



# Transnational Radio: The Role of “La Hora Mixteca” in the Life of Oaxacan Indigenous Migrant Communities

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Evaluation of the Oaxacalifornia Project  
(Rockefeller Foundation Grant # 2002 GI 027)

Submitted by E. Kissam Associates, January 21, 2006

## **Introduction**

In October, 2002, the Rockefeller Foundation made a modest grant of \$120,000 to cover the costs of hardware and installation of satellite equipment to link Radio Bilingue to the network of community public radio stations operated by the Comision de Desarrollo Indigena (then the INI) in areas of Oaxaca and Guerrero state. The objectives of the project were to build on Radio Bilingue’s initial collaborative experience in transnational radio to create a new “Puente Oaxacalifornia”. The underlying idea was that this linkage would both inform Oaxacan migrants and strengthen their transnational communities.

It was also hoped that this would represent another step forward in Radio Bilingue’s efforts to establish collaborative transnational relationships with Mexican public/community radio broadcasters to create a network of “radio sin fronteras”.

This was an extraordinary proposition, to use satellite technology and community radio to link geographically separated areas throughout the Oaxaca-Guerrero indigenous communities’ migration circuit into a virtual transborder communication network, more or less configured to the “footprint” of migrants’ own travels, community and social networks. The current report is an evaluation of the impacts of the project—focused more on examining how it has affected the target population, Oaxacan indigenous communities with high levels of transnational migration, than on the organizational activities and processes involved in project implementation.

The “Puente Oaxacalifornia” project built on Radio Bilingue’s previous experience in linking Radio Bilingue’s California network of four stations (KSJV-Fresno, KHDC, Salinas, KTQX Bakersfield, and KMPO Modesto) in areas to which Mixtec, Triqui, and other indigenous Oaxacan farmworker migrants came with the Comision de Desarrollo Indigena (CDI) affiliate, XEQUIN, San Quintin, Baja California, a major tomato-producing area of northern Mexico. The nexus of the earlier efforts was “La Hora Mixteca”, a music and talk show hosted by Filemon Lopez, a Mixtec community activist and long-time producer at the station. The show, now actually 4 hours in length, has been on the air for more than 15

years but had not been available in San Quintin until July, 1996 when Radio Bilingue secured for XEQIN a satellite downlink.

The “Puente Oaxacalifornia” project extends La Hora Mixteca’s reach to a large, heavily indigenous area of northwestern Oaxaca, through installation of satellite downlinks at La Voz de la Mixteca (XETLA) in Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca; La Voz de la Costa Chica Chica (XEJAM) in Jamiltepec, Oaxaca; La Voz de La Sierra Juarez (XEGLO) Guelatao, Oaxaca; La Voz de la Chinantla, San Lucas Ojitlan, Oaxaca (XEOJN); and La Voz de la Montana (XEZV) in Tlapa, Guerrero. Installation of an uplink at XETLA meant that it would be possible for the transnational broadcast network to be interactive since the CDI station network could, via the uplink, share programming with the Radio Bilingue network in California (and, ultimately, with Satellite Radio Bilingue affiliates throughout the United States).

### **The Puente Oaxacalifornia Evaluation Design and Current Report**

The current report conveys the findings from our evaluation of this project, based primarily on survey research conducted in Madera, California, San Quintin, Baja California, and in the Tlaxiaco and Juxtahuaca districts of Oaxaca during 2005.

While Radio Bilingue had initially anticipated that the project would be completed in two years (i.e. by 2004), the station faced a number of administrative hurdles in establishing the network—due primarily to legal issues involved in securing federal authorities’ approval for the hardware installation and administrative reorganization of the INI into CDI. We delayed the overall evaluation until 2005 and held off with Oaxaca interviewing until December, 2005 in the hope that it would be possible to assess the impact of the bilateral exchange of programming which would result from initiation of the Tlaxiaco uplink service and inclusion of Oaxacan-originated programming in California but communication authorities’ approval had still not been secured as of January 15, 2006.

Our evaluation research was modest, given budget and staffing constraints; yet, at the same time, we wanted to assure we could secure from the population Radio Bilingue and its CDI partners is seeking to serve, truly transnational perspectives on the Puente Oaxacalifornia initiative.

### **Study Objectives**

Our primary research objectives were the following:

- To determine the market penetration of “La Hora Mixteca” among indigenous migrants within the Mixtec migration circuit of the Sierra Mixteca, Baja California, and California
- To profile the indigenous audience for “La Hora Mixteca” to discover who the programming is reaching
- To assess listeners’ exposure to programming on a range of themes (e.g. cultural maintenance, health, news and public affairs) interspersed with music and call-ins

- To assess listeners’ satisfaction with key strategic aspects and stylistic elements of the programming (language mix, exchange of messages from migrants and stay-at-homes, mix of music and talk)
- To sketch out the extent of the migration networks of current listeners as guidance for Radio Bilingue in ongoing efforts to expand coverage to major US areas where transnational indigenous migrants travel
- To broadly assess the impact of “La Hora Mixteca” programming on the lives of the transnational migrant communities it reaches and implications for the participating community radio institutions’ future efforts

## Study Methodology

Overall, 180 respondents were interviewed, 60 in each of the three research areas—California, Baja California, and Oaxaca; thus, the sampling procedure makes it possible to determine if there are any major differences in listenership and perspective in these three “neighborhoods” of the Mixtec migration circuit.

Interviews were conducted in Madera, California, in August, when many transnational migrants are in the area for the grape harvest, in Baja California, in September, and in Oaxaca in December, when at least some migrants had returned home.

Given the lack of high-quality sampling frames to generate a survey sample and our successful use of adaptations of intercept interview techniques developed for market research we used locally-adapted intercept techniques in this study. In each community we sought to interview in diverse venues in order to secure a broad cross-section of respondents.

Interviewers in Madera, California spoke Mixteco Alto, Mixteco Bajo and Spanish but in San Quintin, and in Tlaxiaco and San Juan Mixtepec, Oaxaca the interviewers spoke only Spanish.<sup>1</sup> The language constraints of interviewers introduced some bias into the survey as the migrant population includes in addition to Mixtecos, Triqui migrants, and also speakers of Chatino, Amuzgo, Nahuatl and other indigenous languages.

Places where interviews were conducted are:

- *In Madera*: at home or in front yard (45%), in a park (17%), the remate (15%), a church (5%), on the street (4%), or at work (4%), by health center (4%), not specified (6%)

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<sup>1</sup> We are very grateful to Rafael Flores and Jesus Ordonez of Se’e’Savi for joining Anna Garcia in conducting the Madera interviews. Anna Garcia conducted the interviews in San Quintin and Ed Kissam joined her in conducting the interviews in San Juan Mixtepec and Tlaxiaco.

- *In the Valley of San Quintin*: Vicente Guerrero (Colonia “La Triqui”/Lomas de San Ramon, Colonia San Juan Copala/Las Misiones), Lazaro Cardenas, Colonia Maclovio Rojas, Colonia San Juan Mixtepec—at home (48%), stall in Mercado Tradicional, small grocery store, or other *puesto* (24%), in park (12%), on street (8%), other workplace (4%), not specified (4%)
- *In Tlaxiaco or San Juan Mixtepec*: Friday market San Juan Mixtepec (32%), Agencia Municipal, San Juan Mixtepec (4%), San Juan Mixtepec home (5%), San Juan Mixtepec Plaza (5%) Tlaxiaco plaza (17%), Tlaxiaco park by church (20%), Tlaxiaco street (12%), small business (4%)

In both Madera and San Juan Mixtepec, procedures included reliance on snowball sampling within networks of interviewers’ acquaintances—but we found that survey respondents were generally very responsive to our request “to talk about what they thought about radio programming and how it served the community”. At the end of each interview, survey respondents were given a small honorarium to thank them for their time (in Madera, \$10, in San Quintin, Tlaxiaco, and San Juan Mixtepec, \$50 pesos).

We screened potential survey respondents to include only “Oaxaquenos” and only persons who listened to at least “some” radio broadcasting in Spanish and/or Mixtec or Triqui.

### **Profile of the Oaxacalifornia Survey Respondents**

We believe that survey respondents are fairly but not perfectly representative of the transnational migrant population targeted by *La Hora Mixteca*. While all of the Oaxaquenos interviewed in Tlaxiaco and San Juan Mixtepec were born in the state, survey respondents in San Quintin and Madera included indigenous Oaxacan migrants born in other communities within these transnational migration networks: Veracruz, the Distrito Federal, Sinaloa, Baja California, and California.

Overall, survey respondents were from 79 villages, mostly in the districts of Juxtlahuaca, Tlaxiaco, Huajuapam de Leon, Putla de Guerrero, and Silacoyoapan. However, there were also respondents from a number of other Oaxacan districts including: Ejutla de Crespo, Etlá, and Jamiltepec. As might be expected, some of the major migrant-sending villages such as San Juan Mixtepec, Santa María Tindu, San Andrés Chicahuaxtla, San Sebastián del Monte were fairly heavily represented at each site.

We interviewed respondents as young as 15 years of age and as old as 90 years of age. Not surprisingly, the Madera respondents (average age 32.5 years) were somewhat younger than that of the San Quintin survey respondents (average age 37.6 years) and the Oaxaca respondents (average age 38.7 years). Relatively few (7%) were teenagers and even less (4%) were respondents over 65 years of age. Thus, the survey results should be understood as generally reflecting the perspectives of a young adult to middle-aged population.

The Oaxacalifornia survey population, like the overall indigenous population in migrant-sending areas, has very low levels of education. Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents (72%) have only an elementary-level education and 14% did not go to school at all. Only 4% have any post-secondary education. Their mean level of educational attainment

is 5.1 years of schooling. There are also very striking differences in the mean educational attainment of the survey respondents interviewed in Oaxaca (6.4 years of schooling), San Quintin (3.6 years of schooling), and Madera (5.3 years of schooling).<sup>2</sup>

In Madera, almost two-thirds (64%) of the surveyed respondents worked in agricultural occupations, mostly as farmworkers, but the sample also included two irrigators, two packing house workers, and two landscapers. Another 20% of the sample were housewives. The occupations of the remaining respondents were: construction laborer, cook, house cleaning, studying, and “retired”.

In San Quintin, there was a similar occupational distribution of survey respondents, with half (49%) being farmworkers, and 14% housewives. However, in San Quintin, survey respondents included a number of market vendors (13% of the total), as well as motel cleaners, a house cleaner in a private home, a school principal, construction laborers, several small business owners, a student, and a retired person.

In Oaxaca, one-third (34%) of the survey respondents were *campesinos* working their own land or working as hired laborers; another 6% worked in semi-skilled agricultural work. Another 12% of the respondents were housewives. The Oaxaca survey had somewhat more small business owners than the other areas (8%) and more students (8%). The Oaxaca interviews included four with market vendors (7%), three with van or taxi drivers (5%), three with construction workers (5%), two with young men who shine shoes (3%), one with a teacher, one with a policeman, two retired persons, and four students (7%).

Three-quarters of the Oaxacalifornia survey respondents (72% of those in Madera, 73% of those in San Quintin, and 83% of those in Tlaxiaco or San Juan Mixtepec) spoke an indigenous language in addition to Spanish. By far the largest proportion spoke a Mixtec language but 12% spoke Triqui and 4% spoke Zapotec; other languages spoken included Tacuate and Nahuatl. Not surprisingly, given the communities where we conducted the survey in Oaxaca, most of the Mixtec speakers spoke Mixteco Alto. Although we routinely asked respondents about their ability to understand and speak Mixtec from other areas, there was a great deal of difference of opinion as to whether a speaker of Mixteco Bajo from San Agustin Atenango, for example, could, understand Mixteco Alto from San Juan Numi, well, somewhat, not well at all.

We also asked survey respondents which language they preferred—their mother tongue or Spanish. Of those who spoke an indigenous language, slightly more than half (53%) were bilingual, feeling at home in both languages and one-fifth (19%) actually preferred Spanish, being somewhat limited in the indigenous language they spoke. However 29% preferred the indigenous language they spoke. This pattern of language distribution has some implications for production style.

Overall, 59% of the respondents were men and 41% female. However, more men were interviewed in Oaxaca (74%) and in Madera (63%) while, in San Quintin, there were less men interviewed (41%). This probably reflects seasonal variations in the gender ratio of the Oaxacan migrant community—with more young men in Madera in the spring and less in

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<sup>2</sup> Statistically significant at level of  $p < .001$

San Quintin in the fall (since interviews took place when the raisin harvest was just ending in the San Joaquin Valley and when the wine grape harvest was underway in northern California). However, the skewed gender ratio does indicate some sample bias as a result of the interviewers in San Quintin and Oaxaca not speaking Mixtec or Triqui.<sup>3</sup>

More than one-third (39%) of the survey respondents interviewed in Oaxaca and Baja California had migrated to the United States at some point.<sup>4</sup> This highlights the extent of transnational migration in these communities; the majority of the survey respondents in Mexico had some immediate or extended family member in the U.S.

The survey included Oaxacan migrants living in Madera who had arrived in the U.S. as long as 30 years ago (in 1976) but, also, a fair number of very recent migrants to the U.S. In Madera, 18% of those surveyed had first migrated to the U.S. after 2001; in San Quintin, 7% had, although, only 3% of those who we interviewed in Oaxaca had. Established historical patterns of migration are clearly continuing. However, the interviews in the U.S. and Baja California suggest that a minority of the dispersed migrants who have gone north return fairly regularly to Oaxaca but that most only manage to return often (or ever). Slightly more than one-third of the survey respondents (39% of those interviewed in Madera and 38% of those interviewed in San Quintin) had returned to Oaxaca within the previous 3 years.

It is generally known that the Pacific Seaboard farm labor force includes a very high proportion of migrant farmworkers. The current survey shows that there are also many Oaxacan migrants to the Eastern Seaboard, and to other less common destinations in the Midwest and the Rocky Mountain states. **Table 1A** below shows the regional migration patterns of the survey respondents in each sub-sample.

<b>Table 1A: Migrant Experience/Patterns of Oaxacalifornia Survey Respondents</b>				
<i>% of Respondents who have:</i>	<b>Madera</b>	<b>San Quintin</b>	<b>Oaxaca</b>	<b>Overall Survey</b>
Worked in the Pacific Seaboard states	97%	32%	27%	53%
Worked in the Eastern Seaboard states	5%	13%	30%	16%
Worked in the Midwest or Rocky Mountain states	4%	7%	15%	8%
Cross-country migrants who have worked in more than one region of the U.S.	7%	12%	25%	14%

<sup>3</sup> This was noticeable in San Juan Mixtepec where we were unable to interview some older women who were monolingual in Mixtec.

<sup>4</sup> Obviously, all those interviewed in California were U.S. migrants.

Overall, the Oaxacalifornia survey respondents are much more likely to be “follow the crop” migrants than the overall U.S. farm labor force.<sup>5</sup> The broad geographic span of these Oaxacan migration networks suggests that there are potential audiences for La Hora Mixteca in other areas served by Satelite Radio Bilingue.<sup>6</sup> More importantly, the high mobility of the Oaxacan migrants shows why the available of a “virtual agora”, the communication forum provided by La Hora Mixteca, is so important to these transnational migrant communities.

Tabulations of the specific state-by-state migration of the Oaxacalifornia survey respondents is of some interest as a basis for guidance in further planning by Radio Bilingue and its Comision de Desarrollo Indigena collaborators for efforts to configure a transnational community/public radio network to be as responsive as possible to the “shape” of the Oaxacan transnational migrant networks. **Table 1B** below shows state-by-state migration patterns for major U.S. destination states.

<b>Table 1B: State-by-State Migrant Experience/Patterns of Oaxacalifornia Survey Respondents</b>				
<i>% of Oaxacalifornia respondents who have been to:</i>	<b>Madera</b>	<b>San Quintin</b>	<b>Oaxaca</b>	<b>Overall Survey</b>
California	100%	31%	25%	45%
Oregon	52%	19%	17%	29%
Washington	15%	7%	13%	12%
Florida	2%	10%	22%	11%
Georgia	---	---	10%	3%
North Carolina	3%	7%	22%	11%

Obviously, the specific observed matrix of Oaxacan transnational migrants’ destinations varies depending on where one samples. Thus, the Oaxaca tabulation of places migrants have traveled to provides the best overview of the configuration of migration networks in

<sup>5</sup>The NAWS site frequencies on-line 2001-2002 (MIGTYPE2) shows 13% of the migrants to be “follow the crop” but this tabulation includes in-state migrants and cross-state migrants who travel only within a single region as defined here (e.g. California, Oregon, Washington), as well as the cross-region migrants reported here within the past year while we asked where a migrant had ever traveled.. Half (50%) of the Madera, California survey respondents have worked in another state, while 34% of the San Quintin interviewees and 39% of the Oaxaca interviewees had worked in at least two U.S. states. Thus, the “shuttle” migrants who travel to only one migration destination who predominate in the overall farm labor force make up only a very small minority of the overall indigenous transnational migrant population.

<sup>6</sup> Radio Bilingue has recently acquired an affiliate in Woodburn, OR; broadcast of La Hora Mixteca on stations such as this can be expected to make the Oaxacan migrants’ sense of community continuity stronger, less filled with “gaps”.

the local area, i.e. the Tlaxiaco, Juxtlahuaca districts of the Sierra Mixteca. But the matrix also shows the density of inter-connections of places within these network communities.

Most of the respondents (74%) live in nuclear family households. However, in Madera 11% of the respondents were solo male migrants living with friends, none of whom were relatives. In each of the communities, 5-10% of the respondents lived alone (e.g. an older widowed woman in San Juan Mixtepec, a single mother in Tlaxiaco whose children live elsewhere) and another 10% or so live in a household with other extended family members. Radio listening is likely to usually be a group activity in most of these households.

Half (49%) of the survey respondents said they listen to Spanish-language (or, in the case of CDI station listeners, multi-lingual Spanish-Mixtec-Triqui) programming every day. Another one-quarter (25%) listen to the radio “quite a bit”, i.e. most days of the week, while the remaining 25% listen “some”, i.e. not every day. There are significant differences in the radio listening patterns of respondents in different areas. For example, only 37% of the Madera respondents listen to the radio every day while 59% of those in San Quintin and 52% of those in Oaxaca listen every day. Overall, the San Quintin respondents listened more heavily than those in either Oaxaca or California. It should be noted also that the CDI station there “La Voz del Valle” which airs La Hora Mixteca is the only radio station that can be easily received.

### **Radio Bilingue Listenership**

Radio Bilingue’s “La Hora Mixteca” programming has extraordinary market penetration within the population of indigenous migrants interviewed in the Oaxacalifornia survey. Overall, 90% of the survey respondents said that they listened to Radio Bilingue (in California) or La Hora Mixteca programming (in San Quintin and Oaxaca).<sup>7</sup>

In Madera, where there are many Spanish-language radio signals, 89% of the respondents listened to Radio Bilingue and in Oaxaca, where the programming is aired on the CDI affiliate, XETLA “La Voz de la Mixteca”, 98% of the survey respondents listened to the station. The only area where listenership was slightly less was San Quintin where 83% of the respondents listened to the CDI affiliate, XEQIN “La Voz del Valle”.

There are, however, variations from community to community in frequency of listening to the station which broadcasts La Hora Mixteca, i.e. Radio Bilingue in Madera, XETLA in the Tlaxiaco and San Juan Mixtepec area, and XEQIN in San Quintin. **Table 2** on the next page shows how often survey respondents listen to Radio Bilingue or a CDI affiliate.

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<sup>7</sup> Public radio stations typically have a weekly cume under 20%. Our survey methodology and analysis differs from standard market research in that it is not feasible to rely on diaries for assessing station audience but our definition of “station listener” differs slightly from but is consistent with the analytic definition of “weekly cume” as used in commercial radio research. As can be seen in **Table 2**, Radio Bilingue’s “weekly cume” would be 73%.

<i>Frequency of Listening</i>	<b>Madera (Radio Bilingue) (N=55)</b>	<b>San Quintin (XEQIN) (N=50)</b>	<b>Oaxaca (XETLA) (N=58)</b>	<b>All Listeners (N=163)</b>
Very often--every day	24%	---	60%	29%
Fairly often—3 to 4 days per week	7%	---	12%	7%
Sometimes--1-2 times per week	42%	94%	16%	49%
Not very often-less than weekly	14%	4%	5%	11%
Hardly ever	3%	2%	7%	4%

In order to assess listeners' loyalty to Radio Bilingue or the local CDI affiliate we asked each survey respondent to name their three favorite stations.<sup>8</sup> **Tables 3A** through **3C** report the survey respondents' favorite stations in each of these areas.

**Table 3A** (Madera) shows a very interesting phenomenon, the continuing increase in Spanish-language stations in the San Joaquin Valley of California. Although the Madera respondents identified 20 stations among their top 3 favorites, Radio Bilingue ranks as the #2 station among the Oaxacalifornia respondents—immediately following commercial station “La Buena” and very slightly ahead of #3 “Que Onda” and #4 “Super Q”. As we have reported in previous research, Radio Bilingue is seen by its farmworker listeners as an alternative to, not a competitor with popular commercial stations.

**Table 3B** is unremarkable since it shows that listeners have no choices since XEQIN is the only available signal.

**Table 3C** shows the Tlaxiaco area to have only two major radio signals with XETLA La Voz de La Mixteca as the #1 station—due, in part, to ethnic loyalty among the indigenous survey respondents. In actuality, the interviewers observed over the course of their week-long stay in the Tlaxiaco area that most radio listeners switch back and forth between XETLA and the commercial station, La Poderosa.

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<sup>8</sup> This question was standardized to allow comparison of listenership in each area. It is important to recognize, however, that only one radio signal, XEQIN—the CDI affiliate--is easily tuned in to in San Quintin. In the Tlaxiaco area of Oaxaca where we surveyed, the CDI affiliate XETLA is one of two signals easily heard by most area residents; however, because of the mountainous terrain some survey respondents were able to listen to other stations, e.g. a commercial broadcaster in Putla.

**Table 3A**  
**Listeners' Favorite Stations: Madera**

<i>Station</i>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Station</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Station</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Station</b>
<i>Radio Bilingue</i>	16%	10%	10%
La Buena	23%	18%	3%
Que Onda	16%	7%	8%
Super Q	15%	10%	5%
La Preciosa	15%	8%	7%
La Maquina Musical	3%	2%	2%
La Campesina	3%	3%	2%
Radio Amor	2%	7%	7%
Vida Abundante (Religious)	2%	---	--
Viva 106	2%	---	5%
Estereo Sol	---	2%	3%
Radio Ranchito	---	2%	3%
Radio Guadalupe (Religious)	---	3%	---
Radio Nueva Vida (Religious)	---	2%	---
La Mexicana	---	2%	---
Radio Lobo	---	---	2%
La Favorita	---	---	2%
La Calle	---	---	2%
La Grande 1010	---	---	2%
KLBN 105.1	---	---	2%
None Mentioned	3%	19%	41%

<b>Table 3B</b>			
<b>Listeners' Favorite Stations: San Quintin</b>			
<b>Station</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Station</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Station</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Station</b>
<i>Voz del Valle</i>	100%	---	---
“Religious station”, can’t remember name	---	2%	---
None mentioned	---	98%	100%

<b>Table 3C</b>			
<b>Listeners' Favorite Stations: Oaxaca</b>			
<b>Frequency of Listening</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Station</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Station</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Station</b>
<i>Voz de La Mixteca</i>	65%	18%	---
La Poderosa	30%	40%	2%
AM 100	2%	---	---
“Radio 30”	2%	--	2%
La Explosiva	---	5%	3%
FM 98.1	---	2%	---
Radio Formula AM		2%	---
“Estacion de Putla”	---	2%	---
La Zeta	---	2%	--
Sensacion 1020	---	---	2%
None mentioned	1%	29%	91%

***Other Programs Listened to on the Radio Bilingue/CDI Network***

Most of the Oaxacalifornia survey respondents in Madera do not seem to listen regularly to other Radio Bilingue programs; only 5% mentioned listening to Noticiero Latino or Linea Abierta and another 5% listened to the morning music show. Two respondents also listened to “Arriba el Norte” (Tejano/norteno music).

In the XETLA broadcast area, “Vuela, Vuela, Palomita” is very popular; 41% of those surveyed in the Tlaxiaco and San Juan Mixtepec areas mentioned it as a favorite program. There is a smaller but, nonetheless, significant listenership for the morning show, “Veredas”, which offers a mix of news, community service announcements, and music in Triqui. Mixtecos as well as Triqui respondents mentioned it as a favorite. “Saludos Paisano” (calls and saludos to/from the U.S.) was also mentioned as a favorite by 5% of the respondents.

We also asked Oaxaca survey respondents whether they listened to a news/public affairs program, “Aqui Estamos” produced centrally. Slightly more than one-quarter (27%) of the survey respondents remembered hearing it; however only 5% said they liked it. Most of the others said it was “OK” but another 5% said specifically that they didn’t like it. Listening to this show, it becomes clear why it receives such a lukewarm reception. The style of the material is highly didactic and, at times, academic, anathema for the service population of indigenous communities who have very little schooling. While there is a very high level of listener loyalty to XETLA and to specific on-air hosts such as Eva Martinez, survey respondents’ comments make it clear that this loyalty stems from the station’s success in achieving an identity as community-oriented radio, with content “from and to people like us, the listeners”.

It is ironic, but not surprising, that within a transnational community radio network such as that established via the Puente Oaxacalifornia Project, geographically “peripheral” production nodes such as Radio Bilingue (and the new Florida XETLA linked station, Radio Tropical) have much better rapport with the community of listeners than Mexico-based elite producers. Within the social universe of the Oaxacan indigenous communities, physical distance and national identity mean much less than linguistic/ethnic identity. Within this conceptual framework, the on-air host of La Hora Mixteca, Filemon Lopez, is seen as a major community leader, throughout the transnational migrant network, in Oaxaca and San Quintin as much as in California.

If the CDI radio network is to fulfill its potential as an educational resource for indigenous communities in Mexico it will be necessary for it to re-conceptualize its educational mission within the framework of popular education as articulated by Paolo Freire and others. This concept of education, now widely shared by educators world-wide, sees educational programs as being shaped more by learners’ daily lives, lifelong learning needs, and personal preoccupations rather than following a pre-established instructional agenda as seems to be the case with “Aqui Estamos” (where the proposition of the program title, “Here We Are” is constantly undercut by the obvious linguistic cues that the “we” is not the indigenous community but elite, albeit well-intentioned, producers). In contrast, Filemon Lopez, Eva Hernandez, and other local indigenous producers within the network are key resources in that they possess the “cultural capital” which allows them to be effective community communicators in reaching this target audience.

### ***Who Listens to Radio Bilingue and Who Doesn't***

Radio Bilingue programming reaches virtually all sub-groups within the Oaxacalifornia survey population but there are some differences in market penetration within different audience segments.

Listenership is not related to either gender or educational attainment. However, listenership for Radio Bilingue and CDI stations is significantly higher among survey respondents who speak an indigenous language than among monolingual speakers of Spanish (93% vs. 79% overall).<sup>9</sup> Analysis of responses on language preference among the bilingual survey respondents suggest that limited-Spanish speaking persons are slightly more likely to be Radio Bilingue or CDI affiliate listeners than those who are limited in speaking their indigenous language but this is not statistically significant.<sup>10</sup> While respondents who speak Mixteco are somewhat more likely to listen to Radio Bilingue or CDI than Triqui speakers (97% vs. 86%) or Zapotec speakers (76% of whom listen to the programming) the Oaxacalifornia network clearly has pan-indigenous appeal even though the majority of the programming is in Spanish and Mixtec.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Daily Patterns of Radio Listening***

A challenge of transnational broadcasting (or any network serving a large area) is that local patterns of daily life differ from one area to another. Table 4 below shows the proportions of survey respondents listening to Radio Bilingue or the CDI affiliates during different dayparts.

<b>Table 4</b>				
<b>Overall Radio Listening During the Week By Day Part</b>				
<b><i>% of Respondents who listen to the radio:</i></b>	<b>Madera</b>	<b>San Quintin</b>	<b>Oaxaca</b>	<b>Overall Survey</b>
Very early morning (5-7AM) or early morning (7- 9AM)	87%	81%	68%	79%
Mid-morning to mid-afternoon (9AM-3PM)	30%	76%	34%	47%
Late afternoon (3-6PM) or evening (6-9PM)	56%	76%	47%	60%
Late night (9PM-5AM)	2%	2%	15%	6%

**Table 4** indicates that the main regional variation in weekday radio listening patterns is that there are more daytime and late afternoon-evening listeners in San Quintin than in Madera

<sup>9</sup> P <.02

<sup>10</sup> This is a result, in part, of their being very few non-listeners and, consequently, the sub-cells of Spanish-only and limited Spanish non-listeners do not meet the criteria for the analysis (cell size <5).

<sup>11</sup> XETLA has substantial Triqui-language programming. Radio Bilingue is developing this programming but it is not yet in place. We do not know if XEQIN broadcasts any programs in Triqui.

and Oaxaca. One of the constraints on daytime radio listening, of course, is that this is a working population and it is not always possible to listen to the radio at work. However, in Madera 41% of the respondents listen to the radio at work and in San Quintin 46% do. However, in Oaxaca, only 11% do.

Within this community, Sunday is the day when listenership is particularly high—because it is the only day when people get a chance to rest. Of particular importance to the Oaxacalifornia project is the proportion of radio listeners who listen during the 9AM to 3PM period since *La Hora Mixteca* airs from 12 noon to 4PM Pacific Standard time and from 2PM to 3PM Central Standard time in Oaxaca. Fortunately, responses to our question about Sunday listening patterns show that 63% of the survey population listens to the radio during this time period (15% more than on weekdays). In San Quintin, where the traditional Oaxacan market takes place on Sunday, a number of respondents say they can listen to XEQIN and *La Hora Mixteca* programming in their stalls in the market.

### ***Listenership for La Hora Mixteca***

Overall, 65-72% of the Oaxacalifornia survey respondents listen to *La Hora Mixteca*.<sup>12</sup> Almost one-third (31%) of the survey respondents who do listen to the program listen every week; another third (34%) listen “almost every week”. This pattern is the same in all of the areas—Madera, San Quintin, and Oaxaca. This is a very high level of market penetration for the programming.

### ***Listener Perspectives on the Program***

We asked *La Hora Mixteca* listeners why they liked the program and, as a followup question, what they liked best and least about the show.

The answers make it clear there is a strong consensus among the indigenous transnational migrants about the producers’ success in integrating, music, talk, messages, and dedications of songs. Listeners consistently refer to these as interwoven elements, all of which they like, although some listeners emphasize one aspect or another—e.g. “beautiful music”, “exchanges of greetings between here (Baja California) and there (California)”.

Virtually all of the listeners point to the importance of this programming as part of efforts to maintain their culture. One listener, for example, elaborates on this theme saying, “I like the program because I feel proud when I hear it. I feel fortunate that I am able to listen to fellow Oaxaquenos even though we are so far from them”. There is an almost universal enthusiastic response to the show. Listeners make it clear that *La Hora Mixteca* is, for them, a crucial resource for linking together their dispersed community social networks and asserting their cultural identity.

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<sup>12</sup> The higher estimate is based on tabulation of responses to a prompted question as to whether the survey respondent listens to *La Hora Mixteca*. We also asked survey respondents an unprompted question as to whether there were any programs they immediately thought of which they particularly liked; 65% mentioned *La Hora Mixteca* or “Filemon’s show” or “Timoteo’s show” or “Natalia’s show” (referring to the on-air hosts).

In very personal terms, some respondents told the interviewers that listening to the show made them extremely happy or, sometimes, sad (because it reminded them of their home villages). One listener for example says, “I like the music and I like to remember, to recall my village. The people on the air are well-spoken.” Another listener stresses the evocative power of music saying, “I live for the music more than anything, the *chilenas*. I dance by myself and I fondly recall my village”. Listeners also focus on the issue of collective identity; one listener for example says, “I like listening to the voices of people coming from all parts of Oaxaca and California”. Another says, “I like it. It reflects how we are. We like listening to our *paisanos*”.

Music is an important cultural element, binding together different segments of oral communication. Typical comments about the music played point to music not simply as a mode of entertainment but as an element in cultural identity. One listener, for example, says, “I like the music and the language they speak”. Another listener says, “*Chilenas* are heard in my village too”. Another says, “I like the *chilenas*, so that one doesn’t forget the music of San Juan Mixtepec”.<sup>13</sup>

Language is, of course, a crucial element in cultural identity and cultural maintenance. Many listeners’ comments stress this point, e.g. “I like the program because they speak Mixteco and that is good so that we maintain our language.” The value of La Hora Mixteca as a forum for communication relates not simply to cognitive dimensions of language but also identity; one listener, for example says, I like it a lot, they say everything in Mixteco and I understand everything” (as contrasted to most communication contexts where this is not the case). Another listener says, “I like it because they speak both Mixteco and Spanish. It’s a bit difficult to understand”. While the program hosts are Mixtecos, the programming is seen in pan-indigenous terms by many of the non-Mixtecos. One listener, for example says, “Even though they do not speak Zapoteco I like to listen to them speak”. Listeners generally feel that the primary on-air host, Filemon Lopez, does a very good job of dealing with language diversity (e.g. one listener says “I like the way Filemon speaks and I like the information he offers”. But the program’s reliance on multiple on-air hosts has utility also; one listener, for example, says “I like to listen to Natalia. She speaks the same dialect that I speak”.

We further explored listener opinions about the specific mix of Spanish and Mixtec in La Hora Mixteca by asking respondents who listen to the show whether there should be more Mixtec (*mas dialecto*) in the program, whether it was “OK as is”, or whether there should be more Spanish. There were some interesting variations in regional responses to this question. There were more respondents in Madera (43%) who said more of the exchanges should be in Mixtec than in either San Quintin (where only 9% wanted more Mixtec) and Oaxaca where 26% wanted more of a shift toward indigenous language. In both Madera and San Quintin, 8% of the respondents said there should be more Spanish but no one in Oaxaca wanted this. By and large, with about half (48%) of the listeners in Madera saying the show was “OK as is”, and 83% in San Quintin, and 75% in Oaxaca approving of the language

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<sup>13</sup> Daniel Cardona, the station manager of XETLA, explains that the musical style of *chilenas* varies from village to village so that a Mixtec listener will know when he or she hears a *chilena* from their own village or even know which other village a particular piece is from. XETLA has, over the past decade or so, gathered together an extraordinary archive of local traditional music.

mix, it would seem the show is doing an excellent job of responding to linguistic diversity among its listeners.

The on-air salutations, responses to requests for songs dedicated to distant family members, and messages from distant migrants to hometown family members or to other migrants are another extremely important element in the programming. There are practical dimensions to this (one listener says, “Some of us have no other way of communicating with one another. Not every village has a telephone”). There are also emotional dimensions and an element of curiosity; a Oaxacan listener, for example, says “I like it when they talk about different places and the greetings among people”. Even respondents who didn’t have any immediate or extended family members in Baja California or the U.S. said they liked to hear how things were going for migrants and to hear from community members or paisanos.

While the informational content of the programming is, for this population, not the primary reason for liking the program, the news and information is also appreciated. Specific informational topics mentioned by survey respondents in talking about why they liked the program include: information on current events, discussions of health problems, “educational topics”, commentary, and information from farmworker lawyers.

Very few survey respondents found that there were things about the programming they didn’t like. One who was critical, for example, said “I think it is boring because of so much talk and so many greetings but I do think it’s important to have this program”. Another listener said she’d like to hear more “romantic music”; but there are no major criticisms of the program.

### **Participatory Radio and Social Networks**

A unique feature of La Hora Mixteca as a “virtual agora”, a locus for members of dispersed communities of the transnational Oaxacan migrant networks which are facilitated by the Oaxacalifornia Project is the exchange of “saludos” (greetings), *dedicaciones* (dedications of songs), and messages for people to call each other. To better understand this facet of the Oaxacalifornia model of participatory radio we asked survey respondents a few questions designed to generate rough measures of how communication relates to social network.

The first of these questions was whether a survey respondent had ever heard a message on La Hora Mixteca from one of their own extended family members or a fellow villager. Interestingly, very similar proportions of respondents in Madera (57%), San Quintin (54%), and Oaxaca (54%) had heard this sort of message.

The second question was whether a survey respondent had themselves ever tried to call in to La Hora Mixteca to send greetings or a message to a family member or fellow villager.<sup>14</sup> In

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<sup>14</sup> Radio Bilingue operates a toll-free number in California to facilitate these call-ins. However there is not a toll-free number in Mexico for this, although some Oaxacan migrants with cell phones with GSM chips can, in fact, call to the California toll-free number. Oaxacan migrants also call directly to XETLA, both during La Hora Mixteca and during other program segments to send saludos to their relatives. We heard, for example, a house of six or seven farmworkers in North Carolina calling in to XETLA; it is common that a single call will accommodate five to ten callers’ requests, requiring special skill on the part of the on-air host.

this case, i.e. actively initiating social networking, there were differences from area to area with 39% of the Madera respondents having called Radio Bilingue's toll-free number while 35% of the Tlaxiaco-San Juan Mixtepec area respondents had called in. Only 19% of the San Quintin area respondents had tried to call in (in part because few have phones). Apparently, this was also, at least in part, due to the station's telephone hookups since 16% of the San Quintin area respondents said they had tried to call but the phone line was busy. In contrast, only 8% of the Oaxaca area respondents had tried to call and failed because of getting a busy signal and only 2% of the Madera respondents had encountered this problem.

These answers would seem to suggest that there is very active participation by radio listeners in the unusual sort of participatory radio which characterizes the programming of Radio Bilingue's Hora Mixteca and the some of the other CDI affiliates' shows.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, Radio Bilingue, at least, has done a good job at making access to La Hora Mixteca very easy.

Nonetheless, La Hora Mixteca listeners, in responding to a question about whether the mix of messages, music, and talk was optimal or whether, for example, some listeners might want more music and less talk, or more informational programming, made some useful suggestions. A bit less than half of the La Hora Mixteca listeners (42%) said the mix of messages, talk, and music was fine as is. Another 13% said there were too many messages and that they'd like to hear more music. A small proportion of listeners (4%) said they'd like less messages in order to have more informational programming (e.g. about workers' rights). Finally, another group of respondents (6% of those who commented on this subject) quite thoughtfully said that the problem was not the number of messages exchanged (because the messages are so important and basically enjoyable) said they thought the callers did sometimes go on too long and that the on-air hosts should find a way to make the messages shorter.

### ***Audience Exposure to Specific Program Segments and "Educational" Impact***

Evaluation of the impact of media initiatives can usefully not look simply at the overall audience reach of a broadcast network such as the virtual network created between key CDI affiliates and Radio Bilingue in the current Oaxacalifornia Project but, also, at listener recall of specific programs. To do this, we included in the survey, an inventory of talk show themes which had been aired in the six months since the project-funded California-Oaxaca-Guerrero-Baja California satellite-based audio linkages were established. These information program segments include six culturally-oriented program strands and five about public affairs or health issues. Programs were aired between March 20 and October 16 of 2005, meaning that they had been broadcast from two to nine months before the interviews.

**Table 5** below reports the findings of this analysis.

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<sup>15</sup> There are many similar call-ins to a very popular show produced locally and aired by XETLA, "Vuela, Vuela Palomita" (11 AM to 12 noon on weekdays) and "Saludos Paisano" (1100-12 noon weekends). The "Saludos Paisano" show on XETLA features a linkage modeled after the Radio Bilingue-CDI network one, in this case with a small Latino commercial station in Florida, "Radio Tropical" .

<b>Table 5</b>				
<b>Listener Recall of Specific Informational Programming Segments</b>				
<b>% of Respondents who heard a show about:</b>	<b>Madera</b>	<b>San Quintin</b>	<b>Oaxaca</b>	<b>Overall Survey</b>
Basketball tournaments celebrating Benito Juarez's birthday in the Sierra Juarez (March 20)	45%	41%	30%	39%
How youth are forgetting their parents' language and about traditional dances like that of the Huehuetones (April 24)	49%	83%	70%	67%
A radionovela segment about women's rights and the experiences of a woman when her husband died and people wanted to take away her house (May 15)	16%	38%	63%	37%
A news report about construction of a traditional Oaxacan market in Colonia Maclovio Rojas in San Quintin (May 15)	20%	78%	43%	47%
A program from XEOJN La Voz de la Chinanta about the celebration of the feast day of San Isidro Labrador and homage to mother earth (May 22)	18%	33%	35%	28%
A program about the celebration of the saint day of San Juan Bautista in Colonia San Juan Copala (May 29)	39%	83%	41%	57%
A report from La Voz de La Montana in Tlapa explaining how to avoid contracting HIV (May 26)	39%	51%	70%	52%
A report about deforestation in the Sierra Juarez due to companies which cutting too many trees (July 3)	31%	59%	62%	50%
A program about "Sones" and "Jarabes" from Tlaxiaco (July 31)	<b>Not Asked</b>	<b>Not Asked</b>	46%	46%
A message about depression and "stress" and why its important to get help for dealing with this kind of problem (October 2)	<b>Not Asked</b>	<b>Not Asked</b>	49%	49%

**Table 5** shows La Hora Mixteca to be fulfilling its role with respect to information-oriented programming as well as its societal role in fostering social cohesion and communication within the widely-dispersed network community of Oaxaqueno migrants. Our own assessment of La Hora Mixteca format and programming is that it would be feasible to include in the program format additional news and public affairs programming following the general guidelines articulated by listeners about the need to keep messages short. Surely,

given the educational levels of La Hora Mixteca listeners, there is an urgent need to keep language simple and straightforward and within the stylistic format of “talk from people like us to people like us” (a guideline which CDI-produced programming sometimes violates). However, given the on-air host’s skill in conveying a sense of being “an ordinary person”, “a person from the community”, and, thus, establishing a sense of *confianza*, it would be possible to effectively enhance the informational/educational impact of the programming.

### ***News and Public Affairs Interests***

In order to assess the target audience’s level of interest in news and public affairs and understand what sorts of insights this might provide to La Hora Mixteca producers, we asked Oaxacalifornia survey respondents whether they would be interested in more such programming (*Le gustaria que hubiera mas noticieros/ programas informativos que tratarian los temas mas importantes para los Oaxaqueños?*); we then asked, as a followup, what themes respondents thought should be the focus of such programming (recording up to 3 topics from each respondent) . Overall 92% of the respondents said they would be interested in additional news/public affairs programming. This provides a valuable reminder regarding the role of responsive community broadcasters such as Radio Bilingue in that it underscores the fact that low educational attainment does not equate to lack of curiosity or intellectual engagement. The audience for La Hora Mixteca is, quite like the traditional audiences imagined by public broadcasters (who are usually from the elite), engaged in thinking and learning about the world around them.

**Figures 1-3** on the next pages provide examples of the specific interests expressed by respondents regarding types of news and public affairs programming which they would be interested in hearing.

Comments by respondents in the different areas where the Oaxacalifornia survey was conducted show significant areas of overlap, for example, a high level of interest in Oaxaca and Baja California as well as in California about how Oaxacans in the U.S. are doing and, conversely, ongoing interest in California and Baja California about Oaxacan news and politics. Responses about news and political issues make it crystal-clear that the transnational Oaxacan migrants interviewed in the survey are engaged in the social and civic affairs of all areas of their “network communities”.

There are also some areas of divergence, most notably the level of interest in health issues in Madera, California, apparently, partly as a result of Radio Bilingue’s current emphasis on health-related programming. However, interests include a range of issues relating to behavioral health issues (drugs, gangs, domestic violence). It is interesting, also, to see some concern in Oaxaca about youth issues which, in some respects, echoes prevailing concerns in the San Joaquin Valley. For fairly obvious reasons, the Madera respondents are those who mention interests in radio-based classes on Mixteco but also, on English. The cluster of responses indicating interest in Oaxaca regarding environmental issues (but not in San Quintin or Madera) is also noteworthy.

**Figure 1-New/Public Affairs Programming Interests:  
Madera**

<i>Topical Areas</i>	<i>Specific Topics (Includes multiple responses)</i>
<b>News/Politics</b>	News on Oaxaquenos in other parts of the U.S. (8), or in California, information about all the places where Oaxaquenos live in the U.S. (2), immigration policy (3), politics in general (3), about gangs (4), who's ahead or behind in political races, Mexican politics, Oaxacan state and district politics (8),
<b>Oaxaca/Regional</b>	News from Oaxaca (11), Oaxaca weather (2), current events from Ejutla, Juxtlahuaca, Sta. Maria Tindu, Tehuantepec, Tlaxiaco, Putla, background on villages to help remember them, background information on Oaxaca (2)
<b>Health</b>	Cancer (5), diabetes (3), HIV/AIDS (2), infant nutrition, health issues in general (3), mammograms, women's health, pesticides in agriculture, child abuse (2), drug use in the indigenous community (3), exercise, domestic violence (2), how to diet, anger control, sexuality
<b>Education, employment</b>	Learning English (3), supporting one's children's education (2), education in general (4), on education issues indigenous youth face, labor rights (3), farm labor issues (2), how other Oaxacans are doing in their jobs elsewhere in the U.S., information on available jobs,
<b>Cultural</b>	Learning Mixteco (2) or learning it better (3), about racism, program in Zapotec, how not to lose one's culture
<b>General</b>	How to get a life insurance policy, sports

<b>Figure 2-New/Public Affairs Programming Interests: San Quintin</b>	
<i>Topical Areas</i>	<i>Specific Topics</i>
<b>News/Politics</b>	News about Baja California, Oaxaca state politics (2), what's happening with Oaxacans in the U.S. (23), what's happening with Triqui in the U.S. (4), Triqui in Oregon, about Oaxacans in Baja California, current events in San Quintin (5) what's happening in Florida (2), Washington (2), news about Oaxacans crossing the desert to get to the U.S., crossing the U.S. border, about people from Huajuapam in the U.S. (2), current events in Madera, employment issues
<b>Oaxaca/Regional</b>	Current events from Ejutla, current events from Huajuapam, daily news/current events from Oaxaca (23), celebrations, Oaxaca weather (5), news from respondent's home region (4), from San Juan Mixtepec, how the Triqui are doing in Oaxaca
<b>Health</b>	None mentioned
<b>Cultural</b>	Program in Triqui,

<b>Figure 3-New/Public Affairs Programming Interests: Oaxaca</b>	
<i>Topical Areas</i>	<i>Specific topics</i>
<b>General</b>	Transmittal of money from the U.S.
<b>News/politics</b>	What happens to Oaxacans in the U.S. (15), what happens to Oaxacans in South and North Carolina, how Oaxacans are treated in the U.S. (5), general news of the U.S, news of Oaxacans in Baja California, Oaxaca state politics (4), politics in general (2), crime and criminals, women's and children's rights (2), immigration policy (3),,, news of U.S. in Triqui, Mexican national news (2), world news, migrants' rights (2), the police
<b>Oaxaca/Regional</b>	The environment (4), programming on environment in Triqui, reforestation, announcements of community events, Oaxaca news (3), Putla news, what's happening in Teposcolula,
<b>Health</b>	Adolescence, health in general (4), more about HIV/AIDS
<b>Education, employment</b>	Agronomy, educational options for children who don't want to stay in school, women's education and employment, how youth can contribute to community development, careers for youth, education for employment, community economic development, social change, migrant farmworkers' rights,
<b>Culture</b>	More about my people, more about youth, more banda music, more regional chilenas, culture in general, youth values, hip hop

### *Audience Interest in Radio as a Medium for Distance Learning*

We also asked Oaxacalifornia respondents whether they thought of radio as a viable medium for self-directed learning. Overall, more than two-thirds (70%) of those surveyed thought this was an interesting possibility (though they did not have a specific model as to how this use of the technology might be implemented). The level of interest has higher in Madera and in Oaxaca than in San Quintin where only 58% of those surveyed expressed an interest in this possibility.

This question elicited a range of lifelong learning interests from the survey respondents. While the question referred to distance learning specifically, the interests expressed provide additional guidance about the audiences' general programming interests. Self-directed learning interests are tabulated below in **Figure 4**:

<b>Figure 4 Self-Directed Learning Interests</b>	
<i>Topical Areas</i>	<i>Specific topics</i>
Language/Basic Skills	English (27), more Spanish (14), better pronunciation in Spanish, more Spanish vocabulary, basic skills/literacy (5), Mixtec (3), managing money, complete secondary school (2)
Civics, Social Justice	How government works, orientation to U.S. life, labor law/workers' rights(5), human rights, immigrant rights
Technical	Computers (2), mechanics
General	Oaxacan culture and music traditions, beauty/skin care, economics, starting a business, how to teach children to write, Mexican/Oaxacan history/cultural traditions (6), U.S. history (2),
Family Life and Health	Elder care, domestic violence, how to talk to one's children (2), nutrition, HIV/AIDS, HIV prevention, diabetes, sexually-transmitted diseases, health in general (5), child-rearing, information about sex for youth

Oaxacalifornia survey respondents' interests related to radio as a potential resource for self-directed learning are striking in their appropriateness in terms of preparation for confronting the day-to-day challenges of life in transnational communities. The goals of learning English, as well as more Spanish, and enhancing basic skills, while maintaining indigenous culture, are well-framed. They are complemented by interests in technical/vocational skills. Yet at the same time, the specific list of topics related to family life and health show concern about the challenges of living in communities where there is no longer cultural homogeneity and where cross-cultural stresses are emerging.

Finally, the respondents' assigning some priority to social justice themes and issues of "defending one's rights" show an eagerness to confront issues not just at the individual but, also, at the systemic level.

While we doubt these themes can viably be addressed as standard distance learning courses, it is entirely feasible to use this guidance to further shape news/public affairs coverage and topical conversation on La Hora Mixteca.

## Conclusions

The Rockefeller Foundation's modest investment in telecommunications infrastructure in support of the broad vision of using community radio as a resource for strengthening Oaxacan migrants' transnational dispersed communities has already yielded a rich return. We believe it has contributed significantly to nurturing growing interest in transborder communication and efforts to continue personal, social, community relationships across long distances. The very high listenership for La Hora Mixteca within this population, enthusiastic response to the programming, good recall of news/public affairs topics, and active interest in hearing more news and public affairs are all indicators of a high level of positive impact from the project.

When migration is a societally institutionalized economic strategy as in the case of Oaxaca-US migration, communication is a critical resource to promote individual well-being and social cohesion, the formation and effective deployment of social capital to advance common goals. When migrants' families know more about the whereabouts and welfare of distant family members, family life is enriched and stress relieved. When U.S.-based migrants know more about developments in their home villages, they will be more willing to invest in community improvement and collective well-being. When the news and public affairs programming keeps distant U.S. migrants up to date on local, state, and national politics in Mexico civic engagement can be strengthened and made more effective.<sup>16</sup>

Migration theorists have, for the past several years, debated whether the strength of migrants' social networks will, in the face of increasing global migration and global commerce, overcome the power of nation-states.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, despite enthusiasm in the last several decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century about the promise of internationalism and harnessing technology to promote a "new world information order", the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is suggesting we may see increasing social fragmentation. Radio Bilingue's commitment to and success in making transborder community radio a reality is an important victory in what will inevitably be a global struggle.

While internet-based communication has brought about a paradigm shift in global communication networks for some sub-groups, there is ample evidence that nation-states, whether or not they ultimately cede power to transnational networks, still have the power to block information flow and isolate members of transnational migrant communities such as the Oaxaquenos from each other. The costs in terms of individual misery are high but the costs in terms of erosion of cultural capital are still more problematic. The collaboration

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<sup>16</sup> Oaxacan indigenous migrants do return to fulfill their cargos and contribute to the *tequio* but the reality is that this civic engagement is, to some extent, coerced and might conceivably be productively nurtured with more information of the sort recommended by Oaxacalifornia survey respondents about "current affairs".

<sup>17</sup> A far-ranging discussion of many of the broader civic and political issues related to this topic can be found in James N. Rosenau, "Coherent Connection or Commonplace Contiguity? Theorizing about the California-Mexico Overlap", in Abraham F. Lowenthal and Katrina Burgess, **The California-Mexico Connection**, Stanford University Press, 1993. Lynn Stephen also provides the best review of the anthropological literature (e.g. Kearny, Glick-Schiller, Besserer, Garcia Canclini) on this topic in the specific context of Oaxacan migrants' networks in **Transborder Lives** (forthcoming, 2006).

between the Radio Bilingue network and the Comision de Desarrollo Indigena radio stations is a crucial strategic investment in supporting Mixtec, Triqui, Zapotec and other Oaxacan indigenous cultures in responding to a changing, modern world while still preserving their cultural resources and strengthening their social networks.

The challenge now facing Radio Bilingue and its CDI partners is how best to build on the strong foundation of the Oaxacalifornia Project—to further enhance their collaboration in facilitating communication and self-directed learning within the “network communities” of Oaxacan transnational migrants. The range of topics and concerns addressed in *La Hora Mixteca* can be expanded while retaining the friendly, informal and culturally appropriate tone of the program. The current collective approach led by Filemon Lopez is extremely popular and the addition of a talented young Mixteca, Natalia, to the team has already enhanced the program’s considerable appeal. Ideally, the collective might come to include, at least, Triqui collaborating producers.

At the same time, it is exciting to consider the possibility of expanding the span of the radio network linkages to conform to the span of the Mixtec, Triqui, and Zapotec migration networks—adding linkages to Spanish-language radio stations in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina in the Eastern migrant stream and in Washington state in the Pacific Seaboard migrant stream.

It should be recognized also that *La Hora Mixteca*, now 4 hours long on Sunday afternoon in California and 1 hour long within the CDI radio network may need to be further expanded to accommodate popular demand for more music, more personal messages, and more information. More than half (58%) of those interviewed in Oaxaca wanted the show to be expanded to be longer (most thought 2 hours would be a good length). Radio Bilingue and the CDI stations should explore that possibility.

Expansion of the program’s time span should be balanced with the need to provide adequate production support to allow the *Hora Mixteca* team to deepen the news/public affairs content of the show in response to the types of listener interests highlighted in the Oaxacalifornia survey. This expansion should be disciplined in terms of format. For example, listeners’ suggestions that on-air hosts should seek ways to keep personal messages and dedications from going on for too long seem reasonable ones. While we know this is difficult, it is, we believe, possible. Additional staffing would be needed to generate even a portion of the news/public affairs content listeners hope for.

At the same time, the CDI network might be wise to work diligently in the realm of quality assurance to make sure that a nominal organizational commitment to indigenous peoples’ radio is one which stems from indigenous producers, responds to indigenous listeners’ interests, and most importantly, conveys a sense of authenticity in format and linguistic style. Radio Bilingue staff and local producers such as those in XETLA can work to make the dream of radio by and for indigenous communities a constant reality.

For the moment, the Oaxacalifornia Project is a success which deserves widespread recognition. The Rockefeller Foundation’s investment in the project is clearly a highly cost-effective one. Radio Bilingue management confronted and overcame many bureaucratic problems in installing the network—due in part to the inevitable clashes between the

processes and procedures of the nation-state and the innovativeness of the transborder network being put in place. The immediate result has been creation of a community resource which is almost universally appreciated by the population the project intended to serve, the Oaxacan transnational migrant communities. The vision of a virtual agora in response to basic human needs to communicate with loved ones and to exchange information about what's going on in different "neighborhoods" of a transnational migrant circuit is a powerful one which will, hopefully mature further in the next few years.