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PSC. India. Communication Strategy Involving Radio for Maternal and Child Care. Note by Dr. D.S. Vyas.

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Notes

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The note reviews two previous workshops and makes a list of findings and recommendations for further workshops. Radio is seen as a good medium for creating awareness and strengthening beliefs. Best results are ensured by carrying the same message in different media, such as posters and leaflets to support a radio campaign.

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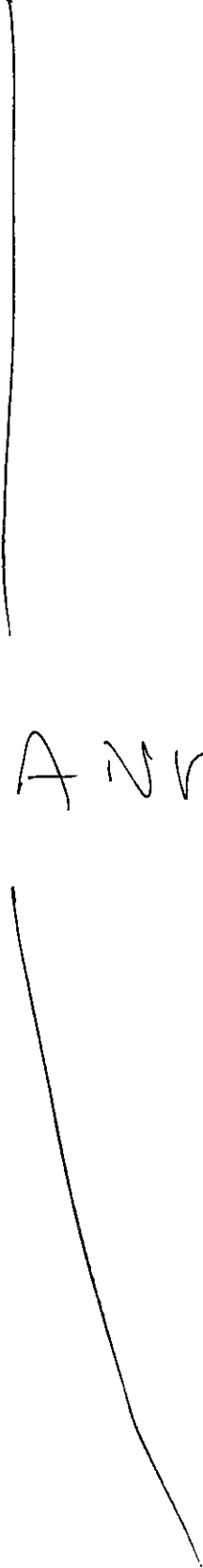
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X. There should be readily available enough copies of one or two radio programmes related to mothers and children broadcast in the past by the nearby radio station to give an exercise to the participants in field testing their programmes.

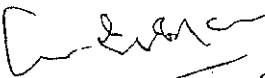
XI. As soon as the workshop finalises the list of topics on which the messages would be broadcast the responsibility for bringing out at least one pamphlet carrying the same information as the broadcast would do, should be fixed so that the AIR and the publication agency jointly start locating the experts on different topics to be covered and start getting the scripts which would form the basis for the publication as well as the broadcasts.

XII. The publication agency may also go in for designing the posters and other support material based on the scripts collected from the specialists and the coordinator of the project should see that the publications and the support material reach the organised listeners groups at least one fortnight before the actual date of broadcast of the programme on that particular subject.

XIII. To effectively implement the communication campaign the leaders of the organised listeners groups should be given a training in-group organisation, leadership behaviour, conducting group meetings, group discussions, letter writing maintenance and operation of radio receiver set, etc. This should form an integral part of the whole communication campaign.

XIV. Provisions for the production of publications, posters, games, etc; profile preparation with monitoring and evaluation and training of animators should be made in the overall budget of the campaign and the respective sources of funds should be identified.

XV. Self-evaluation of the workshop by the participants must be attempted.


29.7.83.

iii. For the time-being, we should concentrate only on radio as our focal medium around which the communication strategy should be built. Other media may be planned just to supplement radio but not to substitute it. Therefore, only radio programmers and the health extension workers should be the participants of these workshops. We need not involve TV and the publications authors in these workshops and, therefore, there should be no need for resource persons from TV, etc. Possibly we may plan separate workshops for TV and publication producers in future.

iv. The overall budget of communication campaign should have three distinct parts as (i) Audience profile study with follow-up monitoring and evaluation. (ii) Media perfection - Radio workshop (iii) campaign implementation - providing for the media including radio sets, publications, posters and other supporting material like adapted indoor games, etc. Funds for this may come from different sources.

v. Before the workshop we have to have the audience profiles mailed to the participants who need to be nominated by the respective departments well in advance.

vi. The workshop should last at least for a week to give enough time to the participants to visit the area and also to plan produce and test at least one model programme before the end of the workshop.

vii. As far as possible the participants of the workshop should be drawn from the radio stations of the areas which are being covered by a single programme of the UNICEF, and are homogeneous in terms of language, agro-economic conditions, and socio-cultural configurations. Radio stations and participants from areas with diverse audience needs and profiles will not be able to give effective communication programmes.

viii. While making arrangements for participants, their complete comfort should be kept in mind. As far as possible they should be lodged at a single place. Arrangements for boarding should also be common for all to provide maximum opportunities to the participants, the resource persons and the officials to mix up and have informal discussions.

ix. The UNICEF should bear the full cost towards the lodging and boarding of the participants and rather than giving any amount in cash to them, the money may be invested in enriching the food quality, and providing them other comforts.

7. Communication planning without the essential component of feedback in it makes little sense. Therefore, to see that the communication achieves the desired objectives we have to give constant monitoring and summative evaluation on scientific lines its proper place in our communication strategy. Necessary provisions shall have to be made in our plans for these.
8. A plan is always visualised in a time-frame, and therefore, the kind of communication strategy we intend to implement has to be time-bound. A communication campaign carried out over a season or such other period, say six to 12 months, should be just sufficient a period to show us the results of our efforts. Therefore the dissemination of messages and the accompanying feedback monitoring has to be planned for a period of 3 to 12 months depending upon the needs of the audience and requirements of the project.
9. Media planning requires perfection of the messages and the channels before the actual communication exercise is undertaken. I visualise the series of radio workshops that we have undertaken only as the series of exercises to plan the medium of radio in a manner that it serves our purpose effectively. Viewed from this angle the radio workshop is just only a part of our bigger communication strategy which we should implement in support of the UNICEF project, being implemented in the area.

With these observations I would suggest the following modifications in our planning of the communication strategy with radio workshops:

- i. Since UNICEF has been the prime mover behind the idea of making more effective use of radio in educating the rural families and the housewives about the problems of mothers and children, only it can visualise the best as to how is this to be achieved? Therefore, the major policies, including the budget in this regard, should be decided, once for all, to be handed over to the organisers, as standard guidelines, so that each organisation involved is clear about its role in the workshop.
- ii. Since UNICEF decides the policy and finances the workshops it has to ensure that the programme proceeds on the lines envisaged. For doing so it should name, as a matter of principle its own man (e.g. PVK) as the Director of the workshop, and give the honour of coordination of the whole show to the head of the institution or his nominee who should be named as the coordinator of the workshop responsible for all arrangements and accounts. The official from the Government Department, who is responsible for implementing the UNICEF programme should also be the coordinator of the entire campaign of communication.

July 29, 1983

Communication Strategy Involving Radio
for Maternal and Child Care

— Dr. D. S. Vyas.

Having gone through the records of the previous two workshops and having had the first experience of our radio workshop held at Rohtak, I have on the basis of my past experience following observations and suggestions to make for further strengthening our field communication aims through such workshops, and related activities.

1. Radio, like all other mass media, is a good medium of communication for creating awareness and strengthening the audience beliefs. A large number of scientific studies have brought out the fact that all of these mass media suffer from certain handicaps and so does the radio. To overcome their limitations each of these media need to be supplemented and complemented with some of the other media. While planning its field communication strategy the UNICEF shall have to keep these facts in mind so that the desired results are achieved.
2. Best communication results are ensured by carrying the same message from different media channels. This necessitates a multi-media approach to our communication strategy of which the radio may form a focal point.
3. In support of radio we may use the script medium in conjunction with some other visuals carrying the same message. Thus, the leaflets along with posters and certain other adaptations of indoor games could form a good package to carry out an effective programme of communication.
4. Information communication is just one of the so many inputs that go in to make a field programme successful. Our communication strategy, therefore, has essentially to be in support of various other UNICEF programmes being implemented in the field and the receivers of our messages have to be the same people who are the beneficiaries of the ongoing UNICEF programmes in support of which the communication strategy is planned.
5. This, then requires that we first identify our audience within the UNICEF project area and establish their information needs within the educational framework of the project. This will greatly facilitate media planning including the radio series.
6. To ensure that the desired messages supportive to the UNICEF programme reach the targetted audience, we shall have to ensure that the channel or the medium is within the easy access of the audience. Supplies of the media i.e. radio receiver sets, leaflets posters, or any other aids have to be ensured beforehand. Only then is the whole exercise of media planning and perfection through workshops is justified. Funds for such supplies should possibly come from the programmes in support of which the communication strategy is being planned.