



2002 RADIO DRAMA SERIES 'OUR STREET': A FOCUS GROUP EVALUATION

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) commissioned InterMedia to carry out a series of focus groups to evaluate a radio drama series "Our Street" developed and produced by the Ukrainian Center for Common Ground (UCCG). The study's primary objective was **to assess the overall efficiency of the episodes of the specialized radio programs in the series "Our Street."**

InterMedia designed the study in accordance with SCG's specifications and contracted the Kyiv-based marketing research firm Taylor Nelson Sofres (TNS) to carry out four focus group discussions in Simferopol and Sevastopol Crimea in early October 2002. The purpose of the focus groups—one with young (15 to 19 year old) Ukrainians and Russians and one with young (15 to 19 year old) Crimean Tatars in each city—was to solicit feedback on thirteen 15-minute episodes of programming and to explore the impact of the programming on stereotypical views. All participants were required to complete a home listening exercise before taking part in focus group discussions lasting approximately two hours each. Thirty-two (32) individuals took part in the group discussions.

'OUR STREET' IS RELEVANT AND ENGAGING

Most participants also found the series helpful in dealing with a wide array of problems confronting them in their daily lives, including such issues as inter-ethnic relations and inter-generational differences. Some participants indicated that listening to **the drama series exposed them to specific ways to deal with potential conflicts and introduced them to skills that might be helpful in resolving various disagreements.**

Furthermore, the majority of participants displayed a favorable attitude toward the series content and noted that the problems addressed by the drama series were urgent and needed to be addressed.

'OUR STREET' BUILDS BRIDGES

Overall, the focus groups showed that the radio drama could facilitate the major goals of the project—the cultivation of inter-ethnic understanding among young people of the Crimea, the prevention of conflicts in the local multicultural environment, and the teaching of basic conflict resolution skills. Under the influence of these programs, the focus group participants took an interest in ethnic groups other than their own and expressed a desire to understand them better.

To measure the possible impact the radio drama series may have had on the participants, InterMedia employed the *Bogardus* method to measure the social distance between various ethnic groups—including the mutual perceptions among Ukrainians, Russians and Tatars. Participants were asked how close they felt to another ethnic group **before and after** they had listened to the entire radio drama series.

Results suggest that after listening to "Our Street," the participants' perceptions of distance (on a 6-point *Bogardus* scale) between the groups in question decreased, in some cases measurably. The results varied by group but, on average, it can be stated that the Ukrainian and Russians felt somewhat closer to Tatars after hearing the drama series.

The change in attitudes of the Crimean Tatars toward the Russians, and especially the Ukrainians, was even more pronounced: the Tatars viewed the Russians and Ukrainians in a more favorable light. Some of this change may be attributed to the way the radio drama plot unfolded, especially those moments where a few Russian-Ukrainian characters helped the Tatars in difficult situations.

"In principle, there is just one method here: Treat people well."

-Focus Group 1

‘OUR STREET’ PROMOTES POSITIVE HUMAN VALUES

The series enhances the attractiveness of positive human values such as love, friendship and “good.” The series also provides insight into the role of emotions in a conflict. For instance, listeners recognized the importance of comprehending a situation before responding to it, and of trying to resolve a conflict peacefully rather than attempting to overcome the opponent.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were provided by the evaluation team in light of the findings:

1. Recruit young people who will talk about their own experiences, about real situations they have faced in their lives;
2. Modify somewhat the language used in the programs, as the slang used by the characters does not seem natural enough for a “teenaged grouping”;
3. Bring the situation involving Alex and Nina to a logical conclusion, as many participants perceived it as “unfinished gestalt”; and
4. Place greater emphasis on the ability to resolve conflicts and familiarize listeners with the possible lines of constructive behavior (listening to the other side, showing respect to it, asking relevant questions and declaring personal interests). It should be noted that, while the listeners appreciated the importance of vindicating one’s personal opinion, they did not see what is the right way to do it.

Source: This document is a summary of, and taken directly from “Radio Drama Series ‘Our Street’: A Focus Group Evaluation.” A copy of this document can be acquired at <http://www.sfcg.org/sfcg/evaluations/ukraine.html>, or by contacting Nick Oatley, Director Institutional Learning at Search for Common Ground at noatley@sfcg.org

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