

Background on the Documentary Film:

“No Vacancy”

By

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We shot 251 hours of film in China, Thailand, India, Mexico, Indonesia, Iran, Nigeria, Ghana, the Netherlands, France, Italy and the United States. The enclosed 90-minute version has been shown in New York, DC, and Los Angeles to colleagues and friends and used as a fundraiser for the Planned Parenthood of Pasadena. The film is more visual and emotional than instructional and didactic. The film is much more effective when viewed in a theater than when shown on television at home or office.

India has over 1,100,000,000 people and adds 1.5 million new people every month. There is enormous contrast in India's 25 states, with replacement size families in the southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar have pervasive poverty and high infant mortality and fertility. Most of the footage was captured in Rajasthan, Haryana and Maharashtra. We filmed dedicated family planning field workers in both rural and urban settings, the multifaceted activities of women's cooperatives, social marketing, adolescent health programs and the use of indigenous and modern mass media coverage of health and family planning messages. There is archival footage of Rajiv Gandhi presenting the Statement on Population Stabilization to Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary General of the United Nations, on the 40th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

We filmed male and female multipurpose workers, health assistants, village health guides, trained birth attendants, auxiliary nurse midwives, leaders of panchayats (village councils), and mandelas (women's community organizations). We captured visually the role of registrars in increasing the age at marriage, the social marketing programs and rural mobile clinics. We were privileged to interview Saroj Pachauri (Population Council), Poonam Muttreja (MacArthur Foundation), Sudha Tewari (Parivar Seva Sanstha), and Avabai Wadia and Vimla Nadkarni of the Family Planning Association of India. We filmed and/or were guided by the assistance of USAID (United States Agency for International Development), the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), the Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, the Population Foundation in India, Liam Health Care (Janani), Jan Mangal Sanstha and a host of local NGOs.

Indonesia is the 4th most populous nation in the world, with 222 million people living in over 3,000 islands. The government has had a long-time commitment to providing family planning services with a comprehensive approach that includes the extensive provision of primary health services, increasing the age at marriage, and reinforcing the small family goal through all development programs including education, agriculture, literacy, credit and creative social marketing schemes. There are over one million individuals actively engaged in the family planning program and, as a result, the total fertility rate is today 2.6 children. Beginning in

villages we wanted to capture the common elements of the highly decentralized program that has the active support of the religious and political leaders.

Filming in Indonesia was supervised by the BKKBN (National Family Planning Coordinating Board) and included village-level home visits by the women family planning field workers, the village management assistants, the supervising field staff, the local women’s welfare clubs, the activities of private physicians, religious leaders, dispensaries and the multiple layers of primary health centers, sub-centers, district hospitals, and all the administrative layers of the BKKBN and Ministry of Health. In addition to Professor Dr. Yaumil Chairiah Agoes Achir, chairman of the BKKBN, and principal secretary Drs. Lalu Sudarmadi, we interviewed Firman Lubis of Yayasan Kusuma Buana, Biran Affandi, chairman of the Indonesian OBGYN Association, and many individuals linked to the donor and NGO (nongovernmental organization) community, including Dr. Haryono Suyono.

In New York and DC we interviewed Allan Rosenfield (dean, School of Public Health, Columbia University), Joseph Chamie (director, United Nations Population Division), Linda Martin (president, Population Council), John Bongaarts (vice president of Policy Research, Population Council), Michael Teitelbaum (program officer, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation), Melissa Upreti (Center for Reproductive Law and Policy), Don Weeden (executive director, Weeden Foundation), Gloria Feldt (president, Planned Parenthood Federation of America), Margaret Neuse (director, Office of Population and Reproductive Health, USAID), Elizabeth Lule (Population/Reproductive Health advisor, World Bank), Lester Brown (president, Earth Policy Institute), Robert Engleman (vice president for Research, Population Action International), Tom Lovejoy (president, the H. John Heinz III Center for Science, Economics and the Environment), and both John Williams and Jim Nations (Conservation International). We interviewed Akio Matsumura of Emerging Leaders, Inc. We received a film interview with Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of the UNFPA, and Christopher Flavin, president of Worldwatch.

In the Bay Area we interviewed Dr. Joe Speidel, Adjunct Professor, Center for Reproductive Health Research and Policy at UC San Francisco, and then Tamara Fox, the interim director of Population at Hewlett. In the afternoon, we had a very stimulating interview with Dr. Paul Ehrlich, Bing Professor of Population Studies at Stanford. At Berkeley we filmed Malcolm Potts, Bixby Professor at the School of Public Health, during an hour and half lecture on family planning and fertility, and photographed a pro-choice rally on campus where Malcolm spoke to the assembled. We then interviewed Martha Campbell of the Center for Entrepreneurship in International Health and Development.

At the Community Health Center in Highland Park in Los Angeles, we photographed the *promotoras* (Hispanic community health workers) giving lectures to women in a literacy class, putting on skits focused on family planning, AIDS and teenage pregnancy and then followed their promotional activities in support of a mobile health center. In Los Angeles we interviewed Shirley Hufstedler who was the chairperson for the bi-partisan United States Commission on Immigration Reform (USCIR). She was also Undersecretary of Education during the Carter administration. She provided a very lively interview on the findings of the USCIR.

At UCLA, Professor Ana Maria Goldani revealed the complexity of fertility factors and interactions from different regions in Brazil and the reasons why couples have small families as a result of women’s empowerment and the increasing cost of the 3rd child in marginally subsistent

flavelas and even in the tropical rainforest. In 1950 Brazil had 52 million people growing at a rate of 3%, a total fertility rate of 6.2 and a life expectancy of 44. Today Brazil has 176 million people, a life expectancy of 69, a total fertility rate of 2.2 and a growth rate of 1.3%. Brazilian social scientist, Dr. Carmen Barroso, the previous director of the MacArthur Foundation’s Population Program and current executive director of the Western Hemisphere of International Planned Parenthood, gave an extensive interview on how programs targeted towards preventing adolescent pregnancy, improving the role and status of women, and having women participate in the labor market have dramatically influenced Brazilian fertility. Although Brazil has the highest rate of female sterilization in the world (48% of all women in their reproductive age), there is an unmet need for sterilizations. Politicians court favor with women by paying for sterilizations.

From Iran, the film chronicles the remarkable progress of achieving replacement size families, dropping infant mortality to one-third of what it was just twelve years ago, and improving the health and education standards for women in both urban and rural areas under the enlightened leadership of the reformist Islamic clerics. We have interviews with the principal leaders in the Ministry of Health, the Institute for Research on Planning and Development, and with leading religious, political and feminist leaders. The individuals interviewed are the architects of the population, family planning, health and development policies and programs formulated during the last twelve years. In both urban and rural areas pre-marriage classes are obligatory for both men and women before obtaining a marriage license. We have footage of women and men health volunteers who visit every household in the country, providing instruction on family planning and health services. We learn how 36,000 trained midwife practitioners provide services at the home and in local health houses. We hear the fatwahs issued by leading Ayatollahs. The local mullahs reinforce and support the family planning program in their local mosques. We have footage of youth programs organized by the Family Planning Association and the role of population and sex education in the literacy and formal education systems at the primary, secondary and university levels.

The successful vasectomy program in Iran is delivered to men where they work and is supported by influential religious and community leaders. There are interviews with women’s rights activists and the publisher of a women’s magazine. We hear private pharmacists and physicians describe their active involvement in delivering contraceptive services. The most exciting transformations have taken place in child survival, the dowry system, the role and status of women, and ultimately the active support from religious leaders.

In Mexico, we filmed the Ministry of Health, Social Security and MEXFAM activities (Mexican Family Planning Foundation). Mexico has experienced a decline in the total fertility rate from over 5 in 1975 to a range of 2.3-2.5 today. We filmed traditional and trained midwives, *promotoras* (field workers), village leaders, and the family planning and women’s reproductive health services provided by the government and private sector. The very dramatic and successful adolescent programs are provided under the auspices of the Mexican Social Security system and the MEXFAM Gente Joven (Young Adults) campaign. In both urban and rural settings we were able to capture visually the mobilization of private doctors and the social marketing campaign. We interviewed over 100 individuals in rural and urban settings, ranging in age from 8 to over 80.

We had a delightful interview with Dr. Javier Cabral Soto, coordinador general del Programa IMSS Oportunidades, who manages the health social security system that provides coverage for

60% of Mexico’s population. At the Ministry of Health we interviewed the director general of reproductive health, Dr. Ma. De Lourdes P. Quintanilla Rodriguez. The overall coordinating government agency for population is Consejo Nacional de Población (CONEPO) where we interviewed the secretary general, Elena Zúniga Herrera. We interviewed Dr. Alfonso Sandoval Arriaga and Dr. Javier Domínguez del Olmo of the UNFPA, and Dr. Ricardo Vernon of the Population Council, who conducts operations research. I got advice from USAID, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, IPAS and the previous Pathfinder representative on the role of the donors and local NGOs.

The most valuable footage reveals the activities of granny midwives, the door-to-door promotion by the promotoras, the adolescent sex education program, the mobilization of private physicians, and the complete complement of all contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception and post-abortion care.

Nigeria is one of the most complex, diverse and challenging countries. The current population of 134 million people is projected to reach over 300 million in 50 years. The current total fertility rate is 5.8. Only 18% of the women are currently practicing contraception and less than 1% of the gross national product is spent on education and 2% on health. The film reveals policy, funding and administration changes needed to satisfy the existing demand for family planning and primary health services.

The Nigerian film footage covers both the urban and rural family planning programs with a strong emphasis on HIV/AIDS education in various ethnic, cultural and tribal regions. The challenges and opportunities of involving feminist, religious, political, and community leaders are portrayed. From literacy programs to social marketing contraceptives in the women’s markets, and from micro-enterprises to sporting activities, the film explores many aspects of Nigeria’s family planning program/women’s reproductive health program. We learn how the UNFPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, USAID, Pathfinder International, EngenderHealth and CEDPA (Center for Population and Development Activities) support and enhance the government services.

In New York we interviewed Dr. Frank Nyonator, the Director of the Program and Monitoring-Evaluation Division in the Ghana Health Service, and Sam Adjei, Deputy Director of the Ghana Health Service. Each interview concentrated on the national population/family planning program and the role of the Navrongo Experiment in transforming the health and family planning program in Ghana. We also interviewed Jim Phillips, Senior Associate in the Policy Division of the Population Council. Accompanying the health professionals was a nurse-practitioner, Rufina Asuru, who is responsible for training community health aides in the community health centers in Navrongo.

Both the interviews and the film footage portray the activities of the Community Health Care Centers, the volunteers, the social marketing and how in rural communities large gatherings are used to promote health and family planning with the support of local chiefs and elders. In Ghana there is an interview with Frederick T. Sai, who is a world-renowned expert in health and family planning. He distinguished himself as a chair of the United Nations Population Conference in Mexico City, as a technical consultant in reproductive health at the World Bank, and as past President of the International Planned Parenthood Federation. He is now principal consultant to the Ministry of Health on family planning, reproductive health and AIDS prevention in Ghana.

In the Netherlands, Italy and France, we explored briefly the reasons for below replacement family sizes and interviewed Dr. J. J. van Dam (Head of the Department of Innovation and Development, Rutger NISSO Group), Dr. Wouter Meijer (Executive Director, the World Population Foundation), Dr. Gijs Beets (Demographer), Evert Ketting (Sociologist), Dr. Antonella Pinnelli (Professor, University of Rome), and Dr. Marcela Villarreal – Chief, Population and Development Service Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.

In a local theater here in Pasadena, \$7,000 was raised at a benefit for Planned Parenthood of Pasadena. We are hoping the film will act as a fundraiser for NGOs both in the United States and abroad. We now have a distributor exploring both broadcast and straight to video sales. Population Communication has been funded by the Bixby Foundation to distribute the film to 3,000 national leaders and public health and family planning professionals in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In each of the major countries, the instructional materials and strategies on how to replicate the success stories will be tailored to the audience viewing the film.

We did not use the film footage obtained from China or Thailand because the film would then double in length. Spending 90 minutes viewing “No vacancy” is dedication and perseverance enough. What is important to know about China, despite the demographic and economic progress you read about daily, is that China adds 650,000 new people every month and half of China’s population lives off of less than \$3 a day.

“No Vacancy” won the Environmental Sustainability Award at the EarthVision 2005 International Film & Video Festival in Santa Cruz, California. It’s world premier took place at the Bay Street Film Festival in Canada. It has screened at the Anchorage International Film Festival, the Big Muddy Film Festival, the Omaha Film Festival, Sarasota Film Festival and the Flint Film Festival. Upcoming festivals include the Mendocino Film Festival and the FAIF Festival. KQED, the PBS station in San Francisco, aired “No Vacancy” at 10:30 p.m. on April 11th. It has continued to roll out via PBS’ satellite stations.

I wish to thank you in advance for spending 90 minutes viewing the film. I look forward to any comments or recommendations.