CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000041

Expanded Number **CF-RAI-USAA-PD-GEN-2007-000041**

External ID

Title

Consultant Report on Program Communication. Jack C. Ling. Senior Communication Consultant.

Date Created / From Date	Date Registered	Date Closed / To Date
09-Jul-2007 at 11:34 AM	**13-Jul-2007 at 11:34 AM**	

Primary Contact

Home Location **Programme Division, UNICEF NYHQ (3003)**

FI2: Status Certain? **No**

Itm Fd01: In, Out, Internal Rec or Rec Copy

Owner Location **Programme Division, UNICEF NYHQ (3003)**

Current Location/Assignee **Upasana Young since 13-Jul-2007 at 11:34 AM**

FI3: Record Copy? **No**

Document Details **Record has no document attached.**

Contained Records
Container

Date Published	Fd3: Doc Type - Format	Da1:Date First Published	Priority

Record Type **A01 PD-GEN ITEM**

Print Name of Person Submit Image	Signature of Person Submit	Number of images without cover
Upasana Young		/0

Consultant Report on Program Communication

Table of Contents

Jack C. Ling
Sr. Communication Consultant
July 9, 2001

III. <u>Background</u>

As the term communication has different interpretations in various circumstances, it may be appropriate at the outset to define it for the purpose of this assignment. Communication involves dissemination and exchange of information and the attendant interaction between communicators and the audiences. The purpose and end result of communication for development is change or reaffirmation of belief, attitude and practice, all of which can come under the rubric of "behavior." Since all programs involving UNICEF assistance aim at some changes in belief, attitude and practice, program communication is a critical part of the programs individually and of the Country Program as a whole.

As someone who introduced the concept of communication support for programs, initially known as project-support communication (PSC) in the late 1960s, it is gratifying for the consultant to note how widespread this concept has taken root in UNICEF's work. However, it must also be said that in spite of three decades of such work, with few exceptions, UNICEF offices have not found a way to handle satisfactorily the spectrum of activities ranging from advocacy at the policy level to behavioral practice at the community level in a *communication continuum*. The tendency has been to treat media-oriented advocacy work as an effort without any deliberate linkage to community action; media specialists handling policy promotion of country programs have yet to pay systematic attention to the process of delivering messages that facilitate behavioral compliance. Those who specialize in community education for behavioral change, on the other hand, have not sufficiently appreciated the power of media in message dissemination, the necessary first step in the process of adoption of new behavior.

However, the Beijing office is considerably ahead of other UNICEF offices in this regard. The Communication section has done a remarkable job in forging an alliance with the mass media and the commercial marketing sector for a variety of innovative activities. Its three-person team has been taxed to its limit by the promotion aspects of the Country Program and the fund-raising related activities. The human resource constraint has been a major factor for the section not venturing in a systematic way into the behavioral aspects at the community end of the various programs. This consulting assignment is an attempt to address this issue, as part of PACK.

Given the circumstances in China where the tidal wave of economic reform has driven every unit to guard fiercely its turf along with the protection of its sources of revenue, the prevalent bureaucratic mindset is not particularly conducive to cross-unit cooperation. It is commendable that the leadership of the Beijing office has chosen to focus its attention on this complex and vexing task. Joe Judd, UNICEF Representative for China and Mongolia, recognizes that this consulting assignment only starts the process for this vital crosscutting issue for the Country Program. He has wisely urged all to move deliberately and slowly and not to expect overnight success, to which this consultant couldn't agree more.

IV. <u>Findings</u>

As the TOR did not include any field visit, it should be noted that the findings are confined to Beijing-based analysis and observation. The series of individual discussion sessions with program sections and a select few partner units were useful not only for the consultant to get a

c.   Some program officers prefer delivering the messages to the community via their section's partner unit network because it saves time. While a vertical approach may be quick, direct and effective, a succession of visits by program cadres to the community each with its own messages could bring about confusion and wear out the welcome mat. More important, repeated and uncoordinated efforts to the same community with a plethora of disparate single-purpose development messages ignore the critical point that many of the issues are inter-related, i.e. sanitation, diarrhea, nutrition and gender issue.

d.   Few messages are presented as part of life, and life is, after all, integrated. Meaningful and multiple messages delivered in a coordinated fashion can reinforce and facilitate change. Integrated messages may even be cost effective, as the frequency of approaches to the community is reduced.

e.   The role of media in program communication is vastly under appreciated. It is ironic that in China where media have traditionally been instruments of the state there is so little systematic and deliberate employment of the fast growing modern media in facilitating behavioral change for social development. In fact, unregulated commercial messages are fast pre-empting airtime in the electronic media at the expense of positive messages. This trend deserves the attention of top policy makers, as it does not augur well for the young who are spending more and more time watching television.

Television has been accepted globally as the principal source of information and has certainly been utilized aggressively in politics and commerce; yet, social development programs tend to shy away from it, either for lack of resources or lack of technical capacity. This does not alter the reality that television is the most powerful channel for message dissemination; it helps to set the public's agenda, often starts behavioral trends and reinforces social norms. This does not mean that media dissemination alone can bring about the desired changes, but information dissemination is certainly the first essential step toward change. Media institutions can and should be partners in program communication. With the expansion of satellite service, Chinese television reaches virtually all but the most remote parts of the country. Thus far, for UNICEF media are mainly venues for policy advocacy and promotion, and more recently, fund-raising.

The concept of the social mobilization/ communication continuum whereby policy level communication input, especially media activities, can have relevance to community-level behavioral action is not understood and practiced.(Fig. 1) In addition to information delivery, entertainment programs on television, especially those built around family situations such as serialized dramas, are ideals settings for integrated messages – gender, child rights, health and nutrition practices, etc.

f.   More strategic planning is needed to incorporate the concept of communication continuum and to develop a more effective framework, taking into account the existing channels of communication and the role of their "gatekeepers." In this connection, it is important to accept the standards of the systems and not to impose "quality" standards, especially imported ones. The objective is to get the messages to the audiences, who

oriented. And, above all, no action should be introduced to interfere with what is already working well.

The discussion sessions with the program sections showed that all the sections recognized the need for professional communication inputs. The consultant was actually asked to give advice on a variety of issues on the spot. Ideally, if additional posts are available, such inputs could be made available in house. Since the small staff of the Communication section is already over-extended, it would be unrealistic for the section to provide specific guidance to the sections on a professional basis. In order to provide that "added value" it would necessary to provide such services from outside resources as the needs arise.

Unfortunately, communication studies embracing interpersonal, group, organizational, inter-cultural and mass media have not yet been taken up by any training institution. There are schools for public relations and marketing, which produce graduates oriented towards the lucrative private and commercial sector. Journalism is taught at several major universities to train media personnel. The Chinese Academy of Social Science has a center that handles some aspects of media research work but has not taken up the communication process in development work. The China Agricultural University maintains the Center for Integrated Agricultural Development (CIAD) and College of Rural Development (CORD), which offer courses in agricultural extension, community participation and communication as well as consulting services at a cost beyond the standard UNICEF rates. A list of potential communication resources, which includes some Chinese graduates of the Tulane Social Mobilization Course and foreign-based communication specialists is attached. (Annex II)

V.   **Recommendations**

If this assignment were commissioned in the early 1980s, when the Country Program was young, it would have been easier to make practical recommendations. But, the various sector programs have been operating for two decades, and attitudes and habits have hardened and become traditions. Nevertheless, the challenges, however difficult, are worth taking up at three fronts:

A.   *Within UNICEF*

The leadership of the office will no doubt weigh the following options based on its perception what is "doable" given the current state of staff attitude:

1. *Do the minimum – no new mechanism. Develop guidelines* ideally with participation from program sections. The guidelines refer to the four areas of coordination

    i.   strategic planning at the start of CP exercise, with each unit indicating its communication strategy - its objectives and activities – through the regular program coordination mechanism; identify areas of common objectives and joint actions;

    ii.   event/training/material production planing during PPA review, which identifies specific activities for coordination, especially in audience segmentation, designing key messages relevant to behavior change with the view of checking scientific

will ensue. The committee cannot be expected to function smoothly. There will be hitches and disagreements, but patience and persistence should be the watchwords.

B.   *With UNICEF's Partner units*

Once the UNICEF has put its own house in order for an integrated and coordinated program communication approach, the partner units will need to be brought on board. A consultative meeting of all partners is needed. In order to get the partner units in line, it would be helpful if UNICEF can mobilize a high level official, preferably at the high ministerial level, as co-chair along with UNICEF's Representative to launch such an approach. At the meeting, with some advance preparation the participants can be encouraged to design their own mechanism for the four stages of coordination. Focus will need to be task and result oriented.

C.   *Pilot Areas for the Integrated Approach for Message Delivery*

Concurrent with the steps taken to start the process of a more integrated approach in the office and with the partner units, the consultant supports the idea of an experimental effort in two counties to demonstrate the value of the new approach. Such an effort preferably in the Northwest where the government is giving so much emphasis for development will demonstrate the value of a truly integrated approach from the ground up. Lessons can be learned in the pilot areas and results from the pilots can then be applied more broadly to the rest of the programs.

One county may be where considerable UNICEF inputs are present. Another may be in an area where no UNICEF program is at work, or just one horizontal program such as LPAC or PCS, which can take on the task of integrating the others. It would be unrealistic to expect existing program funds to be diverted for such experimental work. The use of the intersectoral allotment seems justified. Another idea from a partner unit colleague calls for one pilot in an urban area and one in rural area.

D.   *Collaboration with media*

Media, from print to electronic, can play a direct role in program communication oriented toward adoption of attitude and behavior. For integrated message dissemination, television is certainly the channel deserving special attention. The concept of Entereducate, education through entertainment, has been around for many years and is gaining increasing attention recently. In the 1970s UNICEF supported a comic radio talk show in Kenya to disseminate reproductive health and nutrition messages with great success. In Brazil and Mexico, during the Year of the Child (1979) "tele-novela" took up the issues of breastfeeding and family planning. With Chinese television reaching the far end of the country via satellite and with apparent willingness on the part of the state television network, it is an opportune time for UNICEF to enter into a partnership relationship with CCTV for program communication. Multiple messages can be channeled through CCTV programs, ranging from children and adolescent oriented programs to golden hour entertainment programs.

UNICEF was the pioneer in the mobilization of public personalities, including top performing artists, for social purposes. A major effort could be launched to get commercial sponsorship of a

taken on the broad spectrum of communication studies ranging from intra/inter personal communication and group communication to intercultural and mass media communication. The closest such training is in the field of public relations and marketing, which so far is very closely oriented towards commercial activities. While community relations and marketing can be applied to social development, such orientation is not yet accepted or available.

F. _Core Messages_

There is some confusion about the term, core messages. Because there is no clear, common understanding of the term among project/program officers, the consultant does not feel ready to make any specific recommendations. There are common subjects/themes that are cross cutting for all programs and some subjects cross cutting among programs in the same section with participation of other sectors. Some observations and suggestions about this subject are detailed in the Annex II.

VI. Schedule of work – timeline

Date	Coordination	Capacity Building	Pilot Project	Collaboration with Media
Sept. – Dec. 2001	Develop TOR and establish coord. Comm.	Strategy management workshop (staff)		
Jan. – Mar. 2002	Staff retreat to develop guidelines for four phases of coord; consultative meeting of all partner units on new integrated approach.	Workshop for partner units	Retreat to decide on pilot	Negotiation with CCTV for programme communication
Apr.-Jun. 2002	Implementation of guidelines. Forming taskforce as needed.		Identification of two sites	Discussion with talent (script writer and actors)
Jul. – Sept. 2002	Review of Communication strategy and events, training & production planning		Joint programme communication planning for pilot project	Identify and mobilize commercial sponsorship; orientation of production team including field visit.
Oct. – Dec. 2002	Coordination of communication activities.	Review of experience by staff	Launching of pilot project	Production of drama series and scheduling
Jan. – Mar. 2003	Monitoring and evaluation			Promotion of drama series.

Annex II

Core messages

Observations

The discussion in the office revealed that there is no clear understanding of the term "core messages" among program staff, especially as they relate to behavioral change. Upon request, some of them sent in what they consider to be their "core messages," which turn out to be a mixed bag of themes, objectives and behaviorally oriented messages.

With many of the program staff not available for in-depth discussion and with the time constraint it is not possible for the consultant to come to terms with the anticipated outcome on core messages as indicated in the TOR. The discussion clearly showed that the Beijing office shares with many others the common problem of effective communication within the office i.e. organization communication. New terms and concepts are introduced by those who have devoted considerable time and effort in developing the terms and concepts, without an adequate effort to orient the staff so that there is a common understanding and acceptance of the new terms.

To the consultant, for instance, baseline survey is an exercise to obtain baseline data against which to measure quantifiable progress. Yet in this office it often denotes surveys to collect data about a given situation. In this case, common understanding of the term exists in the office and it does not matter whether it has slightly different application elsewhere. Common understanding of terms facilitates communication; otherwise, much management time and effort is wasted. However, it is clearly not the case with the term core messages.

Messages in health and nutrition programs generally aim at some specific practices and behavioral compliance; it is quite straightforward for such programs to identify messages in relation to behavior. In education programs and programs aiming at processes, attitude and broader issues such as gender, rights, discrimination, it is more difficult to pin down core messages. Not all programs need to follow the same pattern of analysis in terms of identifying messages for behavioral change. It is however important that there is accountability, so that there are clear objectives, specific audiences, appropriate messages, effective channels for delivery and anticipated outcomes.

Suggestions

If core messages refer to cross cutting program themes, then gender issue, child rights, early childhood development, discrimination (against the disabled, girls and AIDS patients) and capacity building (training) are cross cutting for all programs. HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B prevention, health system reform to favor the disadvantaged, clean water and environment, adequate nutrition for child's proper growth, physically and mentally, and health promotion are cross-cutting within the health sector but with participation of other sectors.

Annex III (initial list)

Communication Resource

I.   International resource specialists

        a.   Gary Gleason, Boston, US – all round communication specialist
        b.   Maurice Apted, Bangkok, Thailand – all round communication specialist
        c.   Guy Scanlon, Chiangmei, Thailand – community participation specialist
        d.   Tsai Yin Yin, Taipei, Taiwan, China – all round communication specialist
        e.   Michelle Lee, Singapore – Cornell trained marketing
        f.   Moncef Bouhafa, Tunisia (US based) – communication training –media
        g.   Don Allen, Woodside, CA, US – writing, editing
        h.   Bill Hetzer, New York, US – televison production

II.   National resource specialists

        a.   Song Yin-tong, Johnson and Johnson – marketing
        b.   Guo Yan, Peking University SPH – social mobilization training
        c.   Yu Wen-ping, Jinan, Shandong – community education
        d.   Ma Xiao, Chengdu – community education and evaluation
        e.   Wang Rao-tao – training
        f.   Li Xiao Yun – Center for Integrated Agriculture Development, China
                Agriculture University, Beijing – community organization and
                communication
        g.   Bu Wei, Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing – media research

Figure-1

Communication/Mobilization Continuum
An Illustration of Social
Groups in Partnership

Data/Information ◄► Behavior/Action

Variable:
Biological .Economic
Culture Political
Social

Communication/Dialogue ◄► Education/Learning

I.
Political
Legislators
Decision
Makers
Opinion
Leaders

II.
Government
Public Officials
Bureaucrats
Technocrats

III.
Non-governmental
Social/Civil/Religi
ous Groups
: NGO/PVO
Professional
Associations
Commerce &
Industry

IV.
Community
Groups
Schools
Churches
Day Care Centers

V.
Families
Heads of
Household
Grandparents
Parents
Children

Communication Channels:interpersonal. Media. Traditional. Events

Figure 3   SWOT

Strength

- Interest
- Appreciation
- Creativity
- Leadership Commitment

Weaknesses

- Lack of Uniformity
- Confused Audience
- Quality
- Evaluation

Opportunities

- Beginning of the 'CP

- Willingness to start a new approach

Threats

- Redundant Efforts
- Weariness/Committee Fatigue
- Turf interest
- Reality of the Gov. System and funds allocation

1