin and with what? First look for a room. The ideal, if several people are involved, would be the size of a small bedroom. (About 10' x 10') If there are only two people, then a smaller room would be fine. This could be in your own home or away from as many sounds as possible. (Usually you have more control over your own environment.) You could also hire someone to keep kids, chickens and dogs away from the house while recording.

Next, eliminate square walls by creating baffles with bookcases or other large surface furniture. This will break up the sound patterns in the room. This can also be done by hanging rugs or blankets, or standing up foam mattresses. It is especially important to cover windows or a door. A rug on the floor helps keep sound from bouncing from floor to ceiling. These materials will also soften or absorb the sounds. Try a few tests with your recorder to see how it sounds. You will be amazed at the difference before and after.

When you have your room just right, make sure you have a good recorder and mike. A good mixer would give you more possibilities. Do not use microphones that come with a recorder. Use a good professional, directional mike. Next put a windscreen or sock over the mike. This will help absorb wind blasts that produce a popping sound, especially if recording outside. When recording, have the speaker get as close to the mike as possible without picking up unwanted sounds or deep breathing.

This permits you to turn down the recording gain or the mike level on your mixer. It eliminates any other possible sounds from inside or outside the room. It may help to place the mike off to one side of the mouth to cut down on “popping.”

And don't forget to use the “non-reader” or “prompter” approach to recording. Sometimes this can produce a more natural recording than with a reader. With the “prompter” approach, church or town leaders who may be illiterate can have a part in the production.

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