

File EARO

TOWARDS A MANAGEABLE PSC APPROACH

A Discussion Paper

Why Review PSC Now?

The more we progress from the notion that UNICEF's aims are met when supplies reach their destination towards the belief that our assistance must follow through all stages of implementation, the more we discover that Project Support Communications is an essential tool of programming. For example, after years of work and millions of dollars succeeded in implanting some 500,000 handpumps in Bangladesh villages, Dr. Mahler of WHO and Executive Director Grant ruefully concluded that the programme had little effect on infant mortality and morbidity. Reason: there had not been an adequate complementary effort in health education -- the PSC component.

Examples could be found in every region where more attention to PSC aspects would have produced better implementation and more impact for the investment. In EARO we are not making the best use of regional PSC services. This review is intended to look at the current status of PSC activities, examine problem areas and seek solutions together and look ahead to future perspectives. Trends in UNICEF's global PSC planning will affect us, some changes are in store for us all and we must discuss them as a group to arrive at a common strategy.

What Are the Services Under Review?

- . Regional PSC services fall into four categories:
- . Advisory and programming services to country and regional programmes, performed by the Regional PSC Officer and his assistant officers under the broad supervision of the Chief, Communications and Information Services.
- . Training, under the "Communications for Basic Services" regional project that evolved from a series of country-level workshops. It aims at strengthening national capacities for training social development workers in communications skills and techniques.
- . Technical support, especially in graphic and design services for publications, audio-visual aids, films and related workshops.
- . Liaison with other agencies, bilateral, UN and non-governmental PSC activities, with UNICEF's PSC developments within EARO and in other regions and with national resources.

The regional office in Nairobi has production facilities adequate for these services. The regional staff consists of the Regional PSC Officer, Mr. Sock, Art and Design Officer, Mr. McBean, Coordinator of the regional communications project, Mr. Kasoma, a vacant post currently designated "Anglophone Countries" PSC Officer (probably a misnomer), two full-time and one part-time production assistants. There is a PSC Officer in the Lusaka Area Office and in the Zimbabwe office and part-time assistance in the Ethiopia office. Past plans to provide PSC Officers in Tanzania and Mozambique were dropped. There is no PSC officer in Somalia or Uganda. The Francophone countries are served by the Regional PSC Officer.

The Funding Situation

The Dummy BAL that has financed regional PSC for many years has out-lived its usefulness. Nevertheless, this system of financing cannot be abolished until the end of 1983, by which time we hope that progress toward country-level staffing will be well advanced. Our 1982 budget is \$129,000 of which \$97,000 is unalterably obligated under contracts for salaries. This budget has been cut down from \$160,000 in 1981 and even higher in past years and reflects the CIS effort to economise. Even so, country offices have cut back their contributions and we have a shortfall of \$25,000. If this shortfall is not made up, either by restoration of cuts by offices that are not meeting the requested contributions or by use of the IFP or by country offices assuming more direct travel, consultancy and production costs, or by a combination of these -- well, the salaries will be met, but there won't be any operational funds in 1982. We need your guidance on this problem.

It must be pointed out that several regional advisors make considerable use of our production and advisory facilities for the benefit of country programmes but they do not contribute to the Dummy BAL.

We have to live with this unsatisfactory funding system for just a bit longer. The amounts required are not large. We would be grateful for some decisive action to settle this problem for the time remaining. (See the attached schedule of payments and shortfalls.)

The Technical Support Services

When the regional PSC staff withers away to a single senior advisor funded as a core post and the Dummy BAL has ended, will the country offices wish to see the graphics, design, printing facilities maintained? We have sent out a circular to evaluate your use and opinion of this unit. If the unit is to be maintained after 1983 it must be funded as a regional project -- a solution headquarters does not favour -- or by some other means. What are your suggestions?

We believe that the Communications for Basic Services regional project will have direct benefits for country offices, not only in strengthening and coordinating national PSC capacities and resources but in identifying institutions and individuals who may improve national contributions of PSC in programmes we assist. A closer relationship between the national coordinators of this project and UNICEF country offices will be desirable as the project moves ahead.

Historically, EARO has played a creative, innovative role in the spread of PSC in UNICEF. We need your guidance and collaboration to build on this record in the years to come.

Lusaka, January, 1982.-



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Notes

The paper discusses the following topics: Why review PSC Now? What are the services under review (advisory and programming; training; technical support; liaison)? Current trends; Future perspectives; the funding situation.

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