

BILLY GOAT RADIO – INTRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION TO BILLY GOAT RADIO

Welcome to Billy Goat Radio tool for Risk Education (RE).

Billy Goat Radio is a tool developed by Snail Aid – Technology for Development, in the framework of TIRAMISU¹, an EU co-funded research integrated project. It consists of a modular and adaptable system aimed at enabling local end-users to create cost-effective RE campaigns.

RE campaigns created with Billy Goat Radio tool consist of three elements:

- a. **Radio broadcast serial drama** – the core of Billy Goat Radio tool
- b. **Itinerant live shows**
- c. **Group discussions**, embedding a first form of evaluation

If needed, for example in case of particular unsecure environments where the safety of operators is at risk, only the radio broadcast serial drama could be used, live shows skipped and group discussions substituted by interactions between radio listeners and risk education teams by phone.

The core element of Billy Goat Radio is the serial drama. The serial drama consists of six episodes lasting circa twenty minutes each. As usual, the serial drama structure foresees a story fragmented in chapters and the happenings don't find a conclusion inside the single episode, needing a certain level of concentration capability and memory to be followed. For this reason and for the topics present in the story, Billy Goat Radio tool is specifically addressing adults and young adults: this doesn't mean it is not recommended for children, but that it is meant to be educational and entertaining for an adult audience. Educational messages especially thought for children needs are still present in the story, but they are presented in form of messages parents or teacher should convey to children, and not directly addressed to a very young audience.

The educational use of serial dramas is a result of the Entertainment-education theories. Descending from socio-psychology and human communication theories, Entertainment-education principles are aimed to modify wrong or risky behaviours of common people by spreading information through a mass medium.

Fundamental is the assumption that people from every country are widely exposed to entertainment through media: this intense fruition of messages assimilated through viewing, listening and reading proposed by media suggests that mass media, more than other tools, can effectively modify the way how people feel, think and behave. Thus, Billy Goat Radio is a tool designed to use radio as a mass medium able to simultaneously entertain and educate its audience.

Fundamental characteristic of Billy Goat Radio system is its adaptability. The adaptability system, one of the core modules of Billy Goat Radio system, allows to write a different educational short serial drama, tailored to the local context both in terms of daily life and risk messages, for every different context. It is designed to be used by local operators with understanding of clan system, religion, language, gender, age, geographic location and socio-economic status, to create stories with appeal to the local audience and embedding the right RE messages, without having them to be professional writers nor to engage in a long and expensive re-writing process. Thus, the adaptability system guarantees the cost-effectiveness of the system.

¹ Toolbox Implementation for Removal of Antipersonnel Mines, Submunitions and UXO (TIRAMISU), is an EU co-funded research and development integrated project (under grant agreement n. 284747) whose purpose is the creation of a comprehensive toolbox for humanitarian demining ([TIRAMISU.http// www.fp7-tiramisu.eu/](http://www.fp7-tiramisu.eu/)).

Billy Goat Radio is modular since it's a kit composed by different modules. According to the situation only some of these modules might be needed. The modules Billy Goat Radio system consists of are:

- **Adaptability system, the core module**, consisting of an intuitive software for creating the script of the serial drama, adapted to the local context and an intuitive software for selecting RE messages adapt to the local context
- **Actors training guidelines**, a guide to teach nonprofessional actors simple tricks to make their performance good for the radio broadcasting through exercises.
- **Audio recording guidelines**, a list of cost-effective and robust tools to be used to record actors voices for later broadcasting with details on how to connect them with each other to set up a simple recording studio
- **Audio post-processing guidelines**, a guide to enable local operators to post-process the audio recorded using a free but very powerful software, with key functions explained in details.
- **How to set up a small radio station guidelines**, a guide to set up a small local radio station
- **Group discussion guidelines**, guidelines for carrying out group discussions after the live show and perform a first evaluation of the system in terms of fidelity assessment and understanding of messages.

The relationship between Billy Goat Radio tool elements and modules is represented in the following scheme:

Modules / Elements	Radio drama	broadcast serial	Itinerant live shows	Group discussions
Adaptability system	x			
Actors training guidelines	x			
Audio recording guidelines	x			
Audio post-processing guidelines	x			
How to set up a small radio station guidelines	x			
Group discussion guidelines				x

The versatility of Billy Goat Radio tool allows it also to be used to convey diverse risk education messages and promote safe behaviours related to other threats such as Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Moreover, once operators get confidence with the serial drama system, they could be trained in story writing and could add more episodes to the story for example embedding real life experiences of victims.

BILLY GOAT RADIO SERIAL DRAMA – THE CHARACTERS

Starting from Entertainment-education theories, Snail Aid based the creation of the stories on the Bandura's model of cognitive sub-processes [Bandura, 1977] , according to which people, particularly adults, learn more when they think that the information offered is relevant to their own lives and listeners who can identify themselves with role-model characters in the drama are more likely to be motivated to learn and consequently to change their behaviour [de Fossard, 1997]: thus, the creation of context adherent characters becomes substantial for an entertainment-educational drama.

As foreseen by Bandura, the task of diffusing the educational messages embedded in the story is entrusted to the characters, whose roles have been written following the Sabido's role models structure [Barker et Sabido, 2005]. Remembering that the classifications in good and bad characters refers only to the way how they face mine, UXO or other ERW threats (and not to moral or different features), this structure foresees:

- good characters (positive models): these characters are already well informed about risks or intentioned to inform themselves, they behave correctly when they have to face a threat and give the correct suggestions to evolving and negative characters. At the end of the story, good characters solve their problems and are happy and satisfied, as listeners should learn that correct behaviours are reciprocated by gladness.
- bad characters (negative models): these characters are either not informed or informed but not interested about risk and safety messages, they deliberately ignore good suggestions and warnings and always behave in the wrong way, threatening theirs and other people's lives. They embody the negative side of the story and at the end they will encounter some kind of punishment, losing their happiness and their position, as listeners should learn that wrong behaviours are reciprocated by failure.
- evolving characters: during the plot's development, these characters evolve from their initial negative position to portray a positive role at the end of the story. Evolving characters are similar to most of the common people; experience doubts and hesitations before deciding that the only right way to follow is the way suggested by good characters. Through afterthoughts and changes of minds, at the end of a story, evolving characters meet some kind of reward, as listeners should learn that correct behaviours are reciprocated by gladness.

Recognising that the characters portrayed in the serial drama are similar to themselves and their neighbours, listeners will be naturally brought to identify themselves with positive characters (and encouraged to imitate their behaviours), to empathize with evolving characters (and encouraged to imitate their behaviours) and to blame negative characters (and avoid imitating their behaviours).

The stories proposed by Snail Aid revolve around the events happening to a reduced number of characters, due to the shortness of the drama and to the need to reduce the costs having as few actors as possible. Some characters personify positive models, some of them negative ones, and some embody evolving models. Special importance has to be devoted to the character of Billy Goat: as his name says, Billy is not a human being but a billy goat; moreover, he is a talking billy goat, an anthropomorphized animal. Billy Goat personifies a super positive role model, being a particular character who doesn't really take part in the events and performs the important role of a wise and often funny advisor for many of the others characters. Many educational moments and funny breaks inserted in the story development are committed to him.

BILLY GOAT RADIO SERIAL DRAMA – THE RISK EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES

While embedding educational messages in the story, Snail Aid kept in mind the *incremental* character of the learning process and the *distributed learning* concept. *Incremental learning* concerns the need of introducing new concepts in a gradual way: specific basic steps must be mastered before more complex stages can be understood and practiced [de Fossard, 1997]. On the other side, *distributed learning* is the term used by educators to describe the process of presenting the same information in several different ways over time [de Fossard et al. 1993], owing to the fact that different people learn in different ways: some people are used to learn from direct teaching, while others can learn better by observing and copying the behaviour of their peers, and if some can absorb information after only one exposure, others need to hear and see it a number of times before fully accepting it. In this perspective, it has been carefully evaluated how much time has to be spent on the principal concepts to be conveyed and on which parts of information will have to be repeated and how often [de Fossard, 1997]. By the way, the multi-plot nature of the serial format is really helpful from this point of view, since it facilitates the possibility to bring in the message repeatedly, through different characters in different ways [de Fossard, 1997].

Billy Goat Radio' educational messages are thought to cover the widest spectrum possible: there are messages addressed to every category (unaware, uninformed, reckless, intentional) and to different ages

and gender (women, men, children, young men) of at-risk people, as well as messages concerning different threats (mines, UXO, Booby traps) and different local situations and environment features. Thanks to the Adaptability system all messages are combined, integrated and adapted by local operators in order to have a final version of the serial drama where educational messages are exactly what the at-risk people of the local context need to learn.

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